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The Leader Tribune

Peach County's Newspaper

Vol. 138, Issue No. 04 • 1 Section • 10 Pages

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2026

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Effective June 2**

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Massee Lane Gardens prepares for Upcoming Festival of Camellias in February

By Zoe Hammond
News Editor

FORT VALLEY, Ga. – February is almost upon us, and with it comes the peak blooming season of the camellia. Massee Lane Gardens will celebrate the 2026 Festival of Camellias and the 80th Anniversary of the American Camellia Society for the entire month of February 2026.

Matthew Israel, the executive director of the American Camellia Society, sat down with The Leader Tribune to discuss the upcoming month of celebration. Israel is hoping this year's festivities will provide an opportunity to raise awareness about Massee Lane Gardens as well as recognize and thank local leaders for their dedication and hard work to the Peach County community.

"My hopes [for the Festival of Camellias] are that people come out and see what we have going on at Massee Lane. I hope that people who haven't heard of us, take a day to come visit us," Israel said. "It's a chance to get us back in the public awareness."

Each Saturday, there will be a host of events and activities for the community to take part in; the "Kick Off Celebration" on

Feb. 7, "It's a Valentine Kid's Day" on Feb. 14, and the "Master Gardener's Workshop" on Feb. 21. For the last weekend, the main event will take place on Saturday and Sunday – the Middle Georgia Camellia Society and Flint Energies Camellia Show!

The "Kick Off Celebration" will have various local leaders from Peach County, Fort Valley, and Byron present for the community to meet with and recognize. There will also be a host of activities for children, including a scavenger hunt and the Lozano Farms Mobile Petting Zoo.

The first Saturday will feature an Ikebana art exhibit and will give visitors a chance to see beautiful and unique flower arrangements. Ikebana is the traditional Japanese art of flower arrangement, which dates back over 600 years, originating from Buddhist floral offerings.

The second Saturday is "It's a Valentine Kid's Day," and there will be a workshop with Nancy Dyes from 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m., a saving money workshop – Money Talks – with Synovus Bank, and the Lozano Farms Mobile Petting Zoo.

The third weekend, the "Master Gardener's Work-



shop" will have a waxing camellias workshop with Jonanne Beckman from 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. "Camellia waxing" refers to an old-fashioned Southern method for preserving camellia blossoms by dipping them in melted wax.

The final weekend, which will take place on Saturday, Feb. 28, and Sunday, March 1, will be the Camellia Flower Show. The show will take place from noon to 4:00 p.m. on Saturday and from 1 to 4 p.m. on Sunday. The Middle Georgia Camellia Soci-

ety will showcase hundreds of camellia blooms, showing the diversity of sizes, shapes, and colors that make camellias such a prized addition to any garden.

Entries to the show, which are open to all growers & the public, will be accepted from 7:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. on Saturday. The show itself will be open for public viewing. Those interested in participating in the show can contact Tommy Martin at (478) 235-0096 or by email at massee.lane.camellia.show@gmail.com.

Israel took a moment to thank the community for their continued support over the years.

"We thank you. We've gotten so much support from local people. We want to continue that relationship. We want you to come visit!" Israel said.

Israel also provided an interesting fact about the camellia plant. Camellia sinensis, more commonly known as the tea plant, is where white tea, yellow tea, green tea, oolong, dark tea, and black tea come from. The

leaves are processed differently to attain varying levels of oxidation, with black tea being the most oxidized and white being the least

Massee Lane Garden will be open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. and Sundays from 1:00 p.m. until 4:30 p.m. General Admission is \$10, \$8 for seniors, military (with ID), and free for children under 12 and American Camellia Society members. Flint Energies Co-Op Connection members are eligible for \$2 dollars off the regular admission fee.

From Monday through Friday, Massee Lane will have guided tours with a boxed lunch, which can be reserved early as tours and lunches are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Those interested can call (877) 422-6355 to schedule a guided tour or to reserve a boxed luncheon.

**FESTIVAL OF CAMELIAS
CONTINUED PG 2A**

Fort Valley Councilwoman Charged with Assault

By Zoe Hammond
News Editor

FORT VALLEY, Ga. – Fort Valley's East Ward Councilwoman Sandra Marshall is facing simple assault charges after an alleged heated dispute with her apartment complex manager, according to an incident report from the Fort Valley Police Department.

According to the report, on Monday, January 5, a FVPD officer arrived at the Reserve at Hamptons off Highway 341 around 3:00 p.m. in response to a call about a dispute with a tenant.

The officer spoke with the two property managers, who alleged that Marshall, 63, had behaved in an aggressive manner and attempted to attack one of them after Marshall was told to pay a \$50 late fee for allegedly failing to pay her rent on time.

The first manager said that after Marshall came in to pay her rent late on Monday, the manager called Marshall to inform her of the \$50 late fee. The manager stated that she could tell Marshall was upset, and after about five minutes, Marshall called back asking for the corporate office's phone number, which the manager provided to Marshall. The manager said Marshall had asked, over the phone, to waive the late fee until next month because "she didn't have it," the report reads.

The managers provided the policy on late fees, which is included in every tenant's leasing agreement, to the officer. The policy reads: "LESSEE agrees to pay an additional sum of \$50.00 to the LESSOR, due im-

mediately after 12:00 pm on the 5th of the month."

The report continues, stating that about an hour later, Marshall came to the rental office with a \$50 money order, and the manager said Marshall started "asking questions and making remarks." The manager said when she finally responded to Marshall, the councilwoman "charged" at her over her desk three times "aggressively."

The other property manager reportedly stopped Marshall after multiple attempts to walk her out of the building, as the argument persisted.

The manager who accused Marshall claimed that Marshall had "harassed [her] all day" after learning she was the new manager who previously evicted Marshall from her home at College Square Apartments in Fort Valley in June 2025.

According to the report, as Marshall left, she told the manager escorting her out that the other manager was a "nasty person" who "evicts women with children." Marshall then left the area in a car with another woman who said, "F that lady," before driving off.

The manager who accused Marshall also told the officer she wanted to prevent the councilwoman from entering the rental office in the future by filing a criminal trespass charge.

The officer wrote that he attempted to locate Marshall, but she was not at her apartment at the time. However, Marshall was later charged with simple assault.

Peace Pole Dedication Was Held at Jailhouse Park



Contributed

Immediately following our regular meeting on January 21st, 2026, the Byron Rotary Club installed our first Peace Pole in Jailhouse Park.

Peace Pole Dedication Remarks:

Today we dedicate this Peace Pole, a simple but powerful symbol that carries a global message: May Peace Prevail on Earth. The first Peace Pole was created in 1955 by Masahisa Goi in Japan, in response to the devastation of World War II. His vision was straightforward and bold - to unite people every-

where around a shared hope for peace. Since then, more than 200,000 Peace Poles have been installed in nearly every country around the world, standing in schools, parks, civic spaces, and communities just like ours. This pole represents Rotary's commitment to service above self, to understanding across cultures, and to the belief that peace begins locally - with us. May it serve as a daily reminder that even small actions, rooted in goodwill, can create lasting impact.

Susan Potter, Immediate Past President of Byron Rotary Club, requested this be her project.

Byron Rotary Club honors each Past President by asking them how they would like to have their year remembered. Susan chose to have Peace Poles installed and dedicated at Jailhouse Park and at North Peach Park. Updates to come on installation of the Peace Pole at North Peach Park! We would like for everyone join us in this tribute to help peace take root in our community.

Each Peace Pole has a QR code that has additional information about this global project. We would love for you to visit and scan the code and find out more.



FVSU President Paul A. Jones Announces Retirement Effective June 2026



Photo Contributed by FVSU

FVSU President Paul A. Jones

By FVSU

FORT VALLEY, Ga. — Fort Valley State University President Paul A. Jones, Ph.D., has announced his plans to retire at the end of June 2026, concluding a decade of service as the university's 10th president and more than 24 years of service within the University System of Georgia, including nearly four decades in higher education.

Jones' announcement comes during a milestone period for the university, following the celebration of Fort Valley State University's 130th anniversary and 10 years of his presidential leadership. Together, these moments informed what he described as a thoughtful and prayerful decision. "Serving as president of Fort Valley State University has been one of the greatest honors of my professional life," said President Paul A. Jones, Ph.D. "From the beginning, my goal was to serve faithfully, strengthen the institution and ensure that Fort Valley State is positioned to thrive well beyond my tenure."

During his presidency, Fort Valley State University

experienced sustained growth and forward momentum. The university achieved its largest enrollment since 2013, strengthened student retention and graduation outcomes and expanded access and opportunity in alignment with its mission as Georgia's only 1890 land-grant institution.

Under Jones' leadership, Fort Valley State has received continued national recognition, including being ranked the No. 1 public Historically Black College or University in Georgia for eight consecutive years and the No. 1 regional university in Georgia for social mobility, according to U.S. News & World Report.

During his tenure, Fort Valley State University saw significant progress across three key areas: campus infrastructure, academic program expansion and philanthropic growth. Strategic investments strengthened the university's physical and operational foundation, new academic programs were launched to meet workforce and community needs, and fundraising efforts expanded support for student success, academic programs and endowed faculty positions.

"President Paul Jones has dedicated more than 24 years to the University System of Georgia, including ten years leading one of the South's top public Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Georgia's only 1890 land-grant institution," said University System of Georgia Chancellor Sonny Perdue. "Under his leadership, Fort Valley State University rose to number one in Georgia for social mobility and expanded its reach. President Jones has set Fort Valley State up for long-term impact by strengthening academic offerings and philanthropic efforts, and he leaves a legacy of advancing the university's historic mission."

He will continue to serve fully as president through June 2026, with a focus on ensuring a thoughtful and stable leadership transition that supports continuity, momentum and institutional strength. Information regarding the presidential search process will be shared by the University System of Georgia, at a later date.

Old Turnout Gear Donated to the Junior Fire Program



Contributed

The Peach County Fire Department thanks the Byron Fire Department for their generous donation of out-of-date turnout gear to our Junior Fire Program.

While this gear is no longer suitable for firefighting operations and is out of compliance due to its age, it will go a very long way in helping prepare and train the next generation of firefighters.

Instead of discarding it, they recognized the need within our program and stepped up to support our youth.

Thank you all for your continued support and for investing in the future of the fire service!

Middle Georgia Senate race heads to a runoff between a Democrat and Republican

By Mark Niesse
Staff Writer

Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — A Democrat received the most votes in a special election for an open Middle Georgia state Senate seat on Tuesday but failed to avoid a runoff as five other candidates split the Republican vote.

LeMario Brown, a Democrat and former Fort Valley councilman, advanced to the runoff against Steven McNeel, a Republican and trial attorney, according to unofficial results.

They're running to replace former state Sen. John F. Kennedy, a Republican who resigned to run for lieutenant governor.

The Feb. 17 runoff, required in Georgia because no candidate won a majority of votes, will fill one of four vacant seats in the General Assembly, which began its annual legislative session last week.

Brown was the only Democrat in the race for Senate District 18, which includes Crawford, Monroe, Peach and Upson counties along with parts of Bibb and Houston counties. He gained 37% of the vote while the remaining 63% was divided among the five Republican competitors.

"LeMario's performance is yet another testament to the momentum that Democrats are building as working Georgians across the state grow tired of 22 years of failed Republican leadership," said Democratic Party of Georgia Chair Charlie Bailey.

Georgia Republican Party Chair Josh McKoon said Democrats failed to make significant gains in the Republican-leaning district.

"Democrats threw everything they had at this race — pouring in money from California and New York and even calling in national figures like Sen. Mark

Kelly — but in the end, they still couldn't close the deal," McKoon said. "Republicans stepped up, overcame the noise, and now we're heading into the runoff ready for the final round."

Special elections will also be held to fill other vacant seats in the General Assembly.

Former state Rep. Karen Bennett, D-Stone Mountain, resigned days before she was charged with fraudulently obtaining unemployment benefits during the COVID-19 pandemic, former state Rep. Lynn Hefner, D-Augusta, moved out of her district after her home was damaged by Hurricane Helene, and former Republican Sen. Colton Moore, R-Trenton, stepped down last week to run for Congress.

Special elections for the state House seats are scheduled for March 10. An election date for the state Senate seat hasn't yet been set.

We Love When A Plan Comes Together!



By Peach County EMS

Last year, eight AEDs were obtained through a Peach County Emergency Management Agency grant application and placed on Peach County Sheriff's Office vehicles. Deputy Theus was the recipient of one of those AEDs.

A few weeks ago, we received report of a cardiac arrest. Deputy Theus found himself in the immediate area and rapidly responded with his AED. When he arrived, he found bystander CPR already in progress. He quickly placed the AED pads and in his own words, was surprised when the AED indicated that a shock was advised. He defibrillated the patient, and within a few moments, the patient began to wake up.

This is an exceedingly rare



event. Nationally, only 7.8% of Out of Hospital Cardiac arrests survive to discharge. When we assembled the cardiac arrest task force in 2024, it was identified that officers were often the first on scene and could deliver defibrillation more rapidly so they were prioritized to be the first recipients. This is the first successful deployment of one of these AEDs.

We are pleased to announce that the patient has been discharged home and is doing well. Today, we honor Deputy Theus for his role in this amazing out-

come with a Peach County EMS Challenge Coin. These coins are engraved with the inscription "In recognition of your service to the citizens of Peach County and extraordinary efforts in the saving of a life."

They are given to those whom we can directly attribute an action which resulted in a neurologically intact cardiac arrest survival. We're proud of Deputy Theus and we thank him for his willingness and readiness to intervene when the moment came.

National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month

By Zoe Hammond
News Editor

January is National Human Trafficking Prevention Month, a month that highlights efforts to combat human trafficking and support survivors. This month is the time to focus on the importance of recognizing trafficking signs and taking actionable steps to end this crime.

Human trafficking is a crime in which force, fraud or coercion is used to compel a person to perform labor, services or commercial sex. It affects all populations: adults, children, men, women, foreign nationals and U.S. citizens, and all economic classes.

Traffickers often target vulnerable populations, exploiting instability caused by poverty, conflict, disasters, or displacement. A human trafficker may use deception, emotional control, or threats of serious harm, psychological harm, reputational harm, threats to others, debt manipulation, and/or sexual assault to maintain control over human trafficking victims.

According to the State Department, there are estimated to be "more than 27.6 million people — adults and children — subjected to human trafficking around the world, including in the United States. Traffickers often take advantage of instability caused by natural disasters, conflict, or a pandemic to exploit others."

Human trafficking is often misunderstood. People tend to imagine dramatic abductions by strangers, like what we see

in popular TV shows about law enforcement. In reality, trafficking frequently involves manipulation, coercion, and control, and it can occur in communities of every size, be it urban, suburban, and rural.

