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First Lady Maria Lee, Tractor Supply Foundation, Tennessee Titans, and Cleary Construction partner with KABOOM! to build ADA accessible playground in Hermitage Springs Park

RED BOILING SPRINGS, TENN. – Recently, First Lady Maria Lee and Governor Bill Lee gathered with community leaders and volunteers from across Tennessee to build a brand-new playground in Clay County. The First Lady’s initiative, Tennessee Serves, along with the Tractor Supply Foundation, the Tennessee Titans, and Cleary Construction partnered with national nonprofit, KABOOM! and Clay County government, to build the new, ADA accessible play space at Hermitage Springs Park.

The day began with an exciting kickoff ceremony. Volunteers spent the remainder of the morning and afternoon working hard to construct the playground. The day concluded with a celebratory ribbon cutting ceremony including remarks from First Lady Maria Lee, Governor Bill Lee, Clay County Mayor Dale Reagan, KABOOM! CEO Lysa Ratliff, and various other project partners and community leaders. “Today, we saw many Tennesseans come together to serve their rural neighbors. It is my hope that this playground will continue to bring people together and be a space of joy, growth, and safe play for this community,” said First Lady Maria Lee. “From the beginning of our administration, I have dreamt of leaving something lasting in a distressed county that would bless Tennesseans for generations to come. I am so grateful to all of our incredible partners and the Clay County community for coming together to bring this vision to life.”

The First Lady’s initiative, Tennessee Serves, invited all eight of Tennessee’s federally designated distressed counties to apply for the playground grant and after reviewing criteria, Clay County was selected. This grant and project exhibits Tennessee Serves’ continued commitment to serving and caring for rural and distressed communities across the state.



Volunteers have playful reasons to celebrate the new accessible playground in Hermitage Springs Park and other parks being built from TN First Lady Maria Lee’s “Tennessee Serves” Initiative which celebrates its Fifth Anniversary. (Photo/Courtesy: Tennessee Serves Initiative)

“We are so thankful to First Lady Maria Lee and each of the partners who have made this project possible,” said Clay County Mayor Dale Reagan. “This playground will be a true blessing for Clay County children, families, and all the generations to come.” In March, Lee hosted a Design Day in Clay County to hear input from students, parents, and community members on the playground. National nonprofit KABOOM! took the input directly from Clay County to thoughtfully design the play space for the community. “Playgrounds are where kids can experience the wide range of physical and mental benefits of play, and have the freedom to take risks, build strong relationships, grow, explore, and learn through joyful moments of play,

said Lysa Ratliff, CEO of KABOOM!. “KABOOM! is thrilled to work with Tennessee Serves, the Tractor Supply Foundation, Cleary Construction, and the Tennessee Titans, to bring to life the new play space at Hermitage Springs Park and ensure that kids in Clay County and generations to come have a vibrant place to play designed for them to enjoy childhood and unlock their greatest potential.” Studies have shown the tremendous positive impacts parks and play spaces can have on children and their overall health, academic and physical achievements, and socialization skills. This play space is an intentional effort to invest in rural Tennessee’s youth and create a healthier Tennessee. “At Tractor Supply, we are pas-

sionate about supporting Life Out Here and being a good neighbor in the places we call home,” said Marti Skold-Jordan, manager of the Tractor Supply Foundation. “What a delight to bring a bit of joy to the children of Clay County through this incredible collaboration with the Tennessee First Lady, KABOOM!, the Tennessee Titans and Cleary Construction. Together, we can help give children the opportunity to get outdoors, have fun and flourish in our state’s rural communities.” This playground represents an investment of over \$285,000 in the success and wellbeing of the Clay County community. Investments in local parks and play spaces can have substantial economic benefits, especially in struggling communities. The project also

highlights the Lee administration’s focus on supporting rural Tennessee, encouraging community involvement, and promoting the profound impact of public-private partnerships. “Cleary Construction and the Cleary Family are grateful for the opportunity to partner with First Lady Maria Lee in her Tennessee Serves initiative to provide a safe and exciting new playground for the community of Hermitage Springs,” said Dawn Cleary, co-owner of Cleary Construction. “We are honored to be a part of the preparation and completion of this project for our neighboring friends of Clay County. We hope this program will have a long-lasting, positive impact on many families and future generations.” The Tennessee Serves team en-

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listed Tennessee businesses and many community partners to multiply the philanthropic success achieved in this project. This brand-new playground represents the unification of local government, state government, teachers, families, volunteers, statewide and local businesses, magnifying the impact of investment in the Clay County community. “ONE Community aims to support Nashville’s most underrepresented and marginalized communities through three key areas of focus – opportunity, neighborhoods, and education. We are proud to support the Clay County neighborhood in partnership with the Office of the First Lady, Kaboom! and other fantastic local leaders,” said Johari Matthews, Titans Vice President of ONE Community and Executive Director of the Titans Foundation. “All children deserve a safe and imaginative place to learn, grow and play. We hope this playground will serve as an anchor for the community and the families who call it home for many years to come.”

