

Happy New Year Peach County!

We're
Ringing In
2026!

The Leader Tribune

Peach County's Newspaper

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Items Stolen from the Battle of Byron Christmas Display

By Zoe Hammond
News Editor

BYRON, Ga. – Multiple items were stolen from the Battle of Byron's Christmas display in Jailhouse Park, according to a Facebook post.

According to a post by Austin L. Simar, the Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of the Battle of Byron Festival, multiple items, including lights, extension cords, metal stakes, and a ladder, were taken from the Christmas displays.

Simar had gone back out to Jailhouse Park to continue work on repairing and setting back up several of the Christmas display buildings that had fallen due to recent weather. While there, Simar took note of the absence of numerous items.

"While we understand that this holiday season can be difficult for many, theft is not something we condone in any way, shape, or form. But with that being said, I hope and pray that whoever took those things needed them more than we did!" Simar wrote.

"We strive every day to do good things for our community, and the Christmas displays are one of the many ways we try to bring joy to our town during the holiday season. Incidents like this make it difficult to continue providing these experiences when items are damaged or taken."

Simar asked that if anyone has any information regarding the theft, they reach out to the board or the Byron Police.

Simar ended the post by wishing the community a happy and safe holiday season.

A Look Back Through 2025, Future Plans for 2026 with Peach Superintendent Dr. Davis

By Zoe Hammond
News Editor

FORT VALLEY, Ga. – As 2025 comes to an end, many take the time to reflect on the good and the bad of the previous year. Peach County School's new Superintendent, Dr. Jesse Davis, sat down with The Leader Tribune to discuss the school district's accomplishments and what students, families, teachers, and staff can expect in 2026.

When looking back through the year, Davis stated that one of the key accomplishments for the school district was receiving the highest rating during the accreditation review. This accomplishment highlights the dedication and commitment of the teachers, staff, students, and



Photo Contributed
Dr. Davis

families within the school district.

"One of the most meaningful accomplishments this year was our successful accreditation

**FUTURE PLANS
CONTINUED PG 3A**

Year End Review: A Recap of Peach County

By Zoe Hammond
News Editor

JANUARY
January started on a solemn note with former president Jimmy Carter's motorcade procession traveling through Peach County on Jan. 4, with the procession heading to The Carter Center. Peach County's new Sheriff, Robert 'Buck' Shannon, took the time to speak with The Leader Tribune about his goals for supporting the community as well as his learning about the ins-and-outs of being sheriff.

Later in the month the Fort Valley Downtown Development Authority began its initial project with the University of Georgia's Connected Resilient Communities (CRC) program. From Jan. 17 through Jan. 19, numerous students from the UGA College of Environment and Design were present to discuss downtown improvements. One of the most surprising events of January 2025 was the 2.5 to 4 inches of snow that fell on Jan. 21 & 22!

FEBRUARY
February saw Masee Lane Gardens celebrate the 2025 Festival of Camellias, as well as the 80th Anniversary of the American Camellia Society, for the entire month. Throughout February, Masee Lane Gardens hosted various events including guided tours, plant sales, tea time, educational presentations, and workshops.

February also had a somber note as the Magnolia Garden



Photo Zoe Hammond

Former President Jimmy Carter's funeral hearse as it passes through Peach County.

Club met at the South Peach Park Arboretum to recognize and honor three late members of the Peach County community by planting trees in their memory on Arbor Day. Those three being recognized were Peach County Long-time Tax Commissioner W.L. Brown and two members of the Magnolia Garden Club, Laura Webb Byrd and Billie S. Patterson.

MARCH
March saw the continuation of the Fort Valley Downtown Development and members of the University of Georgia Archway Program work towards improving the Fort Valley Downtown area. During a DDA meeting, the Archway Partnership Director Michelle Elliot presented her students' mini charrette as well as provided awards to local members of the community.

Towards the end of March, the Peach County Health Depart-

ment celebrated their annual Spring Into Good Health event; it was an opportunity for the citizens of Peach County to participate in health screenings and learn more about their health.

APRIL
In April, the City of Byron's Historic Train Depot Museum opened to the public. It gave people an opportunity to discover the rich history of Byron, with numerous artifacts and photographs of the depot and the city's history.

Later in April, the City of Fort Valley worked to combat bullying and encourage respect and positivity in youth, by holding an Anti-Bullying Rally at Festival Park. The event was a collaborative effort between the city, the Fort Valley Police Department, Fort Valley State University, and the Reclaiming Ground

**YEAR END REVIEW
CONTINUED PG 6A**

Hunt Elementary Earned a Closing The Gaps Score of 100 for the 2nd consecutive year

"Our progress came from **being intentional** – using data to guide instruction, strengthening collaboration, and continuously refining our strategies to support students."

– Hunt Elementary Principal Dr. Keysha King



By Georgia Department of Education

Hunt Elementary School in Peach County made sustained progress by strengthening instructional systems, using data with intention, and maintaining a clear focus on continuous improvement.

Through collaborative planning, targeted small-group instruction during PRIDE Time, co-teaching and ESOL PLCs, and consistent feedback from instructional walkthroughs, teachers refined Tier I instruction to better meet student needs. Weekly Continuous Improvement Team meetings and ongoing coaching supported implementation an Hunt Elementary School in Peach County made sustained progress by strengthening instructional systems, using data with intention, and maintaining a clear focus on continuous improvement.

Through collaborative planning, targeted small-group instruction during PRIDE Time, co-teaching and ESOL PLCs, and consistent feedback from instructional walkthroughs, teachers refined Tier I instruction to better meet student needs. Weekly Continuous Improvement Team meetings and ongoing coaching supported implementation and momentum.

As a result of these intentional efforts, Hunt Elementary earned a Closing the Gaps score of 100 for the second consecutive year—a reflection of strong systems and a collaborative school culture.

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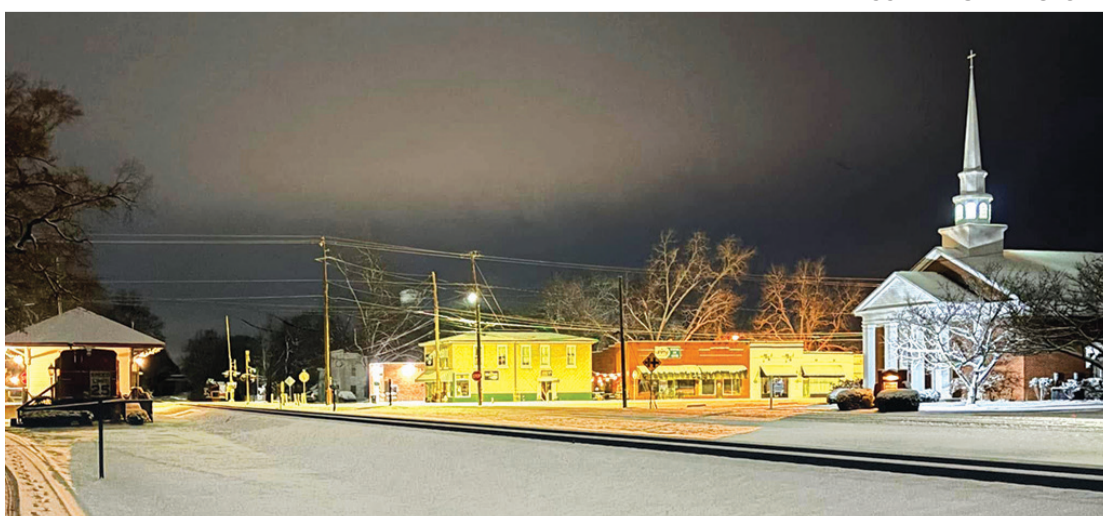


Photo by City of Byron/FB

City of Byron covered in snow in early 2025.



