



The spending season

Deep Black Friday discounts lure Myrtle Beach-area shoppers into storefronts regionwide

BY JAY RODRIGUEZ
jrodriguez@postandcourier.com

MYRTLE BEACH — For people like Mary Madigan and her daughter Christie, it was a matter of tradition. “We do this every year,” said Mary of Fayetteville, N.C. on Black Friday at Coastal Grand Mall in Myrtle Beach. “We just love coming to the beach on Thanksgiving weekend and seeing what’s for sale.”

The two joined dozens of people lined up outside Coastal Grand Friday morning for sales on what has traditionally been known as the biggest shopping day of the year. But the perfect storm of the continued surge of online shopping combined with a worldwide pandemic and, literally, a rain storm flirting with the area at around 5:40 Friday morning, all contributed to the thinning of this year’s crowd.

“There’s definitely less people than there have been (in previous years),” Madigan said. “We just keep our distance and go about our way.”

Shoppers at stores like JC Penney and Belk at Coastal Grand were greeted with employees ensuring people were wearing masks before they entered. The parking areas near entrances of the big-box stores were noticeably thinner compared to previous years nearing the official opening of the mall at 6 a.m.

Lightning flashed shortly before 6 as unseasonably mild temperatures hovered in the mid- to upper-60s through most of the morning. The area received one last soaking of rain shortly after 6 a.m. that lasted about 20 minutes before clearing up.

Black Friday, traditionally, signified the time when retailers would go from in the “red” to in the “black,” but 2020 has been different. A shutdown of nonessential businesses earlier in the year coupled with Myrtle Beach being deemed a “hot spot” for the coronavirus around the Fourth of July nearly crippled businesses in what usually is a prime time at the beach.

“A lot of the retail has shifted online, if you look nation-



Lines formed at Tanger Outlets in Myrtle Beach.



Lines begin to form at Coastal Grand Mall in Myrtle Beach around 5:40 a.m.



Signs like this one outside Affordable Apparel at the Hammock Shops in Pawleys Island was the driving factor that lured shoppers into storefronts Friday.

ally,” said Rob Salvino, an economist with Coastal Carolina University. “Tech is the big winner of the pandemic as far as the economic wins and losses go, and that affects us, as well. More people here are not going into the stores and shopping and instead are buying online. That will continue through the holiday season, especially now since we have the uptick in COVID cases nationally, statewide and locally.”

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control announced 111 new COVID-19 cases in Horry County the day before Thanksgiving, which was the third spike of more than 100 cases since July 28.

Mark Palumbo was at a bustling Palmetto ACE Home Center in Pawleys Island with The Big Green Egg grill under his arm. “For me,” he said matter-

of-factly when asked who that was for. He snickered as he said, “Why? Is there anybody else?”

Palumbo, after encouragement from his wife, eventually put the grill back to price check the grill with online vendors.

“I’ve seen it all over Facebook, so I wanted to see what the hype was all about,” he said. “It looks like something we’ll get eventually.”

Discounted price points — some as high as 80 percent off — were a driving force behind several shoppers.

“This is what got me,” said Cassidy Reeve pointing to an 80-percent-off sign outside Affordable Apparel at the Hammock Shops in Pawleys Island. “I had to see what was discounted so much.”

Reeve was part of hundreds of people who enjoyed the upper-70s weather in the outdoor shopping area Friday afternoon.

Scott Denison brought his dog “Butch” to Woof Gang Bakery and Grooming, at the Hammock Shops Friday.

“I couldn’t do that to him,” Denison said when asked if the treats bought Friday was for Christmas. “He’d sniff right through the paper. This wouldn’t make a day under the tree.”

Traffic on U.S. 501 to turn on Seaboard Street toward big-box stores like Walmart, The Home Depot and those at Coastal Grand Mall, was backed up to the base of the Intracoastal Waterway bridge for most of the 1 o’clock hour.

