

POSTED ON OCTOBER 29, 2008:

A Bold Life: Barbara Hughes

By Marshall Gordon

"I love Hendersonville. I think it's the most awesome place on earth," says Barbara Hughes, owner of Narnia Studios in the city's downtown, and an unabashed promoter of the locale and its many attractions.

Hughes is the one-woman show behind an effort to proclaim Hendersonville "friendliest city in America." Says Hughes, "I was looking for a market angle. 'How could I get it started, how could I get it country wide?' You really try to bring in tourism so that people will spend their dollars here. I thought, 'Who doesn't want to come somewhere friendly?'"

So, entirely on her own, Hughes developed the website friendliestcityinamerica.com. Her efforts to make the slogan official are paying off. The City of Hendersonville recently passed a proclamation declaring the city friendliest in America. Senators Burr and Dole, along with Representative Shuler, have sent in letters of support.

Not bad for a web newbie and a site that's been up for a mere three months. The tireless Hughes hasn't stopped there. "I have a new campaign where I attach a card with the name of the website to a beautiful leaf like a sugar maple or oak and I mail it to personalities like Diane Sawyer and Katie Couric. If it will tweak their interest, maybe they'll say something about it on TV," she says.

—Marshall Gordon

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