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Christmas Wonderland in the Valley Brings Holiday Joy to 46 local Children

Contributed

In the true spirit of giving, Pride Construction hosted a heartwarming Christmas shopping event that brought smiles, gratitude, and holiday cheer to dozens of families from the Fort Valley community.

On Saturday, December 20, 2025, a total of 46 children were blessed with a Christmas shopping spree, giving children, ages 2-12, the opportunity to select gifts for the holiday season. The event, known as Christmas Wonderland in the Valley exemplified community partnership, generosity, and the power of collective compassion.

The shopping experience took place at the Perry Walmart

Center, whose staff helped create a pleasant, organized, and cooperative environment that ensured the children felt welcomed and celebrated. New Bethel Christian Center volunteers and supporters worked together making the experience both joyful and memorable. This serves as a powerful reminder of the impact kindness and generosity can have during the holiday season.

Christmas Wonderland in the Valley stands as a shining example of what can be accomplished when faith, business, and community unite for a common purpose. Pride Construction, organizers, volunteers desire for this event to continue to grow



Photo Contributed
Renaya Pride and Tetse Bryant.

in years to come, spreading hope, joy, and Christmas cheer throughout the Fort Valley area.

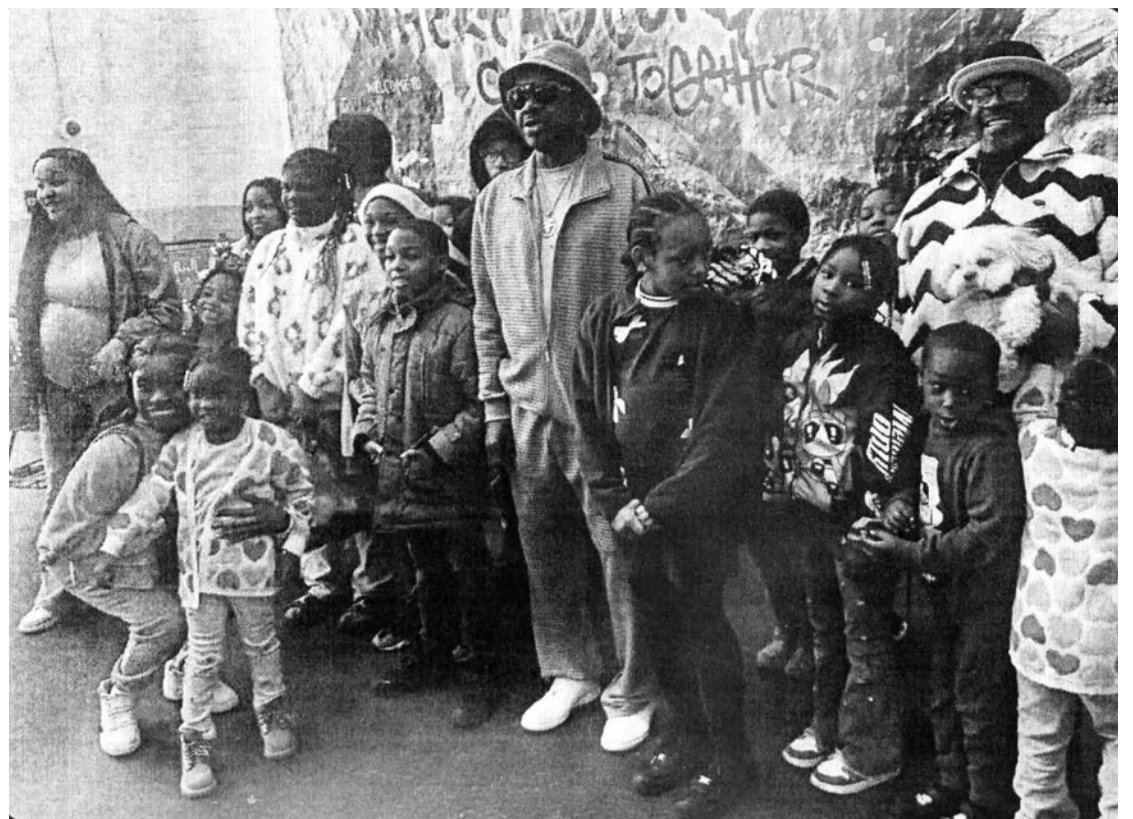


Photo Contributed
Pictured left Ronald Pride, Pastor Frankie Bryant, Supporters and Children.

2025 Department Tree Decorating Contest Winners



MOST CREATIVE



CROWD FAVORITE



MOST TRADITIONAL

By Peach County Government

The winners of the Peach County Government's 2025 Department Tree Decorating Contest are:

Most Creative: Public Works/Buildings Department

Most Traditional: Tax Assessor's Office

Crowd Favorite: Parks & Recreation Department
The community voted on their favorite trees posted on the Peach County Government's facebook page. Winners were selected by noon on Tuesday, December 23.

Red Cross Reflects on a Year of Service and Hope Honoring the resilience of families and the dedication of volunteers across the Central Midwest Georgia Chapter

By American Red Cross

ATLANTA (Dec. 23, 2025) — Throughout the past year, the American Red Cross of Central Midwest Georgia stood alongside families impacted by disasters, providing critical support during some of their most challenging moments. From responding to home fires to offering emergency relief and recovery assistance, Red Cross volunteers worked tirelessly to help families find stability, comfort and hope.

In 2025, the Red Cross of Central Midwest Georgia responded to nearly 345 disasters, more than 300 of them home fires. During this time, volunteers assisted over 1,370 people.

The need for this support shows no sign of slowing down. In the U.S., Red Cross home fire responses spike nearly 20% during the holidays, when families face increased fire risks such as cooking and heating. Just in Georgia, about 2,100 people rely on the Red Cross after home fires in a typical November and December.

"Every number represents a family whose life was turned upside down," said Holly Long, Executive Director of the Red Cross Central Midwest Georgia Chapter. "Whether it's a devastating home fire or another disaster, our mission is to provide comfort, care and hope when people need it most. We are deeply grateful to our volun-

teers and community partners who make this lifesaving work possible."

The Red Cross relies on the generosity of donors and the dedication of volunteers to continue providing disaster relief. Community support ensures the organization can respond around the clock when emergencies strike.

To learn more about how the Red Cross helps communities across Georgia or to support its mission, visit [redcross.org](https://www.redcross.org). For stories about how people from Georgia helped in 2025 go to <https://www.redcross.org/local/georgia/ways-to-donate/local-giving.html>

Practicing Mental Wellness

By Zoe Hammond
News Editor

With the New Year comes a slew of New Year's Resolutions and plans on changes to make to improve oneself. One of these plans should include maintaining your mental wellness.

January is Mental Wellness Month. Mental wellness refers to the time and effort one puts into making sure their mental health needs are being met and maintained. This does not mean they will eliminate their mental health disorder, but instead will do what they need to, to ensure a happy and healthy life.

