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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**LEADERSHIP MACON CLASS OF 2017 BREAKS GROUND ON
FITNESS CIRCUIT AT AMERSON RIVER PARK**

MACON – The newest class of Leadership Macon, which is a program of the Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce, hosted a groundbreaking ceremony on December 18 to welcome construction of the Leadership Macon 2017 Fitness Circuit at Amerson River Park. The Circuit will introduce eight pieces of gym-quality fitness equipment from Greenfields Outdoor Fitness, which can serve up to 23 people at once, along the park’s walking trail.

“Leadership Macon is a signature program of the Chamber that, each year, brings together a diverse group of leaders from the across the community to not only learn more about Macon-Bibb County, but to develop a project that can benefit the area. I am delighted that this year’s class has chosen a project that reinforces what a wonderful place Macon is to live, work and play,” said Mike Dyer, Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce President and CEO.

Spencer Hawkins, Leadership Macon Class of 2017 Project Manager, explained why the Fitness Circuit was chosen: "Our class wanted to find a unique project to address community issues we learned about during our time together. Two of the aspects that resonated with us were the need to raise the level of wellness in our community, and the financial roadblocks that can keep people from working toward their wellness goals."

The Fitness Circuit will also enhance the Ocmulgee Heritage Trail and Amerson River Park. Leadership Macon worked alongside the local public and private organizations, especially NewTown Macon and Macon-Bibb County, which have already invested in the area.

"The Ocmulgee Heritage Trail is already the region’s most-used recreation amenity, and the new Fitness Circuit is a wonderful improvement. NewTown is grateful to Leadership Macon for moving the Trail forward,” said Josh Rogers, NewTown Macon President and CEO.

When construction is completed later this spring, the Leadership Macon 2017 Fitness Circuit at Amerson River Park will be a one-of-a-kind outdoor amenity in Macon, capable of serving a diverse range of users, including children, adults and even those with physical limitations.

“The Fitness Circuit will soon provide our entire Macon-Bibb community and Middle Georgia region with yet another good reason to come and enjoy the growing number of recreational opportunities available at Amerson River Park,” said Rabbi Larry Schlesinger, Macon-Bibb County Commissioner for District 2.

The Fitness Circuit is being funded by generous local sponsors, and there are still sponsorship opportunities available. For more information about supporting this project, visit www.bit.ly/fitnesscircuit. To view renderings for the project, www.bit.ly/fcrenderings.

About Leadership Macon

Leadership Macon, which is a program of the Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce, brings together diverse local leaders each year, with unique perspectives of the community, to engage in a leadership-enriching program. Through an exploration of Macon-Bibb County and the candid exchange of ideas, Leadership Macon helps individuals grow both professionally and personally.

Throughout the years, Leadership Macon has also promoted civic responsibility by encouraging community involvement, as well as breeding enthusiasm and dedication. Leadership Macon's ultimate goal is for its participants to enrich the community through active participation in shaping its future. For more information, visit www.leadershipmacon.com.

About Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce

Established in 1861, the Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce is the area's largest business services organization and primary advocate for the Macon business community. The Chamber supports the growth and development of business by offering networking and marketing opportunities, providing valuable benefits to its members, advocating for legislative issues that will promote a healthy business climate, and participating in the economic development efforts for Macon-Bibb. For more information, visit www.maconchamber.com.

About Amerson River Park

Improving the Quality of Life for residents of the entire region is one of the Focus Areas in Macon-Bibb County's Forward Together Strategic Plan. The extension and improvement of the Ocmulgee Heritage Trail into Amerson River Park is one of the strategies identified to make that happen.

With the help of a federal earmark grant (\$5.5 million) provided to Macon-Bibb County, the Park was shut down for 15 months to make significant improvements, including two new picnic pavilions, upgrades to the Porter Pavilion area, a scenic river overlook, bathrooms at the playground, 3.5 miles of paved trails, 0.75 miles of mulch trails, a grand entrance, a new canoe takeout, and more.

About NewTown Macon

NewTown Macon is a non-profit organization that leads revitalization efforts in Downtown Macon, Georgia. NewTown's mission is to attract, leverage and invest in self-sustaining transformation with the vision of a vibrant and authentic city experience unparalleled in the South. More information about NewTown can be found at www.newtownmacon.com.

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