Steps to Hope, as support group for all victims of domestic violence or sexual assault, discusses human trafficking in their article; "Understanding National Human Trafficking Prevention Month: Why January Matters."

"National Human Trafficking Prevention Month has a clear historical marker. In early January 2010, a presidential proclamation designated January as "National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month," beginning a pattern that has continued each year," they wrote. "That annual proclamation matters because it signals national priority and encourages coordinated action—across federal agencies, state and local governments, nonprofits, schools, faith communities, and everyday citizens. The U.S. Department of State notes this tradition began in 2010 and has continued yearly."

While the government and law enforcement agencies are working to end human trafficking, communities are working to raise awareness and prevent these incidents before they can occur.

One of the first steps is educating. It's important that people learn what trafficking can look like, how grooming works, and how control can be hidden.

While there isn't a one-size-

fits-all indicator that someone is being trafficked — as human trafficking takes so many forms in many different populations — there are behavioral, emotional, physical, and situational signs that may suggest someone is experiencing exploitation.

The Safehouse Project, a non-profit organization dedicated to eradicating human trafficking and restoring hope, freedom, and a future to every survivor, discusses some of the red flags of human trafficking. They emphasize that while these signs do not confirm trafficking on their own, if multiple are present, it's best to report your concerns to the authorities.

Behavioral Red Flags:

- Seems unusually fearful, anxious, paranoid, or tense.
- Avoids eye contact or social interaction.
- Appears withdrawn, depressed, or overly submissive.
- Seems coached or unable to speak freely.

Has inconsistencies in their story or avoids answering personal questions.

Physical & Environmental Red Flags:

- Has visible bruises, cuts, burns, or other signs of physical abuse, especially if in various stages of healing.
- Lacks personal possessions or appears to wear the same clothes repeatedly.
- Is always busy but does not share what they are doing.
- Seems malnourished or poorly cared for.
- Is not in control of their

**TRAFFICKING
CONTINUED PG 8A**

FESTIVAL OF CAMELIAS

CONTINUED FROM 1A

The tours are \$10 per person, and feature admission to the Massee Lane Gardens; a video presentation on the history of Massee Lane Gardens, the American Camellia Society, and camellia species and cultivars; a short informative speech by a Horticultural Expert; and a professionally guided tour

of Massee Lane Gardens. The boxed lunches will be served between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. in the Annabelle Lundy Fetterman Gallery and Museum.

In addition, Massee Lane Gardens will be hosting tea time on Mondays as a way to celebrate the contributions of the tea plant and

its health benefits. The tea tasting is free with garden admission.

Throughout February, camellia plants will be available for purchase. There will also be a camellia plant raffle every Saturday, with tickets costing \$5.

Georgia Senate Bans Local Gun Storage Laws With First Bill Passed In 2026

By Mark Niesse
Staff Writer

Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — The Georgia Senate voted along party lines Tuesday to ban cities from requiring gun owners to lock up their guns in cars, the first bill approved in this year's legislative session.

The bill is a response to a Savannah ordinance that outlawed leaving handguns, rifles or shotguns in unattended vehicles unless they're securely stored. A Chatham County judge ruled in November that the ordinance is unconstitutional.

The legislation now heads to Gov. Brian Kemp for his signature or veto. The Senate approved the bill 32-21 on Tuesday after it passed the state House on the final day

of last year's legislative session.

State Sen. Colton Moore, a Republican from Trenton, said the bill would protect the rights of gun owners. In Savannah, 41 people received citations under the city's ordinance, which comes with a maximum penalty of a \$1,000 fine and 30 days in jail.

"You can travel the state freely knowing you're not going to be a victim of a crime and then be made a criminal as we've seen in Savannah," Moore said during the Senate debate on Senate Bill 204. "We're putting freedom back into the hands of the citizenry."

Savannah's ordinance required guns left in vehicles to be securely stored in a glove compartment, console, locked trunk, or behind the

last upright seat of a vehicle without a trunk. The ordinance also mandated that unoccupied vehicles must be kept locked when there's a gun inside.

State Sen. Derek Mallow, a Democrat from Savannah, said the ordinance reduced gun thefts in Savannah by 30% in the year since the city enacted it in 2024.

"The city overwhelmingly supports the Second Amendment, but they also believe that public safety is at risk when guns are stolen from unlocked cars," Mallow said. "They can fall into the wrong hands very easily."

The bill also allows weapons carriers who receive citations to sue local governments for \$25,000 plus attorney fees.

Peach County Community CALENDAR

email: news@theleadertribune.com



Mayor's Briefing Meeting Was Cancelled For Safety Due To Weather

(January 22, 2026) The Mayor's Briefing Meeting scheduled for Monday, January 26th, at 11:00 a.m. has been canceled; due to the winter storm forecast and the uncertain impact

of freezing rain across Central Georgia. This decision is being made from an abundance of caution to ensure the safety of all citizens and attendees. Please stay safe, and we look forward to gathering again at the next regularly scheduled meeting Monday, February 2nd, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. City of Fort Valley Mayor and Council



NOTICE

CALLED MEETING

CITY OF FORT VALLEY
MAYOR AND COUNCIL
DATE: Tuesday, January 27, 2026
TIME: 5:00 P.M.
LOCATION: City Hall
204 W. Church St

MEETING PURPOSES

Peach County
Future Development

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Real Estate
Personnel

Join Zoom Meeting
Meeting ID: 859 6284 5594
Passcode: 002344

NOTICE PUBLIC MEETINGS City of Fort Valley Mayor & Council Meetings

Location: City Hall 204 W. Church St., Ft. Valley, GA 31030
Mayor and Council Chambers (Courtroom).

• MAYOR'S BRIEFING - Every Monday at 11:00AM

Open meeting is for staff and is available to the public.

• WORK SESSION MEETING - Every 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6:00PM.

A Public Comment Section will be added to the agenda each month to allow for public comment and concerns at the meeting.

• REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING - Every 3rd Thursday each month at 6:30PM.

*The Mayor and Council invite all to attend meetings in-person, via zoom meetings or Faceboo Live.

The Battle of Byron Festival Board of Directors Meeting

The Battle of Byron Festival Board of Directors meet every Third Thursday of the Month at the Old Byron Train Depot at 6:30 P.M.

Trojan Nation TD Club

The Trojan Nation Touchdown Club is selling reserved parking for the upcoming season at a cost of \$75.00. This includes the four regular season home games plus any playoff game that We host. This offer is good as long as spaces are available. You can contact Nate Danielly at 478-957-1141 for more information.

American Legion Meetings

Veterans, consider joining the American Legion Frederick Withoft Post 76 in Peach County, GA. We are an organization of Veterans supporting Veterans and the local community.

Regular Post Meetings are held on the Third Thursday of Every Month, Social Hour with American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, and Guests at 1700 (5:00pm) followed by the Meeting Start at 1800 (6:00pm) at 1212 Peach Parkway, Fort Valley, GA 31030.

We can be reached at our Facebook Page (American Legion Post 76 - Peach County GA) or via e-mail (legionpost76pcga@gmail.com). All Veterans and Spouses are encouraged to participate.

ATTENTION: Veterans

Veterans who would like to get together for brotherhood, please meet for dinner at Mi Ranchito at 311-A Vineville St, Fort Valley, GA on 12 August

2023 at 6:30 p.m./1830. Please RSVP to Ernest Cooling by emailing ecooling79@gmail.com. If further information is needed, please call me at (478) 955-8850.

Fort Valley Downtown Development Authority - Board Meeting

The Fort Valley Downtown Development Authority meets 1st Tuesday every month at 6pm, located at Troutman House Conference Room, 201 Oakland Heights Parkway, Fort Valley, GA 31030. Visit our website for more information: <http://fortvalleymainstreet.org>

Peach County Board of Commissioners Work Sessions

The Peach County Board of Commissioners holds Work Sessions* on the first Tuesday of each month at 5pm in Commission Chambers located at 213 Persons Street in Fort Valley.

Regular Meetings* are held on the second Tuesday of each month at 6:00pm in Commission Chambers located at 213 Persons Street in Fort Valley.

The Board also conducts Public Hearings to consider zoning requests at 6:30pm during regularly scheduled monthly meetings.

*Scheduling may differ due to holidays and unforeseen circumstances. Prior notice will be given. Visit our website for more information: <https://www.peachcounty.net/board-of-commissioners.cfm>

Fort Valley Utility Commission

500 Anthoine St, Fort Valley. The Commission doors are open to customers from 8:00am - 5:00pm.

Public Work Session Meeting first Monday of every month at 4 p.m.

Regular Meeting every second Monday of each month at 6 p.m.

Kiwanis Club of Fort Valley

The Kiwanis Club of Fort Valley meets 1st & 3rd Thursdays every month, noon at Kay Center in Fort Valley. Kiwanis is a civic group focused on helping children, and community service. Each week, members and guests enjoy lunch and a guest speaker who addresses a topic of local, state and sometimes even global interest. Come see what Kiwanis is all about and join one of America's oldest service organizations. See the Kiwanis Club of Fort Valley Facebook page for more information. (TFN)

Peach Public Libraries Board of Trustees REGULAR MEETING

THOMAS PUBLIC LIBRARY, FORT VALLEY, GA

Peach Public Libraries Board of Trustees meets the second Thursday of February, April, June, August, October, and December at 5:15pm in the Meeting Room at Thomas Public Library, Fort Valley, unless otherwise specified.

Peach County Historical Society Meeting

Meets 4th Tuesday each month at 6:00pm. If anyone has school annuals of the past the Historical Society would like to have them. Donations welcome. Contact: Lrgiles77@gmail.com

Fort Valley Historic Preservation

The Fort Valley Historic Preservation Commission Board meeting is held on the second Mondays of the month at 6pm, located at the Troutman House 201 Oakland Heights Pkwy, Fort Valley, Ga 31030.

Peach County Retired Educators Association

The Peach County Retired Educators Association will meet on the first Monday of each

Police Beat

★★★★★★★★★★★★★
The information below is provided by local law enforcement agencies, who are solely responsible for the accuracy of the information. These reports are published for information purposes only. Publication of an arrest or citation report is not evidence of a crime. All persons named in the reports are presumed innocent unless proven guilty in a court of law. Some minor violations that do not threaten public safety are not included.

Byron Arrests/Citations

Al Masmari, Ali Nasser Ali, 33, Hamtramck, MI: Failure To Maintain A Single Lane, Possession With Intent To Distribute A Controlled Substance

Barlow, Brannon Ray, 50, Chester, GA: Probation Violation

Harris, Makel Jabari, 21, Byron, GA: Driving With Suspended License

Harris, Renika Denise, 26, Fort Valley, GA: Failure To Maintain Lane, Failure To Have License On Person, DUI - Driving Under The Influence Of Alcohol - Concentration Is 0.08g Or More Within 3 Hrs Or More

Hart, Jonathan Kent, 69, Atlanta, GA: Defective Headlights, Driving With Suspended License

Ivy, Lanesha Johnae, 33, Macon, GA: Failure To Appear - Misdemeanor

King, Adarius Keshawn, 24, Dacula, GA: Driving With Suspended License, Possession Of Marijuana, Less Than 1 Oz

Nagi, Eissa Monamed Nasser, 26, Detroit, MI: Illegal Possession Of Controlled Substance

Ouzts, Tyrone, 30, Greer, SC: Following Too Closely, Reckless Driving, Driving With Suspended License, Possession Of Marijuana, Less Than 1 Oz, Move Over Law Violation

Puente, Perez Bellisario, 44, Byron, GA: Driving Without A Valid License, Speeding In Excess Of Maximum Limits

Seay, Shuntavius Jermaine, 35, Mcdonough, GA: Possession Of Firearm By Convicted Felon

Shine, Kenterrieo Marque'z, 38, Macon, GA: Driving With Suspended License, Open Container In Motor Vehicle (Misd), Window Tint Violation

Taylor, Gregory Bobby, 55, Lithonia, GA: Speeding In Excess Of Maximum Limits, Driving With Suspended License

Wilson, Brian Paris, 49, Macon, GA: Probation Violation

Fort Valley Arrests/Citations

Marshall, Sandra Bonita, 63, Fort Valley, GA: Simple Assault

Walker, Jerry, 70, Fort Valley, GA: Simple Battery - Family Violence

Peach County Sheriff's Office

Arrests/Citations

Flowers, Morris, 33, Fort Valley, GA: Probation Violation (When Probation Terms Are Altered) - Misdemeanor

Johnson, Walter Lewis, 71, Fort Valley, GA: Possession Of Open Alcohol Container, Driving Under Influence Drugs/Alcohol, Hit And Run; Duty Of Driver To Stop At Or Return To Scene Of Accident

Leffler, Crystal Danielle, 31, Warner Robins, GA: Probation Violation (When Probation Terms Are Altered) - Felony

Smith, Christopher Nicolas, 30, Byron, GA: Failure To Appear - Felony

Stinson, William, 55, Knoxville, GA: Here For Court

Thomas, Kalup Jammal, 36, Warner Robins, GA: Possession Of Open Alcohol Container, Illegal Possession Of Controlled Substance

GA State Patrol Perry Arrests

Lunsford, Unique Quatik, 34, Raleigh, NC: Serious Injury By Vehicle, Hit And Run; Duty Of Driver To Stop At Or Return To Scene Of Accident, Failure To Maintain Lane, Driving Under Influence Drugs/Alcohol, Unsafe Vehicle Or Equipment, Unsecured Load (Littering/Escaping Debris)

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Email:

news@theleadertribune.com

It's Time to Raise Awareness about Stalking



By Zoe Hammond
News Editor

January is National Stalking Awareness Month (NSAM); it's an annual observance that focuses on a crime that is widespread, often misunderstood, and deeply disruptive to victims' lives. Just to make sure everyone is on the same page, stalking is a pattern of repeated behavior directed at a specific person that causes fear for safety and/or substantial emotional distress.

According to the Stalking Prevention, Awareness, and Resource Center (SPARC), about 13.5 million people in the United States are stalked each year. Nearly one in three women and one in six men experience stalking in their lifetime, and more than half of all victims report being stalked before age 25.

While I personally have not been stalked, I do have experience with this. When I was a student at Byron Elementary School, my mom was being stalked. I cannot recall most of what happened while she was being stalked, but I do remember seeing a black vehicle following us. I do remember her telling me to duck down in the seat to avoid being seen.

I also remember the day she had enough and decided to get the authorities involved. She drove past our driveway to my step-grandparent's house and called the Sheriff's Office. While the authorities were on their way, my step-grandpa got some of his friends, in various vehicles, and started following the guy around. The guy floored it down our road, and that was the last

we saw of him.