While related to one another, mental health and mental wellness are not interchangeable terms. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) describes mental health as "our emotional, psychological and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel and act. It also determines how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices." Whereas the Global Wellness Institute defines mental wellness as "an internal resource that helps us think, feel, connect and function; it is an active process that helps us to build resilience, grow and flourish."

The Mental Health Center lists some ways to better practice mental wellness including setting mental health goals and the steps to help you achieve them; volunteering or giving back to the community; meeting with a

mental health therapist to learn more about yourself; attending a peer support group; practicing self-care, such as mindfulness, stress management, quality sleep; engage in healthy relationships at work, home, school, and socially; and avoid mental exhaustion.

One major aspect of mental wellness is keeping healthy habits a priority. Physical health is interconnected with both mental and emotional health. Taking care of one's body is a good step to keeping a healthy mind and emotionally balanced. Some healthy habits include having a balanced diet, getting enough sleep, exercising, managing stress, and seeing a doctor.

This is not to say that having a good grasp of mental wellness will cure any mental illness. That is simply not how it works. Keeping healthy habits makes a mental illness more manageable.

The American Psychiatric Association defines mental illness as a diagnosable medical condition or disorder that causes changes in how a person thinks, feels, and acts. When left untreated, mental illness negatively impacts mental health and your ability to complete daily tasks.

Common mental illnesses include major depressive disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, bipolar disorder, eating disorders, and many more. There are more than 200 types of mental

illnesses. A mental illness is a medical condition. Having a mental illness should not make one feel any shame or guilt, it does not make anyone less. If possible, seek treatment from qualified professionals like you would for any diagnosable illness.

The CDC states that mental illnesses are one of the most common health conditions in the United States. More than 1 in 5 adults live with a mental illness and around 1 in 25 adults live with a serious mental illness, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or major depression. Over 1 in 5 youth (13 to 18 years old) either currently or at some point in their life, have had a seriously debilitating mental illness.

For those who wish to learn more and better understand mental illnesses, you can find more information at <https://www.mhanational.org/> or <https://www.nami.org/>.

It is okay to ask for help. If you or a loved one need assistance, please reach out to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255 for English or 1-888-628-9454 para Español. Mental Health America also provides a Crisis Text Line which can be reached by texting MHA to 741741. You are not alone, there are people who can help.

PUBLIC HEARING
PEACH COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
6:30 P.M., TUESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2026

The Peach County Board of Commissioners will hold a Public Hearing on Tuesday, January 13, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. in the public meeting room of the Peach County Board of Commissioners Office, located at 213 Persons Street, Fort Valley, Georgia 31030.

The purpose of the hearing is to notify the public and receive comments regarding an application for a liquor license submitted by Anaya Anvi, LLC. The business is proposed to be located at 205 South Camellia Boulevard, Fort Valley, Georgia 31030.



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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

Bellamy, Michael Kevin, 51, Beuna Vista, GA: Illegal Possession Of Controlled Substance, Seat Belt Violation

Creech, Victoria Nicole, 44, Macon, GA: Giving False Name, Address, Or Birthdate To Law Enforcement Officer, Theft By Taking - Misdemeanor, Theft By Taking - Misdemeanor, Fail To Rpt Striking Fixed Object

Martin, Jaylen Lamont, 23, Atlanta, GA: Forgery - 1st Degree

Rumph, Wallace Dale, 59, Griffin, GA: Failure To Appear - Misdemeanor

Fort Valley Arrests/Citations

Harris, Steve, 56, Fort Valley, GA: Failure To Appear - Misdemeanor, Failure To Appear - Felony, Failure To Appear - Misdemeanor

Peach County Sheriff's Office

Arrests/Citations

Johnson, Marcus Duvall, 42, Fort Valley, GA: Theft By Taking, Simple Battery - Family Violence

Kolmetz, Jeffrey Lee, 45, Warner Robins, GA: Driving Under The Influence - Alcohol

Lee, Tommy James, 45, Conyers, GA: Driving While License Suspended

Pace, Norman Dean, 70, Fort Valley, GA: Terroristic Threats And Acts

Richardson, Darrell Jerome, 37, Byron, GA: DUI - Driving Under The Influence Of Multiple Substances, Marijuana-Possess Less Than 1 Oz., Possession Of Open Alcohol Container, Failure To Have License On Person

Robinson, Timothy Ray, 51, Lizella, GA:

FUTURE PLANS

CONTINUED FROM 1A

review. Accreditation is essentially an external "check-up" for a school district – it's when an independent organization takes a close look at how we operate, including teaching and learning, leadership, finances, safety, and how we support students, to ensure we meet high standards for quality education," Davis said. "I'm proud to share that Peach County Schools received the highest possible ratings during this process. This recognition reflects the hard work, dedication, and commitment of our teachers, staff, students, and families. It confirms that great things are happening in Peach County Schools and that we are moving in the right direction for our students and community."

Throughout 2025, the board and school system have been working towards addressing chronic absenteeism within the school district. Since 2020, with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, school attendance rates have declined across the nation. Peach County has been working tirelessly to address this issue.

"While the issue is not completely resolved, I am encouraged by the progress we have made in addressing chronic absenteeism in our school district. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, student attendance has been a challenge for school districts across the nation, and Peach County Schools has not been immune to these struggles," Davis said. "Over the past year, our district has developed and implemented targeted interventions to improve attendance and address chronic absenteeism. These efforts are beginning to show early signs of success. While the challenge remains, the progress we are seeing is encouraging, and we remain committed to continuing this important work to support student success. Simply put, students cannot benefit from the great things that are happening in our schools if they are not present."

When looking back at his accomplishments throughout 2025, Dr. Davis spoke of the Board of Education's recent decision to appoint him as the new superintendent of Peach County Schools earlier this month.

"Earning the opportunity to follow Dr. Lionel Brown as superintendent of our school district is both an honor and a responsibility I take seriously. Dr. Brown led Peach County Schools with dedication and vision for eight years, leaving a strong foundation and some very big shoes to fill. Continuing to build on his great work will not be easy, but it is a challenge I am excited to take on," Davis said.

Davis stated that his focus for 2026 will be on listening

to those within the school district and those within the Peach County community on how to better improve the school system, as well as working with any feedback from the Georgia Charter School District Association, which will be visiting the district soon.

"My goals for the upcoming school year are centered on listening – listening to our staff, parents, students, and community members to hear their ideas about how our school district can continue to grow and improve. I believe our best ideas often come from the people who are closest to the work every day. I'm also looking forward to an upcoming visit from the Georgia Charter School District Association, who will spend time in our schools and provide valuable feedback to help us reflect and continue to improve. Hearing their perspective alongside the feedback we receive from our own stakeholders will help guide our next steps," Davis said. "Another important goal is continuing to listen to students, parents, and our local business and industry partners as we consider new courses and opportunities that align with student interests and workforce needs. At the heart of all of this is gathering feedback – and more importantly, using it – to make thoughtful decisions that move our district forward."

Davis is looking forward to the Peach school district working to strengthen partnerships with the surrounding school districts to

"I'm really excited about the way our district is strengthening partnerships with other school districts. Going forward, we're being much more intentional about visiting other districts and inviting them to visit us so we can learn from one another and get better together. When we're all focused on the same important work – doing what's best for students – it just makes sense to work alongside each other. Sharing ideas and learning from approaches that are already working helps all of us grow and improve," Davis said.

