

The Millington Star, 29 September 1999

Millington aims for state's top honor, Three-Star Award

Mayor Harvell announces Navy land transfer nears completion

By Andrew Bell

Star News Editor

Millington Mayor George Harvell Jr. cordially interrupted the city's Three-Star recertification meeting Tuesday morning to announce that Navy administrators have signed off on a covenant approval involving early property transfer on the west side of the base.

The faxed letter means the Navy will go ahead and give the city the deed to the 1,300 acres,

including the airport, while continuing to do its part to clean up the land's soil, contaminated over the decades, even after city gains documented ownership.

Officials had been informed by the Navy it would receive the land before January of next year. The letter, stating that the transfer will be finalized on Dec. 12, 1999, apparently confirms that objective.

The mayor, as well as Milling-

ton Municipal Airport Manager Russ Noble, city economic and development planner Jim Ferguson, also attending the meeting with Tennessee Three-Star representatives, were excited about the news.

"The transfer is one of the multiple keys in getting the industrial park going," Harvell said.

The approval means the Navy will hand over the land before

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environmental clean-ups are complete, but it hasn't been an expedient process. The land was mandated by the U.S. Government in 1993 to be relinquished by the Base Realignment and Closure Commission. The city has been promised the land several times since the fall of 1997. It was determined just last year that the Navy would transfer the land at no cost to Millington. City officials and planners

want to establish the adjoining property around the airport into a multifaceted industrial business park, where corporations would have easy access to air transportation, railway and roadway to Interstate 40, which will be connecting to Paul Barret Parkway by January.

The announcement arrived at a time where it appears the city will receive recommendation for its seventh consecutive certifica-

tion in Governor Don Sundquist's Three-Star program, which sets guidelines of planning, leadership and education involvement for towns and cities.

"I (comparison between last year's certification review and this years) think you're starting to get the Navy involved with Millington and Memphis," said Three-Star consultant Blake

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Swaggart. "The Navy is more community involved where as before it was more close door business."

Consultant Sherry McCarter was encouraged about the fact that the city had hired a city planner and that Millington had formed a cooperative partnership with the Memphis Chamber of Commerce.

"It's great that you all have a planner," she said. "Most communities don't see or can't afford the benefits of a planner."

McCarter said Millington still needs to progress in the education category of the Three-Star approval system, which provides municipalities with marketing advantages to prospective new businesses.

Millington Chamber of Commerce representatives at the meeting, including Chamber President Dr. Kevin Reed, Val Champman and David Wages, explained their recent liaison

efforts to pair up local school's wish lists of items up with local businesses that could match needs. The Chamber reportedly has collectively gained around \$10,000 towards its education foundation. It doesn't plan to spend any of that money until it reaches the endowment amount of \$25,000.

McCarter said he had counted 58 communities across Tennessee who are Three-Star certified. She said, based on Monday's information from the Chamber, she will recommend that Millington be reapproved. Official word should come by the end of the year. If approved, Millington could receive the \$3,000 matching grant from the program for the purpose of promoting the city.

"Three-Star stands for a well-rounded community, economic development and education plan, given with work from the city and chamber," said Page. "It also gives us bragging rights."