Once the authorities arrived, I got to meet previous Sheriff Terry Deese, and we told him what we knew – which, in all honesty, wasn't much. The guy had been parked in an intersection near our home, and when mom was driving somewhere, she stopped and asked if he needed help – she thought he had broken down. After that, he started appearing and parking at the end of our driveway and following Mom around.

We still don't know why he was stalking us – we didn't know who he was or what he wanted. Apparently, he had been doing the same thing in Warner Robins – I believe he was later arrested, but it's been over two decades since then. However, I still remember how angry and scared my mom was.

This incident lasted for about a week. I cannot imagine how much worse it is nowadays with online stalking in addition to those who are even more adamant about causing distress, especially if it's someone you knew at one point.

Stalkers typically use multiple tactics to pursue their victims, including making unwanted phone calls or sending unwanted gifts, approaching the victim or showing up in places when the victim does not want them to, following and watching the victim, sending unwanted texts, photos, emails, and messages through social media, or using technology to monitor and track the victim. Many victims are stalked by someone they know, including current or former intimate partners or acquaintances.

The Stalking Prevention, Awareness, and Resource Center states that victims of stalking experience higher rates of depression, anxiety, insomnia, and social dysfunction than the general population. Victims fear not knowing what will happen next and when, as well as if the stalking will ever end.

**STALKING
CONTINUED PG 5A**

Water and Cold Weather are Free Fat Burners!



By Wade Yoder
IT Columnist

Cold water, cold weather, cold showers, and cold plunge's effect on the metabolism is intriguing to me. Very likely the reason we do not hear more about this, and other benefits is it is not easily duplicated in a resell-able form.

Foods we consume are measured by calories and when we eat extra calories beyond the fuel we need for energy, our body will simply store these for later use in our fat cells. Calories are simply units of heat/energy and are relied on for en-

ergy in our body whether it's for our daily activities, digestion, or temperature control. There are certain things that have a thermogenic effect in our body that will cause the body to release this stored energy (body fat) as usable heat/energy.

Water has ZERO calories, but the body must expend units of heat (calories) to warm up this water, which can lead to a thermogenic (fat releasing) effect on our fat cells causing them to release energy.

A large portion of our required daily calories are used for controlling temperature, whether it's to cool us, or to heat us and our body will work hard to keep our thermostat at 98.6 degrees.

Example: according to the American Council on exercise, you can burn up to 400 calories an hour from shivering. The way I would interpret this is, if there are not enough calories from food in the digestive system, this shivering is causing a

thermogenic (fat burning) process, causing a release of energy from our fat cells for heating purposes.

A similar process happens for the sweating process when the body is pumping water through our cooling system, and this is what keeps us from overheating. Our body when given enough water during times of heat, is really good at pushing this heat out and it burns lots of calories keeping our temperature where it's supposed to be!

Each pound of fat holds approximately 3,500 calories, and when these units of energy are released whether for heating the body, cooling the body or for daily activities and exercise, it works like the energy we get from food except it has the slenderizing effect many of us are looking for.

A study that was published in the Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism showed that drinking about 2 cups of water increases metabolism by

24 %. That sounds like a lot to me, and I don't know exactly how the groundwork was laid to arrive at this percentage, but when you figure that every single action and reaction in the body is reliant on hydration, this could be a very reasonable increase.

Water has been shown to increase the metabolism even when water was 98.6 (normal body temperature), however, if you want to increase the thermogenic (fat burning) effect it has on the body, drink it cold. Your body must burn calories (units of heat) to get cold water's temperature up to body temperature at 98.6 degrees, so the colder the water, the more calories (units of heat) our body must burn to get it to body temperature.

If we know how good clean water tastes to the trillions of cells in our body, it should make a difference in us enjoying it plain without additives and sugar!

DOAA Report Confirms Impact of Qualified Education Expense Tax Credit

By Dr. Benjamin Scafidi,
Director of the Education
Economic Center / GA Public
Policy Foundation

At the beginning of each year, thousands of taxpayers rush to support Georgia families by submitting a tax credit application for the Qualified Education Expense Tax Credit. Through the Tax Credit and participating scholarship organizations, Georgia is expanding K-12 educational access, increasing diversity in private school communities and saving Georgia taxpayers millions.

Demand for this popular program is so strong that, on the first day taxpayers can apply, the statewide demand for tax credits more than doubles the available \$120 million statewide cap on available credits. That level of enthusiasm shows a thirst among participating Georgia taxpayers and families for better K-12 educational opportunities and outcomes.

A new report from the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts (DOAA) confirms just how meaningful the program has become. While debates about school choice can be loud and political, the data here are refreshingly straightforward.

Opening the Doors of Opportunity for Low-Income Families

The most striking finding of the DOAA report is also the simplest: a large share of scholarships is reaching low-income families who otherwise could not afford private school tuition. In 2023, 37% of all scholarships went to families earning below

125% of the federal poverty level, and 41% of scholarship dollars went to that same group. Families below 400% of the federal poverty level were given 86% of scholarship dollars.

Private education has historically been out of reach for many families. The report shows that Georgia's tax credit scholarship is actively changing that. Since the program began, the share of private school students from the lowest income group has nearly doubled statewide. The scholarship isn't just moving students between schools. It's pulling entire income groups into educational environments they previously could not afford.

Win-Win: Saving State Funds While Helping Students

In addition to the many benefits of the scholarship program, in order for the tax credit to merely break even for taxpayers, the report shows that only 56% to 63% of students on scholarship would need to be considered "switchers." These students are scholarship recipients who switched from public schools to private schools because they had access to a SSO scholarship. The Georgia GOAL Scholarship Program is Georgia's largest student scholarship organization, processing over half of the tax credits statewide. Using data from Georgia GOAL on over 13,000 students who received scholarships during the 10-year period from 2015-2024, the switcher rate for GOAL scholarship recipients was 87%. This closely resembles the 90% switcher rate found in empirical studies of other state scholar-

ship programs, and results in an estimated net annual state fiscal savings of \$24.2 million, as well as an annual local taxpayer savings of \$32.2 million.

A More Diverse Private School System

The report also highlights something rarely discussed: Georgia's private schools are becoming more racially and economically diverse, and this shift aligns with the growth of this tax credit. As more low-income families enter private schools, the population has become meaningfully more reflective of the state as a whole. Policymakers often talk about equity in education and this program is delivering it.

A Program Reaching Every Corner of Georgia

Students in 153 of Georgia's 159 counties received a scholarship this past year. This isn't a metro Atlanta program. It is a statewide effort touching nearly every community.

The scale of the impact is substantial: In 2022 alone, the program served nearly 13% of all private school students in Georgia.

High Demand and Deep Trust from Georgia Taxpayers

The demand for this program has never been higher. The report shows that the tax credit has been fully consumed on the first day of the year for several years. In addition, over 90% of contributors are repeat donors, and more than a quarter donated in all six years analyzed by the report. That kind of loyalty is rare in public programs and it signals widespread confidence

that the program is worthwhile, well-run and achieving its intended goals.

The Benefits Extend Beyond Private Schools

The report also reviewed decades of national research on school choice and found something important: programs like Georgia's often benefit scholarship students and generate positive ripple effects for traditional public schools. The report references 22 studies that have shown the benefits of school choice programs across the country. Increased competition has been shown in multiple studies to modestly boost public school performance.

A Program Worth Protecting and Expanding

The data tells a clear story. These tax credits are a pathway to opportunity for families who need choices the most. It's helping reshape the economic and racial composition of private schools. It enjoys overwhelming public support. And it serves tens of thousands of students in virtually every part of the state.

As the debate around education in Georgia continues, this program deserves recognition for what it already is: one of the state's most effective, equitable and publicly supported tools for expanding educational opportunity.

The evidence shows it's working. Now the question is whether, by doubling the annual cap on credits to \$250 million, Georgia lawmakers will continue to champion a program that families rely on and that donors wholeheartedly support.

The Leader Tribune

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OUR GOALS

The Leader Tribune is published proudly for the citizens of Fort Valley, Byron & the surrounding area and its goal is to produce quality, profitable, community oriented newspapers that you, our readers, are proud of. We will reach that goal through hard work, teamwork, loyalty, and a strong dedication toward printing the truth.

HOW TO SUBMIT LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We encourage readers to submit letters to the editor. Letters should not exceed 350 words and must include the writer's name, address and telephone number. All letters printed in The Leader Tribune will appear with the writer's name and hometown – we do not publish anonymous letters. The newspaper reserves the right to edit or reject letters for reasons of grammar, punctuation, taste and brevity. Letter writers are asked to submit no more than two letters per person per month. We cannot guarantee that a letter will be printed on a specific date. The Leader Tribune prefers that letters be typed. Letters to the editor are published in the order they are received as space permits. There are three ways to submit a letter to the editor

E-mail it to news@theleadertribune.net, mail it to The Leader Tribune at 109 Anderson Ave, Fort Valley, GA 31030, or drop it off at 109 Anderson Ave in Fort Valley – Monday through Friday.

OUR POLICIES

Signed letters to the editor welcomed. Please include address and phone number. Liability for an error will not exceed the cost of space occupied by the error. We cannot be responsible for return of pictures or material unless stamped, return addressed envelope is included.

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In Politics, Process Is Power

Charlie Harper
Guest Columnist

As we older folks think about A former Georgia House Majority Leader once told his caucus "Never confuse what you do when campaigning with what you (have to) do when governing." There is some wisdom in this statement. What voters demand they be told in order for candidates to be elected and re-elected is often very different from the hard choices that must be made when governing.

This is not to feed a trope that says "politicians always say one thing and do another". It's instead to demonstrate that slogans and actions now live in almost parallel universes, where campaigns are centered on feelings. It's the job of those elected to channel these vibes into actual policies.

Campaigns are designed to show you, the voters, how you will be winners. The missing details would show tradeoffs – what must be given up in or-

der to get something. In campaigns these details become lines of attack for the opposition. Good policy can often die due to a bad campaign.

The Georgia General Assembly is now officially in the process of governing. The one constitutional requirement is that they deliver a balanced budget to the Governor at the end of their session. Anything else they choose to tackle is up to them.

The process of campaigns is also ongoing. Many of the state's top positions are without incumbents. Qualifying officially occurs the first week of March, inside the Capitol.

The first week of March also contains "Crossover Day", the deadline for a bill to pass either chamber for it to be considered by the other this year. As such, the politics of campaigning now marches side by side with the politics of governing. Broad and purposely vague slogans will meet those details that not only will determine

spending and policy for this year, but will set up the base spending scenarios for those soon to be elected.

Despite campaign influences, the governing process remains the same. In the middle of this mix, the power subtly shifts.

Governor Brian Kemp holds line-item veto power, lest any legislator get the idea that he's irrelevant in this process. And yet, the final accountability for the finished product will lay at the feet of those who remain in office next year.

Lieutenant Governor Burt Jones hopes to hold that veto pen next year, while presiding over the Senate chamber this year. Central to his campaign is a plan to eliminate the state's income tax over time, with the first step to exempt each individual's first \$50,000 of income from taxation. A lot of the details of where the spending would be cut or what other revenues would be raised and from whom would presum-

ably come once Jones has the Governor's mansion – and the power of the veto pen.

House Speaker Jon Burns, meanwhile, wants to eliminate property taxes for Georgia's homeowners. This comes from growing frustrations with local governments who both collect and spend property tax revenues, and have allowed rising real estate prices to grow their tax collections and local spending.

The details for either plan will eventually have to come out in the state's budget. Each Appropriations Chairman will work with his committees to arrive not only at a budget for this year, but with eyes looking through to next year's challenges and changes, and beyond.

The Senate Budget Chairman responsible for reconciling these pledges into details is Blake Tillery of Vidalia. He,

**HARPER
CONTINUED PG 5A**

Never Ever Give Up



By Billy Powell
Parables to Ponder
LT Columnist

During a World Series game in which the Atlanta Braves were losing, the TV camera caught several Braves players in the dugout laughing and joking. At the time the New York Yankees were beating them pretty badly. It bothered me that these players could have a cavalier attitude, particularly since they had already played 164 games to win their division, beat Houston in 6-games to win the National League and now were playing for the championship of the world. How could they be smiling and displaying such levity? True competitors do not take losing lightly. Vince Lombardi, the great Green Bay Packer coach said, "Show me someone who doesn't hate to lose and I will show you a loser." Bear Bryant, the famous Alabama Crimson Tide coach said, "Winning isn't everything but

it beats anything that comes in second." And this writer once said, "The game is not lost until the fat lady sings and, if she purses her lips to sing, slap her face."

I have never enjoyed losing any contest, whether it be a game or another type endeavor. I played basketball at Perry under legendary Coach Eric Staples who was a fierce competitor. Ask any of his former players if they ever saw Coach Staples smile when Perry was behind. In fact, I never saw him smile when we were ahead. He was always intense, striving for perfection, never being satisfied with anything short of total effort and unyielding determination.

I have played a lot of backyard basketball. We would choose sides before playing. I was always happy to be chosen on the same team with Larry Bailey. Larry was the one of the best backyard players I have ever seen. That's because no opponent had a stronger will to win than he. If his team lost, he didn't get over it soon either. He was always ready to play another game for redemption. Larry for some reason never went out for basketball in high school, but were I in a position to play for all the marbles in basketball, I would want Larry Bailey on my team. He had the will to win and never,

ever gave up. I admire that.

The will to win is important, but more important is the will not to sin. Every person has a temptation level at which he or she will succumb to the enticements to sin. That level varies from individual to individual depending upon the closeness of his or her walk with the Lord. In Romans 7, Paul speaks of two opposing forces warring within us—the desire to sin and the will to be righteous. He laments the fact that we sometime fall captive to sin.

Joseph is an example of one who overcame great temptation. His brothers sold him to the Ishmaelites, who carried him to Egypt. There he became a servant of Potiphar, an officer of the king, who placed him in charge of his household. Because Joseph was young and handsome, Potiphar's wife lusted after him and sought to go to bed with him. He refused. One day she made a sexual advance, grabbing his robe. Joseph ran unclothed from the house. Potiphar's wife claimed attempted rape, so her husband dealt harshly with Joseph, sending him to jail. But God looks after His own. Later, Joseph interpreted the king's dream and was restored to great power as the Governor of Egypt.

'Ask the Pastor'

Bridging the Gap Between Worship and Daily Living



By Wayne Lenderman
Lead Pastor of Church in the Orchard
LT Columnist

Every Sunday, churches across the world are filled with believers lifting their hands, singing about victory, freedom, and faith. Hearts are stirred. Altars are full. Tears fall. Prayers rise. In those moments, many Christians genuinely feel close to God, strong in faith, and determined to live differently. But by Monday morning, something often changes. The same believer who was "on fire" in worship now feels overwhelmed by stress, temptation, discouragement, and old habits. The joy fades. Patience thins. Prayer becomes rushed or forgotten. Instead of walking in victory, many find themselves surviving the week in quiet defeat—just trying to make it back to church for another refill.