Dr. Davis had both advice and words of encouragement for the

students of the Peach County School System, highlighting the importance of believing in oneself and supporting one another.

"Whatever you choose to do – whether in the classroom, on the field, on the stage, or in your community – strive to give your very best. Excellence isn't about being perfect; it's about effort, pride in your work, and pushing yourself to grow every day. Believe in your abilities, support one another, and never underestimate what you can achieve when you commit to doing things the right way. We are proud of you and excited to see where your hard work will take you," Davis said.

Dr. Davis thanked the parents of those in the school district for supporting their child's educational career.

"Thank you for all you do to support your children and our schools. Your encouragement at home and partnership with our teachers and staff make a real difference for our students. When families and schools stay connected and trust one another, we're able to support students more effectively – especially when challenges arise. Even when things get tough, working together and maintaining open communication helps us move forward in a positive way," Davis said.

Dr. Davis took a moment to thank those working within the school district for their hard work and dedication to the students.

Thank you for the work you do each day on behalf of our students and community. Your dedication, care, and commitment do not go unnoticed. While there are many places educators could choose to work, you have chosen to be part of Peach County Schools – and that choice matters. You are strengthening a community and making a real difference in the lives of our students. That kind of work has real meaning, and it is something special. I am grateful for your dedication to our students, your trust in one another, and your willingness to continue building something great together in Peach County, Davis said."

Peach County Community CALENDAR

email: news@theleadertribune.com



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. (FVS)

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 month at 2pm. The meeting will be held at Trinity Baptist Church 507 State University Drive. For further info. please contact Dr. Quintin Green (478)951-1911.

2025-2026 FORT VALLEY HEAD START

700 Spruce St, Ft. Valley, GA 31030. (478)825-8584.

Ages 3 -5. Required Documentation: Proof of birth, Social Security Card, Immunization 3231, Medicaid/Insurance card, Proof of income/SNAP, SSI, TANE, Well child check, Dental exam, Ga public health 3300, Verification of income & housing. www.mgcaa.org

25-26 First Step Learning Center Early Head Start

Now Enrolling Infants 6 Weeks Old to Under 36 Months. Call Now to Set up an

Appointment. Enrollment Based on Eligibility. Call (478)825-0509, 406 Carver Dr., Fort Valley. First Step Learning Center Early Head Start in Partnership With Fort Valley State University.

Byron AL-ANON Family Group

Byron Al-Anon meets on Monday mornings at 11 a.m. in the Old Byron School, next to the Byron Municipal Complex. Al-Anon Family Groups are a fellowship of relatives and friends of alcoholics who share their experience, strength and hope in order to solve their common problems. Newcomers are always welcome. Contact Debbie Harrelson 478-714-9393.

Compassionate Friends Middle GA Chapter

We are a national nonprofit organization dedicated to helping bereaved parents by providing highly personal comfort, hope and support to every family experiencing the death of a child, a brother, sister or a grandchild and helping others to better assist the grieving family. We need not walk alone.

Byron meeting: 4th Thursday of every month. 7-9pm. Byron Baptist Church 100 W White Rd, Byron, Ga 21008.

Macon meeting location for TCF: Rock Springs Church, 6601 Zebulon Rd, Macon, GA.

Please contact Chapter Leaders for more information: Karla Chidester - 478-954-4592, or Teresa Tompkins - 478-319-3526, or visit www.compassionatefriends.org.

Addiction Counseling

Narconon can help you take steps to overcome addiction in your family. Call today for free screenings or referrals. 800-431-1754

Byron Lions Club

The club meets on the first and third Thursdays of the month, the first Thursday of the month at Uncorked Event Center (behind Georgia Bobs) at 6:00PM, and the third Thursday of the month at 9:00 AM at Denny's. Anyone interested in participating is heartily invited to join us. For more information, please contact Lion Marlene Humphry at 478-918-3666, email at mhumphry@cox.net

Byron Rotary Club

Meets every Wednesday at 8:00am at Denny's.

Byron Main Street DDA/CVB

Byron Main Street/DDA/CVB meetings are the 1st Mondays of each month at 5:00 p.m., at Denny's. The CVB meetings are usually held the 2nd Tuesday of the month at the Byron Welcome Center at 5:00p.m.

Byron Tax Office

Opened Tuesday & Thursday 8:30am-5:00pm. Closed 12-1:00pm at the Byron Municipal Complex. All official regular meetings are in the Council Chamber at the Byron Municipal Complex, 401 Main Street, Byron, GA.

WE ACCEPT TIPS!

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Goodbye 2025, Hello 2026!



By Zoe Hammond
News Editor

Hello everyone! I hope you've all had a wonderful holiday season. It's been a busy time for me and my husband, that's for sure. Between spending time with immediate family and extended family as well as making time for our friends - it's been a busy holiday season, but I wouldn't trade it for anything. 2025 was a year with a lot of good and a lot of bad for myself and my partner. Though, I'm sure that was the case for many. I'm hoping 2026 is a year filled with more peace and happy moments. Right now, I'm working to fill out my planner with all the yearly events and upcoming government meetings. While I don't have guarantees for all of these events this year, I am looking forward to the many celebrations in Peach County. Masee Lane will soon be starting their Festival of Camellias in February. The Peach County Health Department's Spring

into Good Health is always fun and a good way to learn about health.

The first Saturday in May we'll have the Battle of Byron and following that the Peach Festival will arrive in June. We of course have Nightmare on Main Street and Fort Valley's Halloween Festival. Following Thanksgiving, we'll have the Christmas in the Valley Lighting Ceremony and in December we'll have the annual Christmas parades.

There are some events that don't have set dates/weekends, but I am keeping my ear out for, such as the Cup of Blue, Byron's BBQ Festival, the Peach Regional Chamber of Commerce's Celebration of Community Banquet, the Peach County Health Department's Stuff the Bus, and the Magnolia Garden Club's fundraising event.

You may think it odd that I'm already planning for these events when it's only the first full week in January, but trust me, it'll sneak up on you before you know it!

Also, in case some haven't noticed our notice, all emails at The Leader Tribune now use the extension ".com" instead of ".net". So, my email is now editor@theleadertribune.com instead of editor@theleadertribune.net. Please be aware of this if you plan to email us anything!

Here's hoping everyone is getting back into the swing of things with 2026!

Researching Lifestyle Offsets for Our Year Ahead



By Wade Yoder
LT Columnist

We are about to go into a new year and quite often "ways to improve health and fitness," is a goal for many when turning the page and going into a new year. The gift of health is not one we should take for granted nor the value of investing in it to help our body stay on track!

Often there are lifestyle changes we can make to help counter health problems or even genetic vulnerabilities that may cause future health concerns. Think of it like reinforcing a window before a storm hits—you strengthen the weak points before something causes damage.

Example: If you have weakness or pain in your hip, using a cane can support healing and help prevent further injury.

1. Identify the Weakness
The first step is getting a clear diagnosis—whether it's a current condition or a genetic predisposition you know runs in your family. Depending on the situation, you may need a medical specialist to help pinpoint the issue. Once identified, we can begin making informed lifestyle choices that support and strengthen that weakness. This approach is what we call "lifestyle offsets."

