



When approached about being featured as the March/April “Fan Male,” Chris Pettis was very, very reluctant. He said he didn’t know what made him worthy of being “Fan Male;” he nominated other candidates he felt more appropriate; and then finally caved when insisted upon. Even then, Chris said, “I want the story to be less about me and more about what a great community Thomaston is.”

By definition, “Fan Male” is a story highlighting the great works of an outstanding man in the community and therefore cannot be about the city of Thomaston. However, Chris Pettis’ story is one that cannot be told without also telling the story of the development of Thomaston, Chris’ hometown.

Chris spends a lot of time in the public eye as the City President for Colony Bank. Chris also spends much of his time volunteering for an endless list of committees, boards and associations, including (but definitely not limited to) Boy Scouts, the Chamber of Commerce, Thomaston Mainstreet, Sertoma, Rotary, Hickory Ridge Golf Club and the Ferst Foundation. In many of these groups, Chris is either a founding member or served upon an integral committee. Busy falls slightly short of describing this man.

As if these activities aren’t enough, Chris explains, “Outside of these various civic endeavors, most of what I’ve been spending my time on is industrial recruitment. I’ve been working tirelessly with a great group of committed citizens here...” at which point Chris specifically names nine other men (some of which are the ones he tried to defer the title of Fan Male upon) and then adds, “These are just a few people who are dedicated to the revitalization effort going on here.”

Chris’ desire to make Thomaston a better place isn’t completely just about the community: “My personal motivation is for my children. Because Thomaston was a mill town for over 100 years we raised our children with the understanding that they should go off and get an education but not return here because the only jobs were in the mills. Consequently, many, like me, left town without any intention of ever returning.” Chris wants to help shape a community that his children can obtain a great education, be happy and healthy, make a good living and eventually settle down with their own family.

Several factors influenced Chris to return to his Thomaston hometown. “It is funny how a beautiful hometown girl can affect your way of thinking because I met and married a Thomaston girl and all I wanted to do was come back home.” Chris also lists the election of Billy Maddox as District 127’s (a tri-county district of Pike, Lamar and Upson) Georgia House Representative as a motivating factor to return home. “We now had an advocate at the state level. I came back home because the leadership was changing to adapt to a more progressive and aggressive group of guys.” Then Chris quickly adds, “...and ladies.”

“The one thing we’re missing is jobs and careers but we can change that part easily given that Thomaston has to offer what industry is looking for in a community. I very jealously don’t want my children to *have* to leave to find work. My little girl, Abi, is 4 years old and my baby boy, Wyatt, is 9 months old. The way I see it, I’ve got about 10 to 15 years to make Thomaston a place where they could find a future.” --*Jessica Williamson*