This gap between Sunday's passion and weekday reality

is one of the great struggles of modern Christianity. Emotional encounters with God are real and valuable. Scripture is full of powerful moments—Moses at the burning bush, Isaiah in the temple, and the disciples at Pentecost.

But God never intended for spiritual fire to be an event; He intended it to be a way of life. When faith is built only on weekly inspiration instead of daily formation, believers become dependent on services rather than rooted in Christ. We begin to live off yesterday's manna, even though God offers fresh bread every day (Exodus 16:19–21). Without daily connection, Sunday's fire becomes Monday's smoke. Many sincere Christians fall into weekday defeat not because they don't love God, but because they haven't learned how to walk with Him beyond the sanctuary.

Some common reasons include: A devotional life that is shallow or inconsistent. We cannot thrive spiritually on one meal a week. Unchallenged thought patterns. Old mindsets quietly rebuild what Sunday's sermon tore down (Romans 12:2). Unaddressed wounds and habits. We shout over struggles but never submit them to healing. A consumer view of church. We attend to receive rather than

to be equipped and transformed (Ephesians 4:11–13). The result is a faith that celebrates victory but practices survival. God never called His people to visit Him once a week; He called them to abide in Him (John 15:4). Abiding means learning to carry Sunday into Monday—inviting the Holy Spirit into our schedules, conversations, reactions, and private choices. Transformation happens when believers move from: loving worship to living worship; hearing the Word to obeying the Word; chasing feelings to cultivating faithfulness. The fire of God is sustained not by volume but by devotion. Weekday victory does not mean a problem-free life. It means a God-aware life.

The world does not need Christians who burn brightly once a week and flicker the rest of the time. It needs believers who carry the presence of God into offices, classrooms, kitchens, hospitals, and hard conversations. The goal of Sunday is not to escape the world for an hour—it is to be empowered to live for Christ in it. When the church learns to move from Sunday fire to daily surrender, from altar calls to lifestyle change, and from emotional moments to spiritual maturity, defeat no longer defines the week; Christ does!



CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

email: news@theleadertribune.com

FOOD PANTRY DISTRIBUTION AT ST. PETER A.M.E. CHURCH ANNEX

Food Pantry Distribution at St. Peter A.M.E. Church Annex, 502 State University Drive, Fort Valley, GA.

Fourth Thursday of each month (January-October) and Third Thursday of November and December. Call (478) 825-8452 for details.

BAHA'I COMMUNITY OF PEACH COUNTY

The Baha'i Community of Peach County warmly invites you to an interfaith devotional and discussion via Zoom on the second Wednesday of each month, 7:00 - 8:00pm. The purpose of the gathering is to build friendship and unity. No contributions are solicited or accepted. If you're interested, email us at peachcobahais@gmail.com, and we'll send you an invitation!

COME PRAISE THE LORD OVER ZOOM

Sundays 10am - 12noon. Wednesday nights 7pm-8:30pm. Meeting# 2059432744 Code 7Sb6h8 Host James Manning (Elder)

CHRISTIAN FAITH BAPTIST CHURCH

"Connecting People to Christ" Rev. Bobby J. Roberson, Pastor 478-822-9897. 1735 Hwy 341 North, Fort Valley, GA 31030

FORT VALLEY METHODIST CHURCH

301 W. Church Street (478)825-2762 Join us each Sunday at 10:55AM for Christian fellowship and a spirit-lead service with our pastor, Rev. Herb Flanders. Sunday School for all ages begins at 9:45AM. Nursery is available for infants and younger children.

FT VALLEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (behind Courthouse)

Come & worship in a casual atmosphere at 5:00pm each Sunday. Our weekly pastor will be the Rev. Dr. Bryan Whitfield, a Presbyterian minister who also teaches at Mercer University. For any interested, we will have weekly **Sunday School Bible Study starting at 4:00pm** in the room off the sanctuary. Come and join us for an exciting summer. Brenda Rackley 478-283-1356.

FRIENDSHIP MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

2560 Willow Lake Road, Fort Valley, GA 31030.

GRACE HOUSE COMMUNITY FOODBANK

Open Tuesdays and Thursdays. 9:00am - 12:00pm. Located

behind Fort Valley Court House, 203 Central Ave., Fort Valley. Phone: 478-825-2562 (TFN)

GREATER FAITH BABIES MINISTRIES

1000 Tulip Drive, Fort Valley.

Sunday School at 8:30am
Morning Worship at 10:00am
Wednesday: Free Fellowship Meal at 6pm
60 Minutes Bible Study from 7:00pm -8:00pm Come and fellowship with us!

HOSTING ANGLICAN INQUIRERS' CLASS

Learn the basics of the Christian Faith while enjoying a meal and fellowship.

We will cover theology, history, liturgy, and more! To register contact Fr Matt at harlowmatthew@gmail.com https://www.middlegaanglican.org

THE LIGHTHOUSE CHURCH OF FORT VALLEY

Looking for a church? Pastor Tony Wood invites you to come visit us. Bring the kids for Children's Church! Sunday School at 9:30. Sunday Worship at 10:30.

SAINT ANDREW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

SAINT ANDREW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH located at 309 Central Avenue, Fort Valley, GA 31030. The Rev. Harriette Simmons Ballard. Services every Sunday at 9:00am with Coffee Hour following in Robinson Hall.

ST. JULIANA'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

804 Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. Phone:(478) 825-7127
Sat., 7:00pm Spanish Mass
Sun., 9:00am English Mass; 11:00 am Spanish Mass
Weekday Mass: Tues., - Thurs. 6:30pm
Confessions: Thurs., 6:00pm; Sat. 6:30pm; Sun. 10:30am
Adoration: Thurs., 7:00pm; Sat. 8-9am; Sun. 6:00pm

ST. LUKE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

1000 State University Drive across from the first entrance to FVSU.

We hold morning prayer services, at 10:15am Sundays. Eucharist (Communion) is on second Sundays at 11am.

Please donate to our Little Free Pantry on Charlesvoix St. behind the church (or take food if you are in need). For more info, go to our Facebook page or contact Anna Holloway 478-397-4678 and leave a text message.

SAINT PETER A.M.E. CHURCH

BAHA'I FAITH

"This is the changeless Faith of God eternal in the past, eternal in the future."

Baha'u'llah

For more information peachcobahais@gmail.com www.bahai.us

502 State University Drive, Fort Valley GA 31030

Join us for a rewarding Worship Experience at "The Rock" each **Sunday at 10:00AM**. Our pastor is **Rev. Anthony Dixon**. You may also join us via **YouTube and Facebook**. Weekly **Bible Study every Wednesday at 7:00p.m.**

Bianca Ballard (478)825-8452.

SHILOH BAPTIST CHURCH OF FORT VALLEY

1101 East Church St, Fort Valley, GA 31030

Please join us as we continue to seek to save them that are lost! Our weekly schedule is:

Sunday School at 10:00 A.M.
Sunday Worship at 11:15 A.M.
Bible Study at 7:00 P.M. - Tuesdays

To contact us, please leave a message at (478) 825-7581 or send email to secretary@shilohbaptistfortvalley.org or write us at the above post office box.

TRINITY BAPTIST CHURCH

505 State University Drive, Fort Valley, Georgia 31030

Trinity Baptist Church welcomes you to join us in holy worship service each Sunday morning at 11:00 am. Sunday School is scheduled at 9:30 am. and Bible Study at 7:00 pm. on Wednesday, currently on Zoom. (Contact us at the above number for Zoom access information.)

Also, we invite the participation of children in our Godly Girls and Champs Ministries. Godly Girls, ages 8-15, meets Wednesday at 5 pm; Champs on Thursday at 6 pm. in Church Annex. Transportation is available. We look forward to having you join us soon!

For additional information, call 478-825-7349.

USHERS TEMPLE CME CHURCH

411 Railroad Street, Fort Valley, GA 31030. 478-825-5106.

Join us each Sunday morning with Rev. Tawanna B. Harris at 9:30am for Sunday School followed at 11:00am with holy worship service. You may also join us remotely via Facebook Live. Bible Study held each Wednesday at 6:00pm.

STALKING

CONTINUED FROM 4A

While every case is different, people who stalk can be very dangerous. If you or someone you know thinks they are being stalked, SPARC provides some tips to consider:

Trust your instincts. Victims of stalking often feel pressured by friends or family to downplay the stalker's behavior, but stalking poses a real threat of harm. Your safety is paramount.

Call the police if you feel you are in any immediate danger. Explain why the stalker's actions are causing you fear.

Keep a record or log of each contact with the stalker. You can use this log as an example. Be sure to also document any police reports.

Save evidence when possible. Stalkers often use technol-

ogy to contact their victims. Save all emails, text messages, photos, and postings on social networking sites as evidence of the stalking behavior. You may also want to consider how to use your technology and your devices in a safer manner. For more information, please visit the National Network to End Domestic Violence Safety Net Project's Tech Safety Site.

Get connected with a local victim service provider who can assist you in exploring your options as well as discuss safety planning.

More information and resources about the crime of stalking can be found on the Stalking Prevention, Awareness, and Resource Center website at https://www.stalkingawareness.org.

If you or someone you care about has experienced stalking or any form of victimization, free and confidential support is available 24/7 at victimconnect.org or by calling or texting (855) 484-2846.

Other hotlines that can provide assistance include the National Domestic Violence Hotline and the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN).

Those wishing to contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline can call at (800) 799-7233 or text "START" to 88788.

Those wishing to contact the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network can call at (800) 656-4673 or text "HOPE" to 64673. Both of these hotlines have an online live chat feature as well.

HARPER

CONTINUED FROM 4A

, too, is running for a different office. By anecdotal accounts and the sparse public polling available, he seems to be doing well in the crowded field to replace Jones as the Lieutenant Governor. He also chaired the LG's committee on how to eliminate the state income tax.

There is no policy daylight between the Lt Governor who would be Governor and the Appropriations Chairman who would replace him on the issue of phasing out the income tax. Both are charting their political futures on it, with the power of their current office part of the institutional process to help get them there.

There is always risk in future elections of who holds

power now versus who might in the future. The other side of this risk coin is the House Appropriations Chairman, Matt Hatchett of Dublin. Given the high likelihood that Republicans will retain control of the legislature after the elections, he's the most certain of those in the budget process to be in the same seat – and to wield the same power.

Those campaigning for statewide office will get the most headlines, and they should. Within the Capitol, however, stability and certainty are currency. Both Appropriations Chairmen hold an outsized amount of power and influence over the entire legislative process that extends well beyond the budget. Chairman Tillery has a de-

cent chance to direct not just the Budget but the entire Senate next year. In the Capitol's power players, that gives him currency now with an upside option for the future.

When it comes to landing the plane with details this year and next, however, don't sleep on Matt Hatchett. He's the one who must internalize that this year's details will become next year's problems or opportunities.

His peers know he'll be acting today for the starting point they will begin with this time next year, under new leadership with new goals and agendas. They understand and value this stability in a season of change. That directly equates to even more political power.

Atrium Health Navicent improves access to care in Houston County with new Perry primary care clinic



By Atrium Health Navicent

PERRY, Ga., Jan. 21, 2026 – Members of the community joined Atrium Health Navicent in celebrating a ribbon cutting Tuesday for a new clinic, Atrium Health Navicent Primary Care Family Medicine Perry.

“We’re excited to expand our primary care and family medicine services to help residents of Perry and the surrounding community to have easier access to high-quality care close to home,” said Atrium Health Georgia Market President Delvecchio Finley. “Regular check-ups with a primary care provider and receiving prompt care for other medical needs are key to helping individuals and families live healthier, fuller

lives.”

Conveniently located at 2370 Houston Lake Road in Perry, the clinic offers care for patients aged 6 months and older, including preventative care and annual physicals; immunizations; same-day sick appointments; disease management for conditions such as diabetes, congestive heart failure and hypertension; minor surgical procedures, laboratory services and more.

As part of Atrium Health Navicent, patients at Atrium Health Navicent Primary Care Family Medicine Perry will have direct access to referrals to a broad range of medical specialists. Additionally, patients are invited to register for the

MyAtriumHealth patient portal for access to their electronic medical record, appointments and additional services.

Atrium Health Navicent Primary Care Perry offers appointments from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. To make an appointment, call 478-654-2199.

Atrium Health Navicent also offers primary care services at Atrium Health Navicent Primary Care Warner Robins. Care is available with extended hours Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. To make an appointment, call 478-333-6688. Walk-in services are also available.

Obituaries

Ernest Rogers Anderson, Jr.

Byron – “It’s all in the presentation,” Ernest often said and what a presentation his life truly was.

Ernest Rogers Anderson, Jr., 83, passed away surrounded by his loving family on Monday, October 27, 2025. Charismatic and accomplished, Ernest lived with curiosity, confidence, and unmistakable style. He was a gifted athlete, a keen intellect, a lifelong learner, and a man who genuinely delighted in people. Above all else, he was a deeply loved and devoted husband, father, grandfather, son, brother, uncle, and friend.

A Celebration of Life honoring Ernest will be held on Saturday, January 10, 2026, at McCullough Funeral Home, 417 S. Houston Lake Road, Warner Robins, Georgia. Visitation will take place from 1:00 – 2:00 p.m., followed by a Celebration of Life service in the chapel at 2:00 p.m. The family warmly invites guests to a reception immediately following the service at The Farmhouse at McCullough Funeral Home.

Born in Kingstree, South Carolina, Ernest was the eldest son of Ernest Roger’s Anderson, Sr. and Marie Johnson Anderson. The family later moved to Fort Valley, Georgia, where Ernest spent most of his formative years and where he made a lasting impression. A 1960 graduate of Fort Valley High School, Ernest was President of both his junior and senior classes, a member of the Key, Dramatic, and Latin Clubs, and an outstanding athlete, lettering in football, basketball, and golf. A natural communicator even then, he was also a member of the Debate team and participated in One Act plays.

Ernest continued his education at The University of Georgia in Athens, Georgia, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism degree from the prestigious Henry Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communications. There, he hone the presentation skills, leadership, and creativity that would define his career. He went on to earn a Master of Science in Advertising degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

His professional journey began at Leo Burnett advertising agency in Chicago, Illinois before he returned to Atlanta, Georgia as the Senior Vice President and



General Manager of McCann Erickson, then the largest advertising agency in the Southeast. A master communicator with a sharp creative eye, Ernest was instrumental in new business development and led major accounts including Coca-Cola, Chick-fil-a, Green Giant Foods, and Nestle. His career later took him to Washington D.C., and Greenville, South Carolina before he embraced entrepreneurship and founded Anderson Advertising in Atlanta, Georgia.