2. Take Responsibility for Your Health

Many of us worry about the future of healthcare access and possible limits on procedures or medications. Over time, easy access to healthcare has unintentionally made us less proactive about doing the things that maintain health—avoiding obesity, choosing whole foods instead of processed foods, drinking water instead of sugary or caffeinated beverages, avoiding smoke and pollutants, and so on.

Steps to Counter Ailments and Weaknesses

1. Understand the Problem
This may require medical diagnosis, but don't underestimate the value of well-described online research. The clearer you

describe symptoms—to your doctor or a search engine—the better the results.

2. Identify the Source
Ask: Where is this problem coming from? What habits, foods, movements, or deficiencies are feeding the issue? If you can identify and address the root source of "energy" behind the symptom, you can often resolve or greatly reduce the problem.

3. Research Lifestyle Changes
Many conditions improve dramatically with targeted diet adjustments, supplements, or habit improvements.

Example: If you suspect Type II diabetes—or want to prevent it—search "best diet for diabetes" to find diets that counter and help prevent diabetes.

4. Apply the Changes
Knowledge is only helpful when applied. Start using what you've learned immediately.

5. Be Consistent
Consistency is the key to effectiveness. Small consistent actions outperform occasional big efforts.

6. Be Patient
Natural approaches often take time. Some medications are absolutely necessary, but unnecessary medications can

bring side effects that the body must recover from. Natural methods tend to support long-term healing instead of short-term masking.

Example for Online Research

Type into your search bar: "Best exercises for lowering blood pressure." Open an article, that best fits your search -read it and then look at the related links available to deepen and narrow your research. The same approach works for weight loss, chronic diseases, bone and joint issues, exercise routines, diet questions, and many other health issues. Even if something you have is a rare condition, very likely there are others that have gone through the same thing and have shared online what they found helped them.

If you focus intensely on a topic for even 30 minutes, you can gain enough knowledge to take meaningful action. Knowledge = power and applying that knowledge is where results begin.

A Goal for 2026: no one will ever care about your condition more than you. The more you understand your health challenges, the less likely you are to accept them as permanent.

How breaking government breaks democracy



When most people hear "authoritarianism," they tend to imagine tanks in the streets or elections being canceled overnight.

But democracy is usually undone more quietly — through budget cuts, layoffs and the slow dismantling of the institutions we rely on every day. One of the fastest ways to weaken a democracy is to break the government from the inside. You target the people who make it work and make those who rely on them suffer by default. When people no longer trust that the government will serve them, democracy becomes expendable.

This is Step 4 in the autocrat's playbook. And in few places is the destruction more visible than at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta.

Tens of thousands of Georgians work at the CDC or support its directive to protect the lives of Americans. They're our neighbors. They are parents picking up kids from school. They're scientists who keep us informed during illnesses. They track outbreaks and help local health departments do their jobs.

When Albany, Georgia, became a COVID-19 hotspot in 2020 — holding the No. 5 spot in coronavirus cases and deaths — it was the role of the CDC to understand how to defend lives in the region.

Whether it was the corona-

virus or the bird flu, Georgians knew that the medical knowledge was centered right up 75 and 85. Yet now, the vital charge of the CDC — and the livelihoods of those who serve the public good — is being deliberately hollowed out by the Trump administration.

Step 4 in the authoritarian playbook is simple: break the government by breaking the people who make it function. You don't have to abolish agencies outright. You just take away their funding, politicize them and push out anyone who won't comply.

That's what we're watching with the gutting of the CDC and the broader federal workforce.

What began with the CDC is spreading. In a few weeks, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs plans to slash 35,000 health care jobs, including here in Georgia, a state where 7.6% of the population — or nearly 700,000 residents — are veterans.

Despite being chronically understaffed, the VA, like the CDC, will be asked to do critical, life-saving work with fewer people, fewer resources and fewer backup plans.

When Republicans eviscerate funding, freeze hiring, conduct mass firings or shut down the government entirely, they are sending a message: Do not trust us. Public service doesn't matter. The needs of the people don't matter. Only power does.

For Georgia, the stakes are enormous. The CDC helps protect us from outbreaks of measles, flu, foodborne illnesses and emerging diseases. It supports state and county health departments — especially in rural communities that already struggle to get basic care.

Given that agriculture is an economic engine, we have long relied on the CDC to spot problems before they can ravage communities. So, when the CDC is weakened, Georgians pay the price first.

Now, with cuts decimating veterans' health care, the harm will spread — and the solutions will be even harder to come by. But that's the point.

Authoritarians want the government to fail in visible ways so people stop believing it can help them at all. When inspections slow, data disappears and responses lag, people understandably ask, "Why doesn't government work?"

When those who defended our nation cannot get a doctor's appointment or a prescription, they will wonder if their sacrifices were in vain. Yet most good people won't blame sabotage — they will simply believe democracy failed to deliver because it's useless.

They won't use the words, but the sentiment will take root. Disappointment becomes disengagement, and shared trust in the social contract transforms into disbelief that it's worth the fight.

What's happening now builds on years of attacks — politicizing public health, demonizing scientists and using budget battles as leverage to further erode services. This Republican authoritarian regime has been explicit about their goal: dismantle government and remake it into a hotbed of privatization and

corruption.

However, the most insidious truth is that the damage is not always immediate or dramatic. The CDC will still issue reports, but the science is sketchy. VA offices will stay open, but getting an appointment takes even longer. Public service will feel more broken due to teacher shortages at Head Start and a lack of help from the Federal Emergency Management Agency or the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Fewer people will be willing to speak up when something's wrong. Over time, competence drains away, and trust follows. Eventually, a small "d" democratic government stops being something that serves everyone and becomes something that only serves the powerful.

That's why defending good government matters and why speaking up for civil servants and bureaucrats is an act of bravery. Making sure democracy delivers is not a talking point; it's a matter of self-interest.

These workers are scientists, nurses, inspectors, veterans and public servants who chose stability over profit because they believed in serving the public. Attacking them is attacking Georgia families and our future.

If Trump and Republicans succeed, the consequences ripple outward and include weaker public health, fewer protections, more privatization and a public that's been taught not to expect anything from democracy at all.

That's the warning — and Georgia is once again on the front lines.

Stacey Abrams is a bestselling author, entrepreneur and host of the podcast "Assembly Required." She previously served as minority leader in the Georgia House of Representatives.



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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.

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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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Georgia's 40 mph interstate minimum is a safety problem

By Marc Hyden

In the immortal words of notorious rock star Sammy Hagar, "I can't drive 55!" — a sentiment that still resonates in Georgia.

The speed limits on the Peach State's interstates vary, but they generally sit at 70 mph outside of congested areas. However, many drivers rarely approach this speed, and driving far slower than the pace of traffic — like the 55 mph that bedeviled Hagar — could be dangerous.

Despite that, the minimum speed limit on most Peach State interstates is set at the snail's pace of 40 mph. This policy is both antiquated and even hazardous, but it might change soon. There is already legislation filed to address this in House Bill 809, which was authored by

John Carson, a Republican state representative from Marietta.

A Capitol insider tells me the Georgia General Assembly may tackle this topic next year — and not a moment too soon.

If passed, the bill would make a small — but meaningful — tweak. Simply put, the state would increase the minimum speed by 10 mph in most cases, which would be the first major update to this policy in decades.

