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# Stone County Enterprise

The Local News Source of Wiggins & Stone County Since 1916



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## McHenry Resident Wins Festival's First Art Poster Contest



McHenry artist Toni Mancarus-Smith checks out the Pine Hill Festival poster featuring her artwork before signing limited copies. She won the first art contest for the poster. Enterprise photos.



BY LYNDY BERRYHILL EDITOR

The Pine Hill Festival has unveiled its 2026 commemorative poster, featuring original artwork by local artist Toni Mancarus-Smith. Mancarus-Smith, a recent retiree who moved to McHenry, Mississippi, from Southern California with her husband, Rick, has become active in the Stone County arts community through the Stone County Arts Council. She works across multiple media, including ceramics, watercolor, acrylic, and digital art, and also creates designs for greeting cards and

stickers. Mancarus-Smith drew her poster entry in a digital program called Procreate on her iPad. She says she likes that she can erase and change colors or aspects more easily with digital artwork. Seeing her artwork in print brought her great joy, and she carefully signed all 50 limited-edition posters. "It's really exciting to see it this big," Mancarus-Smith said. "I work on the little iPad. I don't have the big iPad, so you wonder if you made it detailed enough." Her husband, who also has a background in art as a sculptor, was even

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## Factory Connection Cuts Ribbon on New Location



Factory Connection staff and members of the Stone County Business Collective cut ribbon on Wednesday, April 15. Photo by Elizabeth Vargas.

BY LYNDY BERRYHILL EDITOR

Members of the Stone County Business Collective gathered on Wednesday, April 15, 2026, to celebrate the grand opening of Factory Connection in Wiggins, a new retail addition located near the Piggly Wiggly off Highway 26. The store is part of a long-established, family-owned franchise that began in 1976 as a single 1,000-square-foot shop in downtown Guntersville, Alabama. Since then, Factory Connection has expanded to more than 220 locations across over a dozen states, with additional stores planned as part of continued growth. The business previously

operated in Stone County at the exact same location several years earlier. Store employees said it was time to come back to Wiggins. "The economy kind of circled back around, and it opened up an opportunity for us to come back," said corporate manager Kristi Talley. Company officials say the brand emphasizes community-based retail, offering in-person shopping experiences rather than online sales. The Wiggins location employs five people and is designed to provide personalized customer service and locally focused engagement. Factory Connection is headquartered in North Alabama and

operates a distribution network supporting its store base across the Southeast and Midwest. The retailer offers apparel and accessories for juniors, misses, plus sizes, and children, along with shoes and select accessories at discounted prices compared to traditional retail. The company reports it works with major national manufacturers to provide brand-name merchandise at reduced prices, with frequent new shipments to keep inventory changing. Leaders say the model is intended to support smaller communities by offering access to nationally recognized fashions without requiring travel to larger metropolitan markets.

## Wings Over Wiggins Draws Crowd



The annual fundraiser hosted dozens of planes, skydivers and enthusiasts to benefit Gateway Christian Academy on Saturday, April 18. Photo by Elizabeth Vargas.

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