Giving back to his profession and Alma mater was a source of great pride. Ernest served on the Journalism Advisory Board of the University of Georgia’s Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication and was Vice Chairman of the Atlanta Advertising Council, where he received the Aid to Advertising Education Award from the American Advertising Federation. He was a member of Sigma Nu Fraternity, Sigma Delta Chi Journalism Fraternity, the American Association of Advertising Agencies, and the American Marketing Association. His appreciation for the arts was reflected in his service on the boards of both the Atlanta Ballet and the Atlanta Symphony.

Beyond his career, Ernest had a lifelong passion for golf. As a member of Cherokee Town and Country Club in Atlanta, Georgia, he forged enduring friendships that would take him across the country and around the world playing many golf courses and creating memories and camaraderie that he would treasure.

In later years, Ernest and his beloved wife Deena made their home in Byron, Georgia. Never one to sit still, he traded suits and golf shoes for athletic gear and embraced daily workouts at

the gym. One of his greatest joys was lifting weights alongside his grandson, Jackson during his visits. They had a bond built on encouragement, laughter and mutual admiration.

Family was Ernest’s heart. He cherished time spent at the beach with his daughter Laine and her family, discussing books with his son Ernest and lots of family gatherings with his parents, siblings, and extended family. He was genuinely interested in the lives of others. Conversations with him were never rushed; he listened, he engaged, and he made you feel seen and heard. He was endlessly interesting and we all loved talking with him.

Ernest is survived by his wife of 61 years, Deena Marie Anderson of Byron, Georgia; his daughter, Laine West, and her husband Jeff of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina; and his grandson, Jackson West of San Diego, California. He is also survived by his sisters, Ellen Whitmer and her husband George of Jacksonville, Florida and Louise Brockington and her husband, Sam of Athens, Georgia; his sister-in-law Nancy Wilson of Macon, Georgia and six nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his sons, Ernest Rogers Anderson III and Patrick Hartley Anderson; his parents, Ernest Rogers Anderson, Sr., and Marie Johnson Anderson; brother, William McNair Anderson; and brother-in-law, Emory Clyde Wilson, Jr.

Ernest’s life was indeed all in the presentation and it was unforgettable.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests a donation to RIF (Reading is Fundamental) or to your local library.

For friends unable to attend at this time, the service will be streamed live at <https://www.youtube.com/@McCulloughFuneralHome> via the McCullough Funeral Home’s YouTube page.

Go to www.mcculloughfh.com to sign the Online Registry for the family. McCullough Funeral Home and Crematory has the privilege of being entrusted with these arrangements.

City of Fort Valley, Georgia

Job Description

Title: Planning and Zoning / Business License Officer

Department: Planning & Community Development

Reports To: City Administrator

Position Summary

The Planning and Zoning / Business License Officer performs professional, administrative, and technical work related to land use, zoning, permitting, and business licensing for the City of Fort Valley. This position ensures compliance with the City’s zoning ordinances, land development regulations, and business license policies. The role includes processing, reviewing, and issuing zoning and business licenses, coordinating with other departments for permit approvals, and providing information and guidance to developers, business owners, and the public.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

- Administers and enforces the City’s zoning ordinances, land development regulations, and related codes.
- Reviews site plans, business license applications, and development proposals for compliance with local, state, and federal regulations.
- Processes and issues business and alcohol licenses, zoning verification letters, and occupancy permits.
- Maintains accurate records of zoning approvals, licenses issued, renewals, and payments in accordance with City recordkeeping and finance procedures.
- Coordinates interdepartmental license review and approval with Building Inspections, Fire, Police, and Finance departments before final issuance.
- Provides customer service and technical assistance to business owners, developers, and the public regarding zoning districts, use classifications, and permitting requirements.
- Prepares and presents staff reports, maps, and supporting materials to the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council as needed.
- Conducts field inspections and site visits to verify zoning compliance and investigate zoning-related complaints.
- Assists in updating and maintaining the City’s comprehensive plan, zoning map, and development data.
- Maintains up-to-date knowledge of municipal planning, zoning, and licensing regulations and best practices.
- Performs related duties as assigned.

Minimum Qualifications

- **Education:** Public Administration, Business Administration, or a related field; Bachelor’s degree preferred.
- **Experience:** Minimum of two (2) years of experience in planning, zoning, licensing, code enforcement, or related municipal work.
- **Licenses/Certifications:** Valid Georgia driver’s license required. Certification as a Zoning Administrator or Code Enforcement Officer preferred.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

- Knowledge of zoning principles, land-use planning, and Georgia municipal regulations.
- Knowledge of the City of Fort Valley’s business license and alcohol license procedures.
- Ability to interpret and apply zoning ordinances, maps, and plats.
- Skill in maintaining accurate records, preparing reports, and using GIS and permitting software.
- Strong communication, analytical, and interpersonal skills.
- Ability to work independently with minimal supervision and exercise sound judgment.
- Skill in establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with City officials, staff, and the public.

Physical Requirements

- Work is typically performed in an office environment, with some fieldwork and site inspections required.
- Must be able to lift up to 25 pounds occasionally and operate standard office equipment.
- Ability to drive to inspection sites and attend evening meetings as required.

Work Environment

- The work environment involves interaction with the public, contractors, and other agencies.
- Some evening or weekend hours may be required for meetings or inspections.

Please submit your resume or application to

dwoodson@fortvalleyga.org

Deadline to submit applications February 6, 2026

Work continues to address damage from severe weather Sunday

Service restored to 70,000 customers since beginning of Winter Storm Fern; Continued icy conditions, heavy rain, high winds and potential tornadoes expected today; Company encourages customers to remain weather aware, prepared for severe cold this week

Contributed

ATLANTA – Jan. 25, 2026 – Georgians continue to experience the effects of Winter Storm Fern with continued rain, icy conditions, high winds and potential tornadoes in parts of the state today. Since the beginning of the storm, Georgia Power has safely restored power to approximately 70,000 customers, thanks to the work of 10,000 personnel including Georgia Power, contract companies, and partner utilities.

These teams remain engaged and are supporting the company’s response effort as the weather clears and conditions are safe. Crews are navigating changing weather conditions in the field, with additional power outages occurring today due to continued severe weather associated with this storm.

Georgia Power reminds customers that dangerous conditions exist following a storm, and to always heed the advice of local, state, and federal emergency authorities in storm-affected areas.

After the Storm Safety Tips

- Watch for downed wires. Downed power lines may be hidden by debris or fallen trees.

- Take care if using a portable generator. Follow all manufacturers’ instructions, avoid using generators in enclosed spaces and be mindful of elec-

trical safety. Click here for more safety tips.

- Never touch any downed wire or attempt to remove tree branches from power lines – it can kill.

- Don’t step in standing water or saturated ground where downed lines may be present. They could be electrified.

- Avoid chain link fences. They may be electrified by a downed line out of sight and conduct electricity over great distances.

- Watch for Georgia Power crews working across the state. Follow the guidance of state officials and the Georgia Department of Transportation on current road conditions and travel guidance. In the days following Winter Storm Fern, move over lane for utility vehicles stopped on the side of the road – it’s the law in Georgia.

Following Winter Storm Fern, severe cold is expected to continue across the state this week with temperatures well below freezing multiple days in a row. The company encourages customers to continue to remain weather aware this week and review a variety of tips and resources available from Georgia Power to minimize the impact of the ongoing cold weather on power bills. Visit GeorgiaPower.com/Savefor more.

Tools to Stay Connected & Informed

- Outage Alerts – Customers subscribed to our free Georgia Power Outage Alert service will receive personalized notifications and updates via text message. Check that your contact number is up to date to receive the latest information.

- Outage & Storm Center – Available at GeorgiaPower.com/Storm, customers can visit this site to check their contact information is updated to receive Outage Alerts, report and check the status of outages, and access useful safety tips and information. Customers can also report and check the status of an outage 24 hours a day by contacting Georgia Power at 888-891-0938.

- Outage Map – Housed within the Outage & Storm Center, Georgia Power’s interactive Outage Map (GeorgiaPower.com/OutageMap) provides near real-time information, allowing users to see where outages are occurring across the state and track estimated restoration times.

- Georgia Power Mobile App – Download the Georgia Power mobile app for Apple and Android devices to access storm and outage information on the go.

- @GeorgiaPower on Facebook (facebook.com/GeorgiaPower) for storm tips, outage updates, customer service and more.

Legals

Legal Advertising Information

Legal advertisements are published each Wednesday in The Leader Tribune newspaper, the designated legal organ of Peach County and the City of Fort Valley, City of Byron.

For information concerning billing, please contact The Leader Tribune at (478)-825-2432. Notices cancelled after 12:00 Noon on Friday will be billed for insertion in that edition.

IN THE JUVENILE COURT OF PEACH COUNTY
STATE OF GEORGIA
IN THE INTEREST OF:
JUVENILE FILE #7453-J
A.G.-P., SEX F, AGE 14, DOB 6/17/2011, CASE #111-2025J-100
CHILD UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE
NOTICE OF SUMMONS

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN,
GLADIS PEREZ SANCHEZ (mother),
VIRGLIO GABRIEL VASQUEZ (putative father), UNKNOWN FATHER,
AND ANYONE ELSE CLAIMING TO HAVE A PARENTAL INTEREST IN SAID MINOR CHILD

You are notified that a Dependency Petition was filed against you in said court on January 6, 2026, an Order for Service by Publication was entered on 12/30/25.

YOU ARE COMMANDED AND REQUIRED TO BE AND APPEAR before Peach County Juvenile Court, held at Peach County Courthouse, Ft. Valley, Georgia on 3/10/26 at 9:00 o'clock a.m. Serve an answer on Petitioner's Attorney, James E. Patterson, P. O. Box 1006, Forsyth, Georgia 31029. You may obtain a copy of the petition by contacting Peach County Juvenile Court Clerk.

WITNESS the Honorable Judges of this court, this 14th day of January, 2026.
Whitney Nelson, CLERK, PEACH COUNTY PEACH COURT
1/28, 2/4, 2/11, 2/18, 2026
54410

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF PEACH COUNTY
STATE OF GEORGIA
CIVIL ACTION CASE NUMBER 26-V-0002
IN RE: THE NAME CHANGE OF CHETKIA Tirissa HARE, PETITIONER

NOTICE OF PETITION TO CHANGE NAME OF ADULT

Chetkia Tirissa Hare filed a petition in the Peach County Superior Court on January 2, 2026, to change the name from Chetkia Tirissa Hare to Chetkia Tirissa Hare. Any interested party has the right to appear in this case and file objections within 30 days after the petition was filed.

This January 2, 2026.
1/7, 1/14, 1/21, 1/28, 2026
3651

NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS
STATE OF GEORGIA
COUNTY OF PEACH
IN RE: ESTATE OF MALCOLM H. CONNOR JR.

All creditors of the Estate of Malcolm H. Connor, Jr., late of Peach County, are hereby notified to render their demands to the undersigned according to law, and all persons indebted to said estate are required to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This 16th day of January 2026
Peggy Marie Connor, Executor of the Will of Malcolm H. Connor, Jr.
1431 Clopine Lake Rd
Fort Valley, GA 31030

Robert T. Tuggle, III
Daniel, Lawson, Tuggle & Jerles, LLP
Post Office Box 89
Perry, Georgia 31069
1/21, 1/28, 2/4, 2/11, 2026
3655

NOTICE OF SALE UNDER POWER
STATE OF GEORGIA
PEACH COUNTY

WHEREAS, Augustus Gilmore, IV, as borrower(s), executed a SECURITY DEED to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as grantee, as Nominee for Primary Residential Mortgage, Inc., Lender which was dated 3/25/2010, and recorded on 4/8/2010, in Instrument No. , Deed Book 439, Page 160, securing the payment of a Note in the amount of \$177,959.00 in Peach County, Georgia Register of Deeds.

NOW, THEREFORE, notice is hereby given that the entire indebtedness has been declared due and payable as provided in said Security Deed by the Holder, and by virtue of the power of sale and authority vested in it, will on 3/3/2026 sell at public outcry to the highest bidder for cash During the legal hours of sale before the door of the courthouse of Peach County, Georgia of Peach, the following described property situated in Peach County, Georgia, to wit:

ALL THAT TRACT OR PARCEL OF LAND TYING AND BEING IN LAND LOT 45 OF THE 5TH DISTRICT, PEACH COUNTY, GEORGIA, BEING LOT 67 OF CUMBERLAND SHORES SUBDIVISION, SECTION NO. 3, PHASE NO. 1, AS PER PLAT THEREOF RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 26, PAGE 150, PEACH COUNTY, GEORGIA RECORDS, WHICH RECORDED PLAT IS INCORPORATED HEREIN BY REFERENCE

AND MADE A PART OF THIS DESCRIPTION.

Tax Parcel ID: 053B181
Being real property commonly known as 222 CUMBERLAND DRIVE, BYRON, GA 31008

The debt remaining in default, this sale will be made for the purpose of paying the debt and all expenses of

this sale including attorney's fees (notice of intent to collect attorney's fees having been given).

Said sale will be made subject to the following items which may affect the title to said property: All restrictive covenants, easements and rights-of-way appearing of record, if any; all zoning ordinances; matters which would be disclosed by an accurate survey or by an inspection of the property; all outstanding or unpaid bills and assessments for street improvements, curbing, garbage, water, sewage and public utilities which may be liens upon said property; and any outstanding taxes, assessments and other liens superior to the security deed being foreclosed hereby. To the best knowledge and belief of the undersigned, the above-described property is in the possession of the borrower and/or other persons with the consent and acquiescence of the borrower.

Except to the extent that the Holder may bind and obligate Mortgages to warrant title to the Property under the terms of the Security Deed, conveyance of the Property shall be made without any representations or warranties whatsoever, express or implied. All sales are "as is," "where is".

The entire purchase price is due and payable at the conclusion of the auction in the form of certified funds. Insufficient funds will not be accepted. Amounts received in excess of the winning bid will be refunded to the successful purchaser. This property is being sold with express reservation that the sale is subject to confirmation by lender or Substitute Trustee.

Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 44-14-162.2, the name, address and telephone number of the person or entity who shall have full authority to negotiate, amend, or modify all terms of the above-described mortgage is as follows:

Carrington Mortgage Services, LLC, 500 N. State College Blvd., Suites 1300 Orange, CA 92868, Telephone No.: 800-561-4567

The foregoing notwithstanding, nothing in O.C.G.A. § 44-14-162.2 shall be construed to require Carrington Mortgage Services, LLC to negotiate, amend, or modify the terms of the Security Deed described herein.

Carrington Mortgage Services, LLC as Attorney in Fact for Augustus Gilmore, IV
Attorney Contact:
Miller, George & Suggs, PLLC
3000 Langford Road, Building 100
Peachtree Corners, GA 30071
Phone: 404-793-1447
Fax: 404-738-1558
TS # 25-34106

THIS COMMUNICATION IS FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT. ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.