In 1953, the General Assembly passed legislation empowering the public safety commissioner, transportation commissioner or local authorities to set the minimum speed limit as they saw necessary. It isn't clear how early policymakers made 40 mph the norm as the minimum speed limit, but by the early 1970s, it

was already well-established.

In 1974, the maximum speed limit on interstates was set to no more than 55, but the minimum speed remained the same. By 1987, states were authorized to increase the maximum speed limit to 65, but again, the minimum speed limit remained unchanged.

Now, the maximum speed limit is 70 mph, but 40 is still the minimum.

As comedian George Carlin observed, "Anybody driving slower than you is an idiot, and anyone going faster than you is a maniac." Depending on your perspective, Georgia encourages drivers of both persuasions as the chasm between maximum and minimum speed limits continues to grow.

This policy permits drivers to maintain a broad range of speeds simultaneously, which is problematic.

In 2023, there were more than 370,000 auto accidents on Georgia's roads — and roughly 1,600 traffic fatalities. Of course, not all these incidents and deaths were related to driving slowly.

Distracted driving, driving under the influence and speeding are top culprits, and seatbelt misuse is a major contributing factor to drivers' health outcomes associated with crashes.

Georgia has addressed each of these in the code relatively recently — but not the minimum speed limit, and legislators should do so.

One Word You Shouldn't Say in 2026



By Billy Powell
Parables to Ponder
LT Columnist

Many of us make New Year's resolutions, yet few keep them. Many plan to lose weight. Others desire to break some stubborn habit. Some long for business opportunities or career advancement. People mean well, they intend to change, but somehow life overwhelms them and, in a short time, it's back to business as usual.

Nobody wants to fail. Sometimes it's easier not to try than to suffer failure. However, there is a biblical perspective to remember. Philippians 4.13 states: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Therefore, the word we should ban from our vocabulary is "can't." We use it all the time. We say, "I can't lose weight." "I can't stop smoking." "I can't achieve that career goal."

I once told a friend that he should never fail to undertake

a challenge because he thought he would not succeed, yet I fell prey to the "I can't" syndrome. For 20 years, I wanted to write "Pride of the Panthers," and to do so during the life of Coach Eric Staples, yet I felt incapable of accomplishing such a daunting task. The Staples' era spanned 32 years of Perry High basketball, from 1933 to 1965, plus the Coach Paul Hartman years of 1966-69. Where would I obtain the historical information and the photos? If the information were available, could I organize and synthesize it into one coherent book? After many years of saying "I can't," one day a "Small, Still Voice" spoke to my heart, directing me to write the book—that, if I didn't, the legendary story of Perry's basketball dynasty would be lost forever. Needless to say, I responded and God provided the wherewithal for me to write and publish the book.

Many reading this article need to forgive someone who offended them. Others need to start going to church. Some need to find time to read the Bible. But negative thoughts will prevent them.

An inspiring example is the story of "The Little Engine That Could." The boys and girls in the town on the opposite side of a big mountain were waiting for the train to bring their toys.

But its engine broke down. The engineer went to the roundhouse and talked to several engines, but no one was interested including the big diesel locomotive that preferred not to haul toys. Then from a corner came a voice, "I'll do it." It was a little switch engine. "I'll carry the train with the toys over the mountain to the boys and girls on the other side." "But you're much too small." "I'm willing to give it a try." So they hooked the little engine up to the boxcars with the toys. The little engine began to gather steam for its climb up the mountain. As it gathered speed, "The Little Engine That Could" began to say, "I think I can. I think I can. I think I can." Up the mountain it went. Straining with every ounce of energy, the train cleared the crest and started down the other side. In the distance the children were cheering and waving and dancing with delight.

In today's world, there are many on the other side of the mountain—some facing marital mountains, some financial mountains, some career mountains, some spiritual mountains. The mountain seems so high, so forbidding, that they are tempted to give up without even trying. Place your trust in God and He will allow you to climb that mountain.

Land Rental Rates



By Jeff Cook
Extension Agent

I often get calls about fair land rental rates for farmers to pay and for landowners to charge. These calls usually come out after there are news stories about high rental rates somewhere in the country or landowners get their tax statements. There are some averages that we (UGA) compiles every few years but there are other factors that need to be considered.

What I see as the first factor is how you want your land cared for. How much rent you charge can have a direct impact on how a grower manages a crop and is able to care for the land.

The next big factor is the productivity of the land. Realize that every piece of ground is not capable of producing the same yield of the crops that we routinely grow. This is especially true here on the fall line. You can go from beach sand to red clay with a hint of kaolin all in the same field. Soil type is one factor we can look at and determine the productivity based

on historical records. This is something that your county Extension Agent or FSA can assist with.

We also need to consider base acres on that farm. The more base acres assigned to the farm for certain crops the more of a safety net growers have when we have bad years or when prices are low.

The crops grown on the land and the prices these crops bring when harvested is another consideration and one of the most important factors especially as we move into the 2026 growing season. Commodity prices have been very low the last 3 years. Additionally, input costs like fertilizer, chemicals and diesel continue to rise. Luckily for growers, yields were above average in 2025 but still not high enough to make crops like cotton profitable.

We don't have all of our budgets finalized for the coming season, but I wanted to give you an example of what growers might expect in our area. Our economists put together crop comparison tools for each agronomic crop for the coming season. This tool accounts for all of our variable costs (inputs) and predicted yield and projected price. As of this week, prices are projected to tick up to a whopping \$0.68/lb. If we assume that we produce 750 pounds of cotton in a non-irrigated field it should net \$506/

Acre. This sounds pretty good, but we have to remember that variable costs are projected to be around \$522 which leaves us with a return above variable costs of -\$16.

This loss is on a non-irrigated field that we don't pay rent on. If we tack on \$50 per acre for rent, the grower would be losing nearly \$70 per acre to grow a pretty decent cotton crop. The picture does not get any brighter for our other options. With current commodity pricing and input costs rising, almost all of our options will result in a negative return above variable costs or just break even. Peanuts and grain are our bright spots but still on offer around \$10/A above variable costs, and this depends on contracted pricing.

If you go further into the budget and costs associated with farming and look at fixed costs like machinery and equipment the negatives get even bigger. I understand the need to charge land rent, but I also understand that if our farmers can't make some profit or at least break even we risk losing both farmers and farm land. It is already scary enough how much food, fiber and other goods we import. Losing farms and local farmers is a serious national security matter that won't be easy to recover from. Contact me if you have any questions or comments. 478-825-6466, 478-862-5496 or mackiv@uga.edu

2025: Trump policies, big tech and affordability become major issues for Georgia

By Ty Tagami
Bureau Chief

Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — The year started with news about presidents past and present, as Donald Trump was sworn in for a second term and Georgia mourned the loss of Jimmy Carter.

The Trump administration implemented major changes to immigration and trade policy that reverberated across the country and in Georgia. Developments driven by technology companies also rocked the state, as the words "data center" came into common use.

The Peach State also made its

own news, from a shooting at a military base to a split between a high-profile Republican and Trump and a surprising statewide election outcome that threatened the status quo.

Here is a look at the top Georgia stories of 2025.

Jan. 7: The celebration of the life of a native son and former president, Jimmy Carter, moved from Atlanta to the nation's capital for a memorial service in the Capitol Rotunda.

