**

New year ushers in new businesses,
economic development for George County**

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Release Date: January 19, 2023

GEORGE COUNTY, Miss, (WLOX) – George County is starting the new year with new businesses. The rural county celebrated multiple businesses either opening or re-opening in January.

“[The county] has already had three ribbon cuttings for the new year. Earlier this week we had Blossman Gas open their new facility, and now, Miss American Pie,” said Ken Flanagan, the county’s economic development director.

The ribbon cutting for Miss American Pie happened Thursday in Agricola.

“We are making fried pies from scratch,” said Stewart. “Last week was the first time we opened. We sold 550 fried pies. This weekend we have about 1,200 to sell over the three days we’re open.”

Stewart is only 25-years-old, but her passion for baking turned to profit when she began posting the pies on social media.

“It’s really been crazy to see the growth and to realize, okay, I can’t manage this anymore, I have got to get a shop,” she said. “I never expected any of this. I’m just trying to do my best to make my community and my family proud.”

Family and friends clad in white Miss American Pie t-shirts attended the ceremony. Proudly standing next to Kaytelin in each photo is mother Chrissi Taylor.

“She has a great work ethic, Taylor said. “Whatever [Kaytelin] does, she does a hundred percent. At 25, to have your own business is impressive to me. We’re just so proud.”

Flanagan told WLOX News that Stewart’s story is a perfect example of the possibilities George County has to offer.

“What I love about her story is that last year she was doing this in her mom’s kitchen, and here she is today opening up her own store front” he said. “It’s inspiration for everyone – that you can know that if you have a good product and you work hard and you’re passionate about it – from pies to pumping gas – there’s a place for you in George County to grow—along with the entire Gulf Coast.”

Along with small business, larger corporations are opening new locations in this county. A Love’s Travel Center and an Arby’s Restaurant will both open in the coming months.

“We have a great scale of the small, local, family business like [Miss American Pie], all the way up to large, huge, regional corporations,” said Flanagan.