1/07/2026, 1/14/2026, 1/21/2026, 1/28/2026, 2/04/2026, 2/11/2026, 2/18/2026, 2/25/2026
3649 (25-34106)

NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS

All creditors of the estate of Estella Elaine Green late of Peach County, deceased, are hereby notified to render in their demands to the undersigned according to law, and all persons indebted to said estate are required to make immediate payment.

This 8th day of January, 2026
Name: Raphael Geberit Green
Title: Administrator
Address: Meyerson Law Firm, 120 Village Circle, Senoia, GA 30276
01/21/2026, 01/28/2026, 02/04/2026, 02/11/2026
3652 (119615)

NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS
STATE OF GEORGIA
COUNTY OF PEACH

All creditors of the estate of NANCY CAROLYN MILAM, deceased, late of Peach County, Georgia, are hereby notified to render their demands to the undersigned according to law, and all persons indebted to said Estate are required to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

Felicia Milam, Executor of the Estate of NANCY CAROLINE MILAM
56 Waterfront Drive
Fort Valley, GA 31030
Jordan Reab
WALKER, HULBERT, GRAY & MOORE, LLP
PO Box 1770
Perry, GA 31069
478-987-1415
1/7, 1/14, 1/21, 1/28, 2026
3650

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF PEACH COUNTY

STATE OF GEORGIA
ESTATE NO. 2026-ADM-7224
IN RE: ESTATE OF GLEN DEVEREUX, DECEASED
PETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION

NOTICE TO: ANY AND ALL INTERESTED PARTIES

and to whom it may concern: MILTON DEVEREUX has petitioned for MILTON DEVEREUX to be ap-

pointed Administrator(s) of the estate of CLEN DEVEREUX, deceased, of said County. (The Petitioner has also applied for waiver of bond and/or grant of certain powers contained in O.C.G.A. § 53-12-261.) All interested parties are hereby notified to show cause why said Petition should not be granted. All objections to the Petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections, and must be filed with the Court on or before FEBRUARY 18, 2026.

BE NOTIFIED FURTHER: All objections to the Petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections. All objections should be sworn to before a notary public or before a Probate Court Clerk, and filing fees must be tendered with your objections, unless you qualify to file as an indigent party. Contact Probate Court personnel for the required amount of filing fees. If any objections are filed, a hearing will be scheduled at a later date. If no objections are filed, the Petition may be granted without a hearing.

KIM WILSON, Judge of the Probate Court
By Katrina Corbin, Clerk of the Probate Court
205 West Church Street
Fort Valley, GA 31030
478-825-2313
1/28, 2/4, 2/11, 2/18, 2026
3662

GEORGIA, PEACH COUNTY
NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS

All creditors of the Estate of CINDY KAY STRICKLAND, deceased, of Peach County, Georgia, are hereby notified to render in their demands to the undersigned according to law, and all persons indebted to said Estate required to make immediate payment.

This 14th day of January, 2026.
John Walter Strickland, Executor c/o Rebecca C. Moody, Esq.
MOODY AND ASSOCIATES LAW FIRM, LLC
P.O. Box 422
Perry, GA 31069
478-988-0238
1/21, 1/28, 2/4, 2/11, 2026
3653

NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS

STATE OF GEORGIA
COUNTY OF PEACH
IN RE: ESTATE OF ROBERT L. BITTLE

All creditors of the Estate of Robert L. Bittle, deceased, late of Peach County, Georgia, are hereby notified to render their demands to the undersigned according to law, and all persons indebted to said estate are required to make immediate payment.

Sabrina M. Petersen is the Executrix of the Estate of Robert L. Bittle. Edwin S. Varner, Jr., Attorney at Law, 1719 Russell Pkwy., Bldg. 200, Warner Robins, GA 31088, (478)922-3010.
1/28, 2/4, 2/11, 2/18, 2026
3658

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF PEACH COUNTY

STATE OF GEORGIA
IN RE: ESTATE OF GARY A. COREY, DECEASED

ESTATE NO. 2024-ADM-7039
NOTICE FOR DISCHARGE FROM OFFICE AND ALL LIABILITY
IN RE: PETITION FOR DISCHARGE OF PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE

TO ANY AND ALL INTERESTED PARTIES: This is to notify you to file an objection, if there is any, to the above-referenced petition, in this Court on or before February 11, 2026.

BE NOTIFIED FURTHER: All objections to the petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections. All objections should be sworn to before a notary public or before a probate court clerk, and filing fees must be tendered with our objections, unless you qualify to file as an indigent party. Contact probate court personnel for the required amount of filing fees. If any objections are filed, a hearing will be scheduled at a later date. If no objections are filed, the petition may be granted without a hearing.

Kim Wilson, Judge of the Probate Court
BY: KATRINA CORBIN, Clerk of the Probate Court
P.O. BOX 327, Fort Valley, GA 31030
478-825-2313
1/28/2026
3660

NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS

STATE OF GEORGIA
COUNTY OF PEACH

All creditors of the Estate of Morris Hillsman, Sr., deceased, late of Peach County, are hereby notified to render in their demands to the undersigned according to law, and all persons indebted to said estate are required to make immediate payment to me.

This 20th day of January, 2026.
J. Enrique Morales, Esq.
Attorney to the Administrator of the Estate of Morris Hillsman, Sr., Deceased
Kerry B. Hillsman
253 Hidden Creek Circle
Lizella, GA 31052

1/28, 2/4, 2/11, 2/18, 2026
3656

NOTICE OF SALE UNDER POWER
GEORGIA, CRAWFORD COUNTY
AND PEACH COUNTY

Under and by virtue of the Power of Sale contained in a Security Deed given by Jason Moyer to Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. dated July 31, 2017, recorded in Deed Book 362, Page 257, Crawford County, Georgia Records, and recorded in Deed Book 569, Page 166, Peach County, Georgia Records, Peach County, Georgia Records, and as modified by that certain Loan Modification Agreement recorded in Deed Book 374, Page 572, Crawford County, Georgia Records, Peach County, Georgia Records, as last transferred to US Bank Trust Company National Association, not in its individual capacity, but solely as owner trustee for GS MORTGAGE-BACKED SECURITIES TRUST 2024-RPL3 by assignment recorded in Deed Book 757, Page 511, Crawford County, Georgia Records, and recorded in Deed Book 757, Page 757, conveying the after-described property to secure a Note in the original principal amount of FIFTY-SEVEN THOUSAND AND 0/100 DOLLARS (\$57,000.00), with interest thereon as set forth therein, there will be sold at public outcry to the highest bidder for cash before the courthouse door of Crawford County, Georgia, or at such place as may be lawfully designated as an alternative, within the legal hours of sale on the first Tuesday in February, 2026, the following described property: SEE EXHIBIT "A" ATTACHED HERETO AND MADE A PART HEREOF

The debt secured by said Security Deed has been and is hereby declared due because of, among other possible events of default, failure to pay the indebtedness as and when due and in the manner provided in the Note and Security Deed. The debt remaining in default, this sale will be made for the purpose of paying the same and all expenses of this sale, as provided in the Security Deed and by law, including attorney's fees (notice pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 13-1-11 having been given).

Said property will be sold subject to any outstanding ad valorem taxes (including taxes which are a lien, but not yet due and payable), the right of redemption of any taxing authority, any matters which might be disclosed by an accurate survey and inspection of the property, any assessments, liens, encumbrances, zoning ordinances, restrictions, covenants, and any matters of record including, but not limited to, those superior to the Security Deed first set out above. Said property will be sold on an "as-is" basis without any representation, warranty or recourse against the above-named or the undersigned.

US Bank Trust Company National Association, not in its individual capacity, but solely as owner trustee for GS MORTGAGE-BACKED SECURITIES TRUST 2024-RPL3 is the holder of the Security Deed to the property in accordance with OCGA § 44-14-162.2.

The entity that has full authority to negotiate, amend, and modify all terms of the mortgage with the debtor is: Shellpoint Mortgage Servicing, 75 Beattie Place, Suite 300, Greenville, SC 29601, (800) 365-7107.

Note, however, that such entity is not required by law to negotiate, amend or modify the terms of the loan.

To the best knowledge and belief of the undersigned, the party in possession of the property is Jason Moyer or a tenant or tenants and said property is more commonly known as 176 Tanglewood Rd, Fort Valley, GA 31030. Should a conflict arise between the property address and the legal description the legal description will control.

The sale will be conducted subject (1) to confirmation that the sale is not prohibited under the U.S. Bankruptcy Code and (2) to final confirmation and audit of the status of the loan with the holder of the security deed. US Bank Trust Company National Association, not in its individual capacity, but solely as owner trustee for GS MORTGAGE-BACKED SECURITIES TRUST 2024-RPL3 as Attorney in Fact for Jason Moyer
McCalla Raymer Leibert Pierce, LLP
1544 Old Alabama Rd
Roswell, GA 30076
www.foreclosurehotline.net
EXHIBIT "A"

All that tract or parcel of land lying and being in Land Lot 226 of the 6th Land District of Peach and Crawford Counties, Georgia, and being more particularly described as Tract 7, containing 4.26 acres, on that certain plat made for Peach Valley Plantation by Brent Cunningham & Company, Inc., G.R.L.S No. 2097, which plat is recorded in Plat Book 21, Page 154, Clerk's Office, Peach Superior Court, and Plat Book 13, Page 281, Clerk's Office, Crawford Superior Court. Located on said Lot is a 1998 Horton Manufactured Home as shown in Certificate of Permanent Location recorded in Deed Book 308, Page 716, Clerk's Office, Crawford Superior Court.

The above described property is known as 176 Tanglewood Road, Fort Valley, GA 31030.
MR / CA February 3, 2026
Our file no. 22-06486GA-F18
22-06486GA
01/07/2026, 01/14/2026, 01/21/2026, 01/28/2026
3641

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF PEACH COUNTY
STATE OF GEORGIA

IN RE: ESTATE OF MARY C. CLEVELAND, DECEASED

ESTATE NO. 2024-ADM-6955
NOTICE FOR LEAVE TO SELL PROPERTY IN THE ABOVE-REFERENCED ESTATE HAVING BEEN DULY FILED

TO ANY AND ALL INTERESTED PARTIES: This is to notify you to file an objection, if there is any, to the above-referenced petition, in this Court on or before February 11, 2026.

BE NOTIFIED FURTHER: All objections to the petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections. All objections should be sworn to before a notary public or before a probate court clerk, and filing fees must be tendered with our objections, unless you qualify to file as an indigent party. Contact probate court personnel for the required amount of filing fees. If any objections are filed, a hearing will be scheduled at a later date. If no objections are filed, the petition may be granted without a hearing.

KIM WILSON, Judge of the Probate Court
BY: KATRINA CORBIN, Clerk of the Probate Court
P. O. BOX 327, Fort Valley, GA 31030
478-825-2313
1/28, 2/4, 2/11, 2/18, 2026
3659

STATE OF GEORGIA
COUNTY OF PEACH
NOTICE OF SALE UNDER POWER

Because of a default under the terms of the Security Deed executed by Shameka L. Dugger to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as grantee, as nominee for LOANDEPOT.COM, LLC, its successors and assigns dated December 1, 2020, and recorded in Deed Book 635, Page 821, Peach County Records, said Security Deed having been last sold, assigned, transferred and conveyed to Nationstar Mortgage LLC, securing a Note in the original principal amount of \$154,050.00, the holder thereof pursuant to said Deed and Note thereby secured has declared the entire amount of said indebtedness due and payable and, pursuant to the power of sale contained in said Deed, will on the first Tuesday, March 3, 2026, during the legal hours of sale, before the Courthouse door in said County, sell at public outcry to the highest bidder for cash, the property described in said Deed, to-wit:

All that tract or parcel of land situate, lying and being in the City of Fort Valley, Peach County, Georgia, being more particularly described on that certain plat of survey of record in Plat Book 19, Page 249, Clerk's Office, Peach Superior Court. Said plat and the recorded copy thereof are incorporated by reference for all purposes.

Said property is known as 114 Knoxville Street, Fort Valley, GA 31030, together with all fixtures and personal property attached to and constituting a part of said property, if any.

Said property will be sold subject to any outstanding ad valorem taxes (including taxes which are a lien, whether or not now due and payable), the right of redemption of any taxing authority, any matters which might be disclosed by an accurate survey and inspection of the property, any assessments, liens, encumbrances, zoning ordinances, restrictions, covenants, and matters of record superior to the Security Deed first set out above.

The proceeds of said sale will be applied to the payment of said indebtedness and all expenses of said sale as provided in said Deed, and the balance, if any, will be distributed as provided by law.

The sale will be conducted subject (1) to confirmation that the sale is not prohibited under the U.S. Bankruptcy Code and (2) to final confirmation and audit of the status of the loan with the secured creditor.

The property is or may be in the possession of Shameka L. Dugger, successor in interest or tenant(s).
Nationstar Mortgage LLC as Attorney-in-Fact for Shameka L. Dugger
File no. 25-083625
LOGS LEGAL GROUP LLP*
Attorneys and Counselors at Law
1050 Crown Point Parkway, Suite 500
Atlanta, GA 30338
(770)220-2535
https://www.logs.com/
*THE LAW FIRM IS ACTING AS A DEBT COLLECTOR. ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.
01/28/2026, 02/04/2026, 02/11/2026, 02/18/2026, 02/25/2026
3661 (BCNS 270079)

ads is \$25 each. These ads run one time and typically come from the Peach County State Court or the Municipal Court of incorporated cities.

Juvenile Matters - This broad category can include notices such as adoption, custody, juvenile court actions and contemporary custody. These matters frequently run from two to four times, depending on the order. Some of these issues come from the Peach County Juvenile Court, others from the Peach County Probate Court.

Domestic Matters - These include notices for change of name and for divorce. When one of the parties cannot be located locally. Both of these items run four times.

Notice of Sale or Foreclosure Notice - These notices typically run the four Wednesdays prior to the first Tuesday of the month when the sales are held at the Peach County Courthouse in Fort Valley. The fee for these notices is \$15 per 100 words per insertion.

Publisher's Affidavit fee is \$10.

NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS
IN RE: ESTATE OF SHANTEEZ L. TOWNS

All creditors of the estate of Shanteez L. Towns, late of Peach County, deceased, are hereby notified to render in their demands to the undersigned according to law, and all persons indebted to law, and all persons indebted to said estate are required to make immediate payment this 23rd day of January 2026 to Jovon S. Towns, c/o Attorney: Tim J. Thompson, 1900B Northside Crossing, Macon, GA 31210, 478-471-9900.

