

Orchestra planned for Collegedale

BY MIKE O'NEAL
STAFF WRITER

Collegedale officials were unanimous in support and praise of a new community orchestra that was announced during a regularly scheduled commission meeting Monday night.

East Tennessee Symphony Orchestra board members said they plan to develop a 70- to 75-member orchestra that eventually will perform a late spring through early autumn season.

"This will be a concert series like Pops in the Park," board member Mathew Miller said.

The symphony's debut is to occur at the Collegedale Veterans Memorial Park during the city's annual Fourth of July celebration.

"It would add to and enhance the Veterans Park," Commissioner Bill Hulsey said.

Richard Hickam, music director and president of the newly formed orchestra, said the idea of forming the symphony came about after a reunion last summer of Southern Adventist University orchestra alumni.

He said many local musicians had trained under Dr. Orlo Gilbert at Southern, and that pool of talent will provide a steady stream of professional-caliber players.

"The vision is to get the local musicians an opportunity and outlet to perform," Mr. Hickam said.

Local developer and symphony board member Franklin

ON THE WEB

Information about the East Tennessee Symphony Orchestra can be found at www.etsomusic.org.

Farrow said he hopes the orchestra helps bring the community together.

"Collegedale has matured as a city," Mr. Farrow said. "It is not a start-up anymore. It is not just a bedroom community of Chattanooga or simply an adjunct to Southern."

Mr. Miller said the symphony is asking for no financial assistance from the city, just to allow use of Veterans Park for performances. Mr. Miller helped raise more than \$1 million to build the park.

Mr. Hickam said musicians will not be salaried. He said the first concert's biggest expense will be for purchasing music and finding a full-size cannon to fire during the conclusion of the "1812 Overture."

WSMC-FM will simulcast the symphony performances, he said.

The symphony board hopes at some point to build an amphitheater alongside the greenway, he said.

"Grant money is available for such cultural projects and events," City Manager Carol Mason said.

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