Feb. 12: The state economist warned that Trump's tariffs would probably drive up prices for Georgia consumers while suppressing exports.

March 21: The Georgia Gen-

eral Assembly passed Gov. Brian Kemp's top priority — an overhaul of tort law to create a friendlier environment for insurance companies.

March 25: Lawmakers pushed back against big tech, passing a law that will prohibit student cellphone use in public elementary and middle schools starting next fall.

March 31: Reacting to the mass shooting at Apalachee High School last year, the legislature passed a sweeping school safety bill that sought to identify

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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

Led by Father Matt Harlow 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.middleleganglican.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.

BAHA'I FAITH

"Verily I say, this is the Day in which mankind can behold the Face, and hear the Voice, of the Promised One."

Baha'u'llah

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

SAINT PETER A.M.E. CHURCH 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.

HYDEN

CONTINUED FROM 4A

According to one government manual: "If you drive slower than the minimum speed, you can halt the traffic flow and create a dangerous condition. Those driving too slowly can be as dangerous as those who drive too fast."

Rigorous research backs up this statement, too.

"In a landmark study of speed and crashes involving 10,000 drivers on 600 miles (970 kilometers) of rural highways, Solomon [...] found a relationship between vehicle speed and crash incidence that is illustrated by a U-shaped curve. Crash rates were lowest for travel speeds near the mean speed of traffic and increased with greater de-

viations above and below the mean," reads a U.S. Department of Transportation report.

In other words, driving faster and slower than the speed limit can be dangerous propositions.

Slow drivers — even when not involved in accidents — can also contribute to traffic congestion, which is an ongoing problem in Georgia. Earlier this year, U.S. News & World Report ranked Georgia's capital as the country's eighth-worst city for traffic.

Atlanta is also home to three of the nation's 10 worst traffic bottlenecks, and the metro area has the dubious honor of having nine of the country's 100 worst bottlenecks.

There are many variables con-

tributing to these woes, and I imagine that exceptionally slow drivers are not helping the situation.

If Carson gets his way, the minimum speed limit might get its first major update in many decades, and if it does, then it may improve traffic and reduce auto accidents. Since it would set the minimum speed limit to 50 on most interstates, Sammy Hagar will be able to drive 55 (or faster if he wishes), which I imagine comes as a great relief to the rock star.

Marc Hyden is the senior director of state government affairs at R Street Institute. You can follow him on X at @marc_hyden.

Subscribe Today!
478-825-2432

YEAR END REVIEW

CONTINUED FROM 1A

Inc. (RGI) “Combat the Bullying” Tour.

The fifth annual Cup of Blue took place on the last Saturday of April at North Peach Park. It was an evening to honor law enforcement and remember officers who have passed whether in the line of duty or not.

MAY

May was a busy month for Peach County. The Battle of Byron held their third annual event on the first Saturday of May in Downtown Byron, which was crowded with families and friends enjoying the day together.

The Peach Regional Chamber of Commerce held its fifth annual Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE) Award ceremony at the Peach County High School – this was the first time the ceremony was held in the gymnasium as 301 students were being recognized!

The 2024-2025 Pathway Stars are Adalberto Martinez in Agriculture; Jackson Wells in Veterinary Sciences; Dawson Ferguson in Automotive; Evan Alonzo in Business, Administration, and Management; Jalen Rayford in Healthcare; and Logan Kovitch in Nutrition and Food Sciences. From these Pathway Stars, usually one student was selected to be the

CTAE All-Star Student. However, this year there was a twist. Two CTAE All-Star Students were chosen because their final scores were mere decimal points away from each other. The 2024-2025 “Minnie R. Booker” CTAE All-Stars are Jackson Wells and Jalen Rayford.

Each student was then given the opportunity to recognize a teacher as the CTAE All-Star Instructor. Wells named Jody Kemp, the Agriculture teacher, and Rayford named Kristine Spivey, the Healthcare teacher, as the CTAE All-Star Instructors.

Later in the month, alumni from the Fort Valley High School erected a plaque in front of the old school, which is now the Vallihi Apartments Complex. The plaque, a statue of a Green Wave, is meant to honor the teacher, faculty, staff, and students of the Fort Valley High School as well as the school itself.

JUNE

June saw the arrival of the 39th Georgia Peach Festival, in both Fort Valley and Byron. It was the chance to honor the local peach growers and showcase the cities of Fort Valley and Byron as well as Peach County itself.

JULY

In July, the City of Fort Valley

lost their Fire Chief Antonio Woodard who passed away unexpectedly. The city and community came together to mourn his passing and honor his memory.

The Peach County Health Department held their Third Annual Stuff the Bus. Children and their families were able to stop by the Health Department to get free school supplies as well as receive immunizations and vision, hearing, and dental screenings.

Peach County High School hosted their third annual Trojan-Fest Back-to-School event, where students were able to receive free school supplies as well as learn about the local schools and community resources available to them.

AUGUST

August saw the Peach County Board of Education electing Scott Hodges to be Chair and Ben McDaniel to be the Vice Chair. The City of Fort Valley hired an Interim Fire Chief and Interim Finance Director as well.

There were also concerns regarding rabies, as two separate incidents were reported in the area – one in Fort Valley and another in Warner Robins.

SEPTEMBER

September saw Downtown Fort Valley filled with festive music, dancing, lassos, and pinatas during the annual Fort Valley Mexican Independence

Day Celebration! It was an opportunity to learn, understand, and appreciate cultural differences.

The Byron Welcome Center’s Third Annual Byron BBQ Fest, in which numerous cook teams prepared their barbecue to be judged by members of the Georgia BBQ Association – which included the categories of chicken, pork, and ribs. North Peach Park was packed with families stopping to shop and partake in the many food trucks that were present.

OCTOBER

October started with the suspension of the Fort Valley State University Blue Machine Marching Band, right before Homecoming Week, over hazing allegations, which led to the arrest of two people. Right after that, was the suspension of the head football coach and multiple players were suspended due to a fight that broke out with FVSU’s homecoming opponent, Central State University.

Later in the month, the Peach Regional Chamber of Commerce held its Annual Celebration of Community at Southern Bridle Farms, with the 2025 theme being a Halloween Monster Mash. The barn was transformed into a haunted haven

full of dark and gothic decor with splashes of bright orange and deep purple.

Halloween was a busy evening in Peach County as both Byron and Fort Valley held celebrations. Byron’s Nightmare on Main Street saw a plethora of people walking down Main Street in costume, enjoying the time spent gathering candy with the family. Fort Valley’s downtown area was packed with both children and adults in costume having a fun-filled night.

NOVEMBER

November started with the community coming together to honor Deputy Sheriff Daryl Wayne Smallwood (PC306) and Sergeant Michael Patrick Sondron (PC311), who were killed in the line of duty in 2016. The Peach County Sheriff’s Office held a bridge dedication ceremony in their honor. The bridge on Exit 149 in Byron will be named in honor of Sgt. Sondron and the bridge located at Exit 146 on the Ga. 247 Connector will be named in honor of Deputy Smallwood.

Later in the month, the Peach County officials and members of the community celebrated the grand opening of the county’s new Animal Control Facility, located at 372 Clint Howard Road in Byron, a project that has been

in the works since 2008.