1/28, 2/4, 2/11, 2/18, 2026
3665

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF PEACH COUNTY
STATE OF GEORGIA
CIVIL ACTION CASE NUMBER 25-V-0492

IN RE: THE NAME CHANGE OF JEREMY FORTE ROBINSON, PETITIONER.

NOTICE OF PETITION TO CHANGE NAME OF ADULT

Jeremy Forte Robinson filed a petition in the Peach County Superior Court on December 22, 2025 to change the name from Jeremy Forte Robinson or Jeremy Robinson Forte. Any interested party has the right to appear in this case and file objections within 30 days after the petition was filed.

December 22, 2025
1/7, 1/14, 1/21, 1/28, 2026
3647

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF PEACH COUNTY
STATE OF GEORGIA

IN RE: ESTATE OF KATHY W. SMALLWOOD, DECEASED

ESATE NO. 2025-PRO-7161
NOTICE (for discharge from office and al liability)

IN RE: PETITION FOR DISCHARGE OF PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE
TO: ANY AND ALL INTERESTED PARTIES and (all and singular the heirs of said decedent,) (the beneficiaries under the will,) and to whom it may concern:

This is to notify you to file an objection, if there is any, to the above-referenced petition, in this Court on or before February 11, 2026.

BE NOTIFIED FURTHER: All objections to the petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections. All objections should be sworn to before a notary public or before a probate court clerk, and filing fees must be tendered with your objections, unless you qualify to file as an indigent party. Contact probate court personnel for the required amount of filing fees. If any objections are filed a hearing will be scheduled at a later date. If no objections are filed, the petition may be granted without a hearing.

Kim Wilson, Judge of the Probate Court
By: Katrina Corbin, Clerk of the Probate Court
205 West Church Street, Fort Valley, GA 31030
478-825-2313
1/28/2026
3663

NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS
STATE OF GEORGIA
COUNTY OF PEACH

The Last Will and Testament of BESSIE CHRISTINE SANDERS NEWMAN having been Probated in Solemn Form and Letters Testamentary, having been issued to SHIRLEY STONE this is to cite all creditors of said estate to make their demands known to us and all debtors of said estate to make immediate payment to us.

This 5TH day of JANUARY, 2026.
SHIRLEY STONE, as Executor
C/O Robert J. Aromatorio
Collins & Aromatorio, P.C.
GA Bar No. 023708
P.O. Box 250
Byron, Georgia 31008
478-956-3071
1/21, 1/28, 2/4, 2/11, 2026
3654

NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS
STATE OF GEORGIA
PEACH COUNTY

IN RE: WILLIAM FREDRICK KELSAY

All creditors of the estate of William Fredrick Kelsay, late of PEACH COUNTY, deceased, are hereby notified to render in their demands to the undersigned according to law, and all persons indebted to said estate are required to make immediate payment.

THIS 31st day of December 2025
Angela C. Earls
Administrator for William Fredrick Kelsay
242 Eli Way Drive
Byron, GA 31008
1/7, 1/14, 1/21, 1/28, 2026
3648

AUCTION
PUBLIC SALE
NOTICE OF SALE. Notice is hereby given that the undersigned intends to

LEGALS

CONTINUED FROM 7A

sell the personal property described below to enforce a lien on said property pursuant to the Georgia Code Sections 10-4-210 to 10-4-215. The undersigned will sell at public sale by competitive bidding on **Wednesday, February 18, 2026 at 10:00am on-line at www.storage-treasures.com**, the property found in the following units: Unit G05A Christopher Postell Household Items
Unit C19 Dennis J. Sturm Household Items
Tenants have the right to redeem prior to sale.
PEACH MINI STORAGE
1/28, 2/4, 2026
3657

STATE OF GEORGIA COUNTY OF PEACH NOTICE OF SALE UNDER POWER

Pursuant to the power of sale contained in the Security Deed executed by DALROY RUPPERT to ARGENT MORTGAGE COMPANY, LLC in the original principal amount of \$90,142.00 dated April 16, 2004, and recorded in Deed Book 300, Page 823, Peach County records, said

Security Deed being last transferred to WELLS FARGO BANK, N.A., AS TRUSTEE, FOR PARK PLACE SECURITIES, INC. ASSET-BACKED SERIES 2004-WCW1 in Deed Book 756, Page 297, Peach County records, the undersigned will sell at public outcry to the highest bidder for cash, before the Courthouse door in said County, or at such other place as lawfully designated, within the legal hours of sale, on 2/3/2026, the property in said Security Deed and described as follows:

ALL THAT TRACT OR PARCEL OF LAND, SITUATE, LYING AND BEING IN LAND LOTS 141 AND 116, 9TH LAND DISTRICT, PEACH COUNTY, GEORGIA, BEING KNOWN AND DESIGNATED AS LOTS 29 AND 32, GREEN VALLEY ESTATES SUBDIVISION, ACCORDING TO A PLAT OF SURVEY PREPARED BY THOMAS W. FUTRAL, III, DATED MARCH 9, 1999, RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 21, PAGE 247-249, CLERK'S OFFICE PEACH SUPERIOR COURT. SAID PLAT AND THE RECORDED COPY THEREOF ARE INCORPORATED HEREIN BY REFERENCE FOR ALL PURPOSES.
TOGETHER WITH THAT CERTAIN 2003, SOUTHERN, MANUFAC-

TURING HOUSING UNIT WITH SERIAL NUMBER OF DSDAL38435A AND DSDAL38435B, WHICH WAS FORMERLY PERSONALTY BUT IS NOW PERMANENTLY ANNEXED AND AFFIXED TO THE ABOVE DESCRIBED LAND AS A PERMANENT IMPROVEMENT.

Said property being known as: 7980 HWY 96, FORT VALLEY, GA 31030

To the best of the undersigned's knowledge, the party or parties in possession of said property is/are DALROY RUPPERT or tenant(s).

The debt secured by said Security Deed has been and is hereby declared due and payable because of, among other possible events of default, failure to pay the indebtedness as provided for in the Note and said Security Deed. The debt remaining in default, this sale will be made for the purpose of paying the same and all expenses of sale, including attorney's fees (notice of intent to collect attorney's fees having been given).

Said property will be sold subject to the following: (1) any outstanding ad valorem taxes (including taxes which are a lien, whether or not yet due and payable); (2) the right of redemption of any taxing authority; (3) any matters which might be disclosed

by an accurate survey and inspection of the property; and (4) any assessments, liens, encumbrances, zoning ordinances, restrictions, covenants, and matters of record superior to the Security Deed first set out above.

Said sale will be conducted subject to the following: (1) confirmation that the sale is not prohibited under the U.S. Bankruptcy Code; and (2) final confirmation and audit of the status of the loan with the holder of the Security Deed.

The name, address, and telephone number of the individual or entity who has full authority to negotiate, amend, and modify all terms of the mortgage is as follows:

Select Portfolio Servicing, Inc.
3217 S. Decker Lake Drive
Salt Lake City, UT 84119
800-635-9698

Note that pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 44-14-162.2, the above individual or entity is not required by law to negotiate, amend, or modify the terms of the mortgage.

THIS LAW FIRM IS ACTING AS A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT. ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED MAY BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.

WELLS FARGO BANK, N.A., AS TRUSTEE, FOR PARK PLACE

SECURITIES, INC. ASSET-BACKED PASS-THROUGH CERTIFICATES, SERIES 2004-WCW1,
as Attorney-in-Fact for
DALROY RUPPERT
Robertson, Anschutz, Schneid, Crane & Partners, PLLC
13010 Morris Rd., Suite 450
Alpharetta, GA 30004
Phone: 470-321-7112
Firm File No. 25-334631 – LiG
01/07/2026, 01/14/2026, 01/21/2026,
01/28/2026
3644 (25-334631)

**IN THE PROBATE COURT OF PEACH COUNTY
STATE OF GEORGIA
ESTATE NO. 2025-ADM-7207
IN RE: ESTATE OF
ARLIS TURNER, DECEASED
PETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION
NOTICE**

TO: ANY AND ALL INTERESTED PARTIES

and to whom it may concern:
ALLISON R. HEARD has petitioned for ALLISON R. HEARD to be appointed Administrator(s) of the estate of ARLIS TURNER, deceased, of said County. (The Petitioner has also applied for waiver of bond and/or grant of certain powers contained in

O.C.G.A. § 53-12-261.) All interested parties are hereby notified to show cause why said Petition should not be granted. All objections to the Petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections, and must be filed with the Court on or before JANUARY 23, 2026.

BE NOTIFIED FURTHER: All objections to the Petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections. All objections should be sworn to before a notary public or before a Probate Court Clerk, and filing fees must be tendered with your objections, unless you qualify to file as an indigent party. Contact Probate Court personnel for the required amount of filing fees. If any objections are filed, a hearing will be scheduled at a later date. If no objections are filed, the Petition may be granted without a hearing.

KIM WILSON, Judge of the Probate Court
By atrina Corbin, Clerk of the Probate Court
205 West Church Street
Fort Valley, GA 31030
478-825-2313
1/7, 1/14, 1/21, 2/28, 2026
3646

Ocmulgee River Conservation District Now Accepting Entries For Poster Contest

By GACD

Perry, GA January 21, 2026—The Ocmulgee River Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), a local agency dedicated to the conservation and stewardship of the area's natural resources, is now accepting entries for their Poster Contest for students located within the District's service area. The service area includes Bibb, Crawford, Dooly, Houston, Macon, Peach, Pulaski, Taylor, and Wilcox counties. Education is a critical element of the conservation effort at the local, state and national levels. Educating young people about the benefits of conservation helps to ensure the next generation will be wise

stewards of America's natural resources.

The annual Poster Contest provides public, private and homeschooled students in Kindergarten through 5th grades the chance to have their art selected to advance on to the state contest. Each year, the poster's topic reflects the National Association of Conservation District's annual Stewardship theme and highlights the work of Conservation Districts to protect and enhance natural resources. This year's theme "Soil. Where it all Begins." celebrates the incredible power of soil to support life in all its forms. The deadline to enter the contest is March 2, 2026. There will be cash prizes given to winners. The District

winner will also advance on to the State contest.

The Ocmulgee River Soil and Water Conservation District is a unit of state government that directs natural resource management programs in Bibb, Crawford, Dooly, Houston, Macon, Peach, Pulaski, Taylor, and Wilcox counties. The Conservation District works with farmers, landowners, and with other units of government to educate and actively promote programs and practices that support the conservation, and use and development of soil, water, and related resources. More information can be found at www.gacd.us/ocmulgeeriver.

CONTEST RULES

- ANY MEDIUM CAN BE USED (PAINT, CRAYONS, COLORED PENCILS, STICKERS, ETC.).
- POSTERS CAN ONLY BE CREATED BY ONE INDIVIDUAL, NOT A GROUP OF INDIVIDUALS.
- THE 2026 STEWARDSHIP THEME "SOIL. WHERE IT ALL BEGINS." MUST BE INCLUDED ON THE FRONT SIDE OF EACH POSTER SUBMISSION TO BE ELIGIBLE.
- HOW TO SUBMIT: SEND A PICTURE OF THE POSTER VIA EMAIL.
- PLEASE SUBMIT STUDENT NAME, GRADE, TEACHER CONTACT, AND SCHOOL INFO WITH EACH POSTER SUBMISSION.
- IF YOU HAVE A WHOLE CLASS DOING THE CONTEST, PLEASE UPLOAD PICTURES INTO A GOOGLE DRIVE FOLDER AND SHARE IT.
- POSTERS CAN BE ANY SIZE FROM A 8.5X11 SHEET OF PAPER TO FULL SIZE POSTER.

CASH PRIZES WILL BE GIVEN FOR WINNING POSTER.

ELIGIBILITY

PUBLIC, PRIVATE, AND HOME-SCHOOLED STUDENTS IN KINDERGARTEN THROUGH 5TH GRADE IN THE FOLLOWING COUNTIES:
BIBB, CRAWFORD, DOOLY, HOUSTON, MACON, PEACH, PULASKI, TAYLOR, AND WILCOX

Soil.
Where it all Begins

EMAIL SUBMISSIONS TO LEANNE.CHAFIN@GACD.US
BY MARCH 2, 2026

Congressman Bishop Protects Health Care, Job Training, Education, National Security, Housing, & Community Development Programs In FY 2026 Funding Bill

By the office of U.S. Congressman Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.

WASHINGTON – Congressman Sanford D. Bishop, Jr. (D-GA02), a senior member of the U.S. House Appropriations Committee, supported the passage of H.R. 7148, a bipartisan bill which provides Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 funding for several federal departments, agencies and programs. As the final bill was negotiated, he helped block harmful policy provisions and funding cuts which would have decimated much needed investments in medical research into cures or treatments for cancer, diabetes, and Alzheimer's disease; public health at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta; child-care access for working Georgia families; highway and transit improvements; and affordable housing.

Congressman Bishop also was instrumental in the bipartisan effort to restore funding for the Job Corps program, which is one of the few national programs that specifically targets the 16 to 24-year-old population that is neither working or in school and provides a direct pathway into employment, including construction and man-

ufacturing industries, apprenticeships, higher education, or the military.

Last year, President Trump sought to eliminate the program in its entirety and close nearly 100 Job Corps campuses across the country, including the Turner Job Corps Center in Albany, Georgia. The final legislation, however, includes \$1.8 billion for the Job Corps program, which is the same funding level as FY 2025 and \$800 million more than the FY 2026 Republican House bill. The measure also includes statutory language to restrict the arbitrary closure of Job Corps campuses.

Congressman Bishop also secured more than \$6 million for projects in both rural and urban communities in Middle and Southwest Georgia that will create jobs, make housing more affordable, revitalize neighborhoods, and provide clean water.

"The funding that I have secured for Georgia's Second Congressional District will strengthen our communities and improve the quality of life for my constituents," said Congressman Bishop. "I am especially pleased that Democrats and Republicans were able to come together in a bipartisan fashion to reverse many of the

harmful cuts proposed by the Trump Administration. These funding bills should have been finalized last September. I am hopeful that, this year, Congress will put partisanship aside to enact policies that will reduce the high cost of healthcare, housing, groceries, utilities, and other everyday expenses hard-working families are facing."

Last year, President Trump and House Republicans proposed eliminating the following programs. Congressman Bishop as well as Democrats on the House and Senate Appropriations Committee successfully fought to restore them in H.R. 7148:

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult Job Training and Youth Job Training, which are designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with employees. WIOA Adult Job Training is funded at \$876 million and WIOA Youth Job Training is funded at \$948 million.
- Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), which helps older Americans get back into or remain active in the workforce. SCSEP is funded at \$395 million.

that is unequal or manipulative - Seems isolated from friends or family or is secretive about their social circle - Refrains from discussing their home life or family

As stated previously, trafficking victims represent all demographic groups in the United States, however, some populations are disproportionately targeted due to other social or systemic risk factors. Trafficking victims often represent one or more of the following groups:

- Children in unstable home situations, foster care, or the juvenile justice system
- Individuals experiencing homelessness, unemployment, or poverty
- LGBTQ+ youth facing family rejection or social isolation
- People with disabilities or mental health problems
- Individuals with a history of abuse or neglect, especially those with high ACE scores
- Survivors of domestic violence or sexual assault
- Immigrants or undocumented individuals with limited legal protections

limited capacity to make their own choices. They may promise love, protection, employment, housing, or opportunity, only to later use those promises as tools for manipulation." The Safe-house Project states.