At Tanger Outlets on U.S. 501, traffic was backed up to the base of the Intracoastal Waterway bridge for most of the 1 o’clock hour.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAY RODRIGUEZ/STAFF

COVID slows revolving door in retail

BY JAY RODRIGUEZ
jrodriguez@postandcourier.com

MYRTLE BEACH — Julie Yamtich opened her first Sparkles store — a young girls’ boutique — in April 2009 at Broadway at the Beach so she is familiar with the cycle of retail workers in Myrtle Beach.

“People are at the beach, they quit because they want a day off, especially the age range we hire,” said Yamtich, who opened her second Sparkles location at Tanger Outlets on U.S. 501. She said the age range she gets her employees from are typically high school- or college-aged girls. “But we’ve been able to retain our employees for a good amount of time.”

This year’s job market along the Grand Strand has been tumultuous, mainly because of COVID shutdowns. Ironically, retaining employees, like the 13 Yamtich employs at Sparkles, has been easier than in previous years, mainly because of the uncertainty of employees finding a new job in a COVID market.

“We’ve always had a lot of turnover just being in a beach area,” Yamtich said. “But what we’ve noticed is we’ve really been able to retain our employees that we have now. Every employee I have on staff now has been there at least a year. That’s unheard of in Myrtle Beach, for retail.”

Please see COVID, Page B10

Speech pathologists help patients progress

BY JAY RODRIGUEZ
jrodriguez@postandcourier.com

PAWLEYS ISLAND — What if our main form of communication, our speech, was taken away by an illness or injury?

What happens if the pathway from the brain to what you say is suddenly interrupted?

That’s when Align Speech Therapy of Pawleys Island steps in. At Align Speech Therapy and Consulting, owner Amanda Barclay and her team helps people align what they think with what they say through the company’s “accessible, effective, and functional therapy services.”

“Communication and swallowing and cognition are things we take for granted until they are impacted and if you have a lesion to the brain, depending on what area of the brain is impacted, it’s going to potentially take away your ability to speak,” Barclay said. “And you’re going to have to relearn that and establishment the motor planning for your brain to send the message to your muscles to produce sound and to put words together and to think of words.”

Please see SPEECH, Page B3



Barclay

Chamber, visitors bureau to be Destination NMB

NORTH MYRTLE BEACH — The North Myrtle Beach Chamber of Commerce Convention and Visitors Bureau wants to simply be known as Destination NMB — a \$35,000 organizational rebrand for those who already do business with the entity.

Destination NMB has been working on the name change, which it says is to differentiate itself from neighboring communities and not distance itself from other chambers, since June.

“If you build a place where people want to visit, you build a place where people want to live,” said Mendel



JAY RODRIGUEZ

Bell, the board’s chairman. “If you build a place where people want to live, you build a place where people want to work. If you build a place where people want to work, you build a place where people want to be. If you build a place where businesses have to be, you build a place

where people have to visit... It’s part of the circle that’s going into our new name.”

The artwork for the new logo was developed by the Sarasota, Fla.-based Miles Partnership, Destination NMB’s agency of record. The logo, designed by Miles Partnership, uses a palmetto tree and crescent as the stem to the “N.”

The team at Miles Partnership worked with the marketing committee and a small work group to develop a logo that expresses the style and creates an impression about the organization. The new logo is called Carolina Classic and uses a font that



The North Myrtle Beach Chamber of Commerce’s new logo that encompasses the Convention and Visitors Bureau.

is timeless along with integrating the South Carolina Palmetto and crescent as part of the ‘N’ in NMB.

Please see CHAMBER, Page B3

LVT • Carpet • Tile • Wood • Laminate • Vinyl • Custom Shower • Custom Backsplash



FLOORING PLUS

Coat Drive!

We are teaming up with HGHBA to help foster children in our area stay warm. Drop off new or gently used coats at our store by December 10th!



843-651-3303 • www.FlooringPlusSC.com • 1/4 mile north of Tidelands Hospital 3930 Hwy. 17 Bypass • Murrells Inlet