This year marks the 5th anniversary of First Lady Maria Lee’s Tennessee Serves initiative, with this project marking the initiative’s largest scale project to date.

Whataburger brings bold flavors to Wheeler Lake with fourth consecutive Elite Series sponsorship

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — For the fourth consecutive year, Whataburger, the beloved burger chain known for bold flavors and fresh ingredients served up just like you like it, has signed on as a Bassmaster Elite Series tournament title sponsor. The 2024 Whataburger Bassmaster Elite at Wheeler Lake will be held June 13-16 in Decatur, Alabama.

“At Whataburger, we’re all about creating memorable moments, and that’s exactly what we’ve been able to do with the Bassmaster Elite tournament over the last four years,” said Whataburger Director of Sponsorships Jeff Altman. “Wheeler Lake is a prime location for these anglers and their families and fishing fans from all over to enjoy a day at the lake and celebrate afterwards at their nearest Whataburger. It’s truly a special experience we’re proud to be a part of.”

The last B.A.S.S. event to be held on Wheeler Lake was the May 2023 St. Croix Bassmaster Open presented by SEVIN, where Wisconsin pro Adam Rasmussen won with 54 pounds, 15 ounces. Wheeler is the second-largest lake on the Tennessee River in northern Alabama and stretches 60 miles from Guntersville Dam to Wheeler Dam near

Rogersville. Stumpy flats and creek channels are popular areas to find bass midlake, while the lower end features steep banks and long points. Whataburger locations in nearby Decatur, Athens, Florence and Huntsville will keep anglers and fans fueled up on their way to the free, family-friendly Elite Series Outdoors Expo at Ingalls Harbor in Decatur, held in conjunction with the Elite Series event. The Outdoors Expo will bring together fishing and Whataburger fans alike to learn about exciting new menu items and play games to win prizes at the Whataburger tent. “We’re very excited Whataburger is serving as title sponsor for the Bassmaster Elite at Wheeler Lake,” said B.A.S.S.

CEO Chase Anderson. “The Wheeler Lake event is always a very popular stop for tournament anglers. North Alabama is bass fishing country, and we look forward to welcoming fishing fans from the area. The Whataburger partnership is a great fit for everyone, and we always enjoy their on-site presence where they share the Whataburger experience and promote North Alabama’s Whataburger locations.” Live coverage of all four days of the Whataburger Bassmaster Elite at Wheeler Lake starts Thursday, June 13 on Bassmaster.com. The tournament will air on FS1 on Saturday, and, for the first time, coverage of an Elite Series event will be available on FOX on Sunday. For more information, visit Bassmaster.com.

About Whataburger Whataburger serves up Goodness 24/7. Our original recipes are made to order, just like you like it, and we pride ourselves on extraordinary hospitality and meaningful connections in our communities. That’s what’s led fans to Whataburger since Harmon Dobson served our first customer in 1950. Headquartered in San Antonio, we’ve stayed close to our roots while building sales of more than \$3 billion annually across our 15-state footprint and over 1,000 restaurants. Even with our exceptional menu, we know that people make the difference at Whataburger. That’s why we’re

among QSR Magazine’s Best Brands to Work For in 2023 and consistently win culture excellence awards, including Top Workplaces 2023. Want to become part of our orange spirit? Apply to become a Family Member (what we call our employees) at Whataburger.com/careers. Just hungry for a great meal? Download our app on iOS or Android to order ahead. Shop Whataburger-branded merchandise and selected sauces, including our famous Fancy and Spicy Ketchup, at Whatastore.com and find Whataburger original-recipe products in grocery stores. See our press kit for a list of loca-

tions, fun facts, milestones and other company information.

About B.A.S.S. B.A.S.S., which encompasses the Bassmaster tournament leagues, events and media platforms, is the worldwide authority on bass fishing and keeper of the culture of the sport, providing cutting edge content on bass fishing whenever, wherever and however bass fishing fans want to use it. Headquartered in Birmingham, Ala., the 500,000-member organization’s fully integrated media platforms. Connect with #Bassmaster on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and TikTok.



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