There are two vastly important things to do if you see someone that you think is being trafficked: document what you see and report your concerns. Take note of the person's appearance, behavior, and any relevant details, such as license plate numbers, addresses, or interactions. Make sure to write down which red flags you noticed, as well as names and the time and date of

- Healthy Start, which is a program in over 100 communities throughout the United States to reduce infant and maternal mortality. Healthy Start is funded at \$145 million.
- Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants, which are federal funds distributed by the U.S. Department of Education to states to improve teacher, principal, and leader quality, ultimately boosting student achievement, especially for low-income and minority students. The program is funded at \$2.2 billion.
- Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), which provides annual funding to states, cities, and counties for community development, focusing on low- to moderate-income individuals by supporting housing, public services, infrastructure, and economic development to create viable communities. CDBG is funded at \$3.3 billion.
- HOME Investment Partnerships, which provides grants to state and local governments to create affordable housing for low-income households. The program is funded at \$1.25 billion.
- Lead Hazard Reduction Grant Program, which helps communities reduce lead and other housing related health hazards in homes built before 1978. The program is funded at \$156 million.
- Some of the funding highlights

- in the bill include:
- \$400 million increase for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to develop cures and treatments for diseases.
- \$170 million increase for Child Care and Head Start, helping provide American families access to early childhood education and childcare.
- \$66.7 billion for rental assistance, which reverses President Trump's efforts to slash funding for these programs by 50%.
- \$366 million increase for the Homeless Assistance Grant program to combat homelessness.
- \$1.6 billion for the Federal Aviation Administration to hire more than 2,500 air traffic controllers and bolster aviation safety.
- \$1.7 billion increase for medical research funded by the United States Department of Defense.
- Fully funds the 3.8% pay raise for military personnel.
- The specific funding which Congressman Bishop secured for Georgia's Second Congressional District includes:
- \$1,700,000 to the City of Americus for the Downtown Americus Streetscape Project, which aims to revitalize the community by enhancing the aesthetic appeal and functionality of the central business district. The funding will implement vital improvements such as upgraded sidewalks for accessibility, additional lighting for safety, and green spaces.

- \$1,129,036 to the City of Albany for neighborhood revitalization to restore historic homes and build new affordable workforce housing surrounding Phoebe Putney hospital to increase housing accessibility, promote social equity, stimulate economic growth, and attract the workforce to the medical and downtown community.
- \$1,000,000 to Macon County to construct a community building to house a gymnasium and athletic facility that will also serve as a county-wide disaster relief shelter
- \$1,000,000 to the City of Whigham to build a municipal wastewater treatment plant to serve residents and businesses.
- \$1,000,000 to Crawford County for the construction of a Youth Center, which will include a gymnasium and space to support a variety of recreational and extracurricular activities.
- \$302,000 to the City of Plains for the renovation of the exteriors of the public buildings for a one-mile stretch of SR-280, including paving and lighting of the parking lot for the recently constructed multipurpose community center.

Following House passage today by a 341 to 88 vote, the legislation moves to the United States Senate for its consideration.

TRAFFICKING

CONTINUED FROM 2A

identification documents.

- Is always accompanied by someone who speaks for them or appears controlling.
- Work & School Red Flags:
 - Works long hours with no breaks or days off
 - Cannot leave their workplace or living situation without permission
 - Suddenly stops attending school or starts missing activities
 - Has expensive belongings they cannot afford

- Expresses fear, confusion, or shame about where they live or work
- Relationship Red Flags:
 - Refers to an older boyfriend, boss, or friend who is controlling about their time and social contact
 - Talks about owing someone money or needing to meet a quota
 - Expresses fear of disappointing or angering someone in their life
 - Appears to be in a relationship

concerning events. Even if you aren't certain that what you're seeing is human trafficking, you can still make a report. It could save someone's life.

The National Human Trafficking Hotline can be reached by phone at 1-888-373-7888. You can reach the Hotline 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in more than 200 languages. All calls are confidential and answered live by highly trained Anti-Trafficking Hotline Advocates.

Their website, <http://humantraffickinghotline.org>, also has a live chat feature, a way to submit an online tip, and email at help@humantraffickinghotline.org.



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Place Your Classified Ad By
Calling Us At 478-825-2432
Or Fax: 478-825-4130

Deadline For Classifieds:
The Leader Tribune
- Friday by 5pm
The Citizen Georgian
- Friday by 5pm
The Vienna News Observer
- Friday by 5pm

Reaching Over 36,000 Readers in Peach, Macon and Dooly Counties

FOR RENT

FOR RENT

Peach Place Apartments
201 Allred Rd, Byron, GA 31008
(478) 654-6096
TTY Relay #711

Leasing Office Hours:
Monday - Friday 9:00AM until 4:00PM

Housing for older persons requiring that all members of the household be age 18 or older with the tenant or co-tenant aged 55 or older.

1 Br/1 Bth and 2 Br/2 Bth Ground Floor Units
Handicap Accessible Units / Reasonable Accommodations

Unit Amenities Include

Garden ground level units, vinyl & carpet, W&D connections, stove, refrigerator, dishwasher, garbage disposal, walk in showers, lawncare and garbage provided.

Community Amenities Include

Community garden, grill/picnic area, laundry room and fitness center on site.



This institution is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.



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fax 478-956-2389



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104 Anderson Ave
Fort Valley, GA 31030

Alfredia J. Walker, Agent
Peach Realty
112 Commercial Hgts, Fort Valley, Ga 31030
478-318-4970
Email: alfrediawalker@gmail.com
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The Agent You Can Depend On!



RUUD Bradshaw's Heating & Air

WE'VE BEEN IN BUSINESS FOR 30 YEARS AND STILL GOING STRONG. *Jonathan Quick*

Office (478)825-0068 Cell (478)951-4763
401 Green Street Fort Valley, GA

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Call today to place your business in the Call-A-Pro Directory...
Make your ad dollars count.
(478) 825-2432

MUST BOOK BY 3/31

Grand Alaskan Cruise & Tour
12 DAYS INSIDE CABIN STARTING AT \$3,549 \$3,299*

BASED ON JUL 8, 2026 DEPARTURE

- Marvel at Alaska's natural beauty in Denali National Park
- Visit Alaska's the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center
- Cruise Glacier Bay and Wrangell St. Elias National Park
- Travel through the legendary Inside Passage

CALL US: 1-855-548-2623

*Per person based on double occupancy & includes tax service/gov't fees. Ask your Travel Consultant for terms & conditions. Add-on airfare with transfers available for most major gateways.

BIG WIRELESS COVERAGE, WITHOUT BIG WIRELESS COST.

Plans start at just \$20/month.

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833-446-1847 **Consumer Cellular**

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Place your ad in The Leader Tribune
478-825-2432

The Classifieds RIGHT ON THE MONEY!
Sell your unwanted items for fast cash with the Classifieds.

PLACE YOUR AD TODAY
478-825-2432
office located at 109 Anderson Ave., Fort Valley, GA 31030

Help Wanted?
Place your ad in The Leader Tribune Classified section.
478-825-2432

Georgia LOCAL MATTERS STATEWIDE CLASSIFIEDS

Publish your classified ad in more than 60 Georgia newspapers for only \$350.

Call Georgia Newspaper Service: 770-454-6776



We don't knowingly accept advertisements that discriminate, or intend to discriminate, on any illegal basis. Nor do we knowingly accept employment advertisements that are not bona-fide job offers. All real estate advertisements are subject to the fair housing act and we do not accept advertising that is in violation of the law. The law prohibits discrimination based on color, religion, sex, national origin, handicap or familial status.

STATEWIDE CLASSIFIEDS FOR THE WEEK 1/25/26

CELLULAR
Consumer Cellular - the same reliable, nationwide coverage as the largest carriers. No long-term contract, no hidden fees and activation is free. All plans feature unlimited talk and text, starting at just \$20/month. For more information, call 1-833-446-1847

HEALTH CARE
Don't let the stairs limit your mobility! Discover the ideal solution for anyone who struggles on the stairs, is concerned about a fall or wants to regain access to their entire home. Call AmeriGlide today! 1-877-871-3210

ATTENTION OXYGEN THERAPY USERS! Discover Oxygen Therapy That Moves with You with Inogen Portable Oxygen Concentrators. FREE information kit. Call 1-833-661-9339

Stroke and Cardiovascular disease are leading causes of death, according to the American Heart Association. Screenings can provide peace of mind or early detection! Contact Life Line Screening to schedule your screening. Special offer - 5 screenings for just \$149. Call 1-855-391-2065

HOME IMPROVEMENT
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Trojans Fall Short in Tight Contest Against Dougherty High

By: Chris McKenzie
Sports Reporter

The Peach County Trojans put together a strong effort but came up just short Saturday night, falling to Dougherty High by a score of 72-67 in a hard-fought boys basketball matchup.

Peach County battled toe-to-toe with Dougherty throughout the evening, matching the visitors' intensity on both ends of the floor. The Trojans showed resilience after falling behind early, using strong defensive pressure and timely scoring to stay within striking distance heading into the final quarter.



Down the stretch, Peach County continued to fight, cutting the deficit to just a few possessions in the closing minutes. Despite creating quality looks

and forcing key turnovers, the Trojans were unable to complete the comeback as Dougherty capitalized at the free-throw line late to secure the win.

With the loss, Peach County moves to 8-13 on the season. While the record may not reflect it, the Trojans' competitive play and continued growth were evident, especially against a tough Dougherty squad.

Peach County will look to bounce back in its next outing as the Trojans continue to build momentum and prepare for the remainder of the season.

Lady Wildcats Fall to Miles College, 92-65

By: Chris McKenzie
Sports Reporter

The Fort Valley State University women's basketball team came up short on the road Saturday, falling to Miles College by a final score of 92-65 despite a strong individual performance and a competitive effort over the final three quarters.

The Lady Wildcats struggled out of the gate, managing just three field goals in the opening quarter as Miles College jumped out to an early advantage. Fort Valley State shot 3-of-19 from the floor in the first 10 minutes and trailed by double digits heading into the second quarter.

FVSU found a better rhythm offensively in the second period, shooting 50 percent from the field and trimming into the deficit. Kimora Wade helped spark the run, attacking the basket and getting to the free-

throw line as the Lady Wildcats showed improved ball movement and energy. However, Miles maintained control going into halftime.

Wade turned in a standout performance for Fort Valley State, leading all scorers with 26 points on an efficient 10-of-13 shooting from the field. She added three rebounds, four assists, and a block while consistently putting pressure on the Miles defense. Marley Bell also provided a strong presence off the bench, recording nine points and a team-high 12 rebounds to go along with two steals.

Aaniyah Allen filled up the stat sheet with nine points, nine assists, and four rebounds, while Grace East contributed eight points and four rebounds. India McIntosh battled inside, pulling down 10 rebounds to anchor the Lady Wildcats on

the glass.

Fort Valley State showed resilience in the fourth quarter, shooting nearly 59 percent from the field and knocking down three three-pointers, but the early deficit proved too much to overcome. The Lady Wildcats finished the game with 34 points in the paint, 19 fast-break points, and held a 48-30 rebounding advantage, including 18 offensive boards that led to 12 second-chance points.

Despite the loss, the Lady Wildcats displayed fight and balance, with contributions from both the starting lineup and the bench. Fort Valley State will look to build on its improved shooting and rebounding effort as the team continues conference play and works to turn strong individual performances into team success.

Wildcats Fall Just Short in 84-81 Loss to Miles College

By: Chris McKenzie
Sports Reporter

The Fort Valley State University men's basketball team battled to the final horn but came up just short Monday night, falling 84-81 to Miles College in a tightly contested matchup. Despite the narrow defeat, the Wildcats showed resilience throughout, trading leads and answering runs in a game that featured six ties and six lead changes.

Fort Valley State (8-8) struggled to find an early rhythm offensively, shooting just 27.6 percent from the field in the first half. However, the Wildcats stayed within striking distance thanks to strong free-throw shooting, converting

14-of-15 attempts before the break. A second-half surge saw FVSU shoot over 46 percent from the floor, but Miles was able to make key plays down the stretch to secure the three-point win.

Aidan Lambert led the Wildcats with a strong all-around performance, finishing with 18 points and a team-high 10 rebounds for a double-double. Danny Delgado III added 17 points, knocking down three three-pointers, while Derek Delgado Jr. chipped in 12 points and four assists. Off the bench, Meka Nnaji provided a spark with 12 points, six rebounds, and four blocks, giving FVSU a presence on both ends of the floor.

The Wildcats were effective at the free-throw line, shooting an impressive 90.5 percent (19-of-21) for the game, and held a 38-22 rebounding advantage. Fort Valley State also generated 17 second-chance points and 19 points from the bench, keeping the pressure on Miles throughout the contest.

In the end, timely baskets and defensive stops by Miles proved to be the difference, as Fort Valley State's late comeback attempt fell just short.

The Wildcats will look to bounce back and build on the positives from the hard-fought loss as they continue through the heart of their schedule, now sitting at an even 8-8 on the season.

AFA Ambassador Program Selects 41 Student Leaders: Connecting Students to the Future of Agriculture

By Agriculture Future of America

Kansas City, MO — December 8, 2025 — The Agriculture Future of America (AFA) Ambassador Program equips ambitious students to shape the future of the agriculture industry. This year, 41 student leaders representing campuses nationwide were selected to serve as a bridge between AFA and the next generation of agricultural professionals.

"As an AFA ambassador, I'll become even more engaged on campus and deepen my sense of community. This role will strengthen my communication and leadership skills while allowing me to promote student engagement and success," said Aja McNair.

As Ambassadors, students work with AFA to set goals and get personalized coaching to develop creative outreach strategies to achieve these goals. Designed for student leaders who believe in the power of connection, the AFA Ambassador Program empowers real-world leadership, marketing mindsets and industry engagement.

For more on the responsibilities of AFA Ambassadors and to view the full team, visit <https://www.agfuture.org/news/meet-afa-ambassadors>



Aja McNair

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AFA Ambassadors serve as a direct bridge between campuses and the agricultural industry. Media partners are encouraged

to engage with these students for interviews, local coverage and perspectives shaping the next generation of ag leaders.



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