November, into December, saw the arrival of two new members and the return of an incumbent to the Fort Valley City Council. Alton Howard won the race for the Fort Valley City Council, At Large and Donald Williams secured the vote for West Ward. Incumbent Juanita Plant Bryant kept her seat on the city council. The Fort Valley mayoral race had a run-off between incumbent Mayor Jeffery Lundy and challenger Shakeena Reeves, as neither candidate secured over 50% of the votes – with Reeves later winning the runoff.

DECEMBER

December saw numerous holiday celebrations, namely the Fort Valley’s Christmas Parade. Byron had to cancel their parade due to hazardous weather conditions. Two local businesses, the Drugstore Deli in Byron and Dee’s Flowers and Gifts in Fort Valley celebrated their multiple years in business.

To finish out the year, Peach County Board of Education appointed Interim Superintendent Dr. Jesse Davis as the new Peach County Schools Superintendent following Dr. Lionel Brown’s retirement earlier in the year.

INVITATION TO BID

Project Title: Upper Yard Paving Project
Owner: Utility Commission of Fort Valley
Project Location: Near 500 Anthoine Street, Fort Valley, GA 31030

The Utility Commission of Fort Valley invites qualified contractors to submit sealed bids for paving improvements to an Upper Yard area as described in this document.

1. PROJECT OVERVIEW

The project consists of paving an existing yard area with a combination of reinforced concrete paving and asphalt paving. The total site area measures approximately **160 feet by 140 feet**. Work includes site preparation, placement of concrete pads, placement of asphalt paving, and all labor, materials, equipment, and incidentals necessary to complete the work in accordance with this bid document.

2. PRE-BID MEETING

- **Date:** January 21
- **Time:** 11:00 AM (local time)
- **Location:** Public Meeting Room, Utility Commission of Fort Valley

Attendance at the pre-bid meeting is strongly encouraged to review project details and existing site conditions.

3. BID OPENING

- **Date:** January 29
- **Time:** 11:00 AM (local time)
- **Location:** Public Meeting Room, Utility Commission of Fort Valley

Bids will be publicly opened and read aloud at the time and location listed above.

4. CONTRACTOR QUALIFICATIONS

All bidders must:

- Be properly **licensed** to perform work in the State of Georgia.
- Carry appropriate **insurance**, including general liability and workers’ compensation, in accordance with state and local requirements.
- Provide proof of licensing and insurance upon request.

Bid Bond: No bid bond is required for this project.

5. SCOPE OF WORK

The contractor shall furnish all labor, materials, equipment, and supervision necessary to complete the paving work as outlined below. Grade will slope from back to front.

5.1 Site Dimensions

- Total yard area: **160 ft x 140 ft**

5.2 Concrete Paving

Concrete paving shall be:

- **Thickness:** 6 inches
- **Strength:** 3,000 PSI minimum
- **Reinforcement:** Fiber-reinforced concrete

Concrete pad areas include:

1. **Pad Area #1:**
 - Dimensions: **60 ft x 160 ft**
 - Location: From the **left fence to the back fence**
2. **Pad Area #2:**
 - Dimensions: **60 ft x 80 ft**
 - Location: From the **back fence to the right fence**

5.3 Asphalt Paving

- **Thickness:** 6 inches
- **Area:** **80 ft x 100 ft**
- **Location:** From the **front fence to the right fence**

Asphalt work shall include proper base preparation, placement, compaction, and finishing suitable for yard and equipment use.

6. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- Contractor shall verify all field dimensions prior to bidding.
- Contractor is responsible for site safety and coordination during construction.
- All work shall comply with applicable local, state, and federal regulations.
- The Utility Commission of Fort Valley reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive informalities in the bidding process.

7. BID SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Bids shall include:

- Lump sum bid price for the complete scope of work
- Contractor name, address, and contact information
- Proof of license and insurance (or statement of ability to provide upon award)

Bids must be submitted in a sealed envelope clearly marked:

“Upper Yard Paving Project Bid”

8. CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions regarding this bid, contractors may submit inquiries prior to the bid opening date to the Utility Commission of Fort Valley. Contact information Robert Johns rjohns@fvutil.com, Keith Spillers kspillers@fvutil.com, Gary

Moncrief gmoncrief@fvutil.com

INVITATION TO BID

Utility Commission of Fort Valley

Project Title

Construction of Two (2) Tubular Metal Pole Barn Structures

1. INVITATION

The Utility Commission of Fort Valley (UCFV) is requesting sealed bids from qualified, licensed, and insured contractors for the construction of **two (2) tubular metal pole barn structures**. This project will be awarded in accordance with applicable local and state procurement requirements. Prebid Meeting will be 10am Wednesday, January 21st at Main Conference Room, 500 Anthoine St Fort Valley GA 31030. Bid Opening will be 10am Thursday, January 29th at Main Conference Room, 500 Anthoine St Fort Valley GA 31030

2. PROJECT LOCATION

The project site is located at the **Upper Yard**, near:

500 Anthoine Street
Fort Valley, Georgia 31030

3. SCOPE OF WORK

The successful contractor shall furnish all labor, materials, equipment, and supervision necessary to construct two tubular metal pole barn structures as described below.

Structure No. 1

- Dimensions: **20 feet wide x 60 feet long**
- **16-foot openings**
- Tubular metal framing
- Open front
- Metal wall panels installed on **back and both side walls**
- No utilities required
- No doors required
- No gutters required

Structure No. 2

- Dimensions: **40 feet wide x 130 feet long**
- **16-foot opening**
- Tubular metal framing
- Open front
- Metal wall panels installed on **back and both side walls**
- No utilities required
- No doors required
- No gutters required

General Structural Requirements (Both Structures)

- Designed and constructed to withstand **wind speeds of 135 mph**
- 10-year minimum Warranty on all construction materials.
- Materials and workmanship shall comply with all applicable local, state, and federal codes and standards
- Contractor shall be responsible for proper anchoring and structural integrity

4. CONTRACTOR REQUIREMENTS

All bidders must:

- Be **properly licensed** to perform work in the State of Georgia
- Carry **current liability and workers’ compensation insurance**
- Provide proof of licensing and insurance upon request

5. BID REQUIREMENTS

Each bid submission shall include:

- Lump sum bid price for the complete scope of work
- Estimated project timeline (start date and completion date)
- Contractor company name, address, and contact information
- Proof of licensing and insurance
- Any assumptions or exclusions clearly stated

No bid bond is required for this project.

6. SUBMISSION OF BIDS

Bids shall be submitted in a sealed envelope clearly marked:

“**Bid – Tubular Metal Pole Barn Structures**”

Bids must be delivered to the Utility Commission of Fort Valley by 10am January 29th at 500 Anthoine St Fort Valley GA 31030.

Late bids will not be accepted.

7. EVALUATION AND AWARD

Bids will be evaluated based on:

- Total cost
- Contractor qualifications and experience
- Compliance with bid requirements
- Ability to meet project schedule

The Utility Commission of Fort Valley reserves the right to:

- Reject any or all bids
- Waive informalities or minor irregularities
- Award the contract in the best interest of the Commission

8. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Questions regarding this bid request shall be submitted in writing to the Utility Commission of Fort Valley prior to the bid deadline.

Issued by:
Utility Commission of Fort Valley
Fort Valley, Georgia

Legals

Legal Advertisements E-Mail: legals@theleadertribune.com E-Mail Attachments: Word Text Format Legal Fax: 478-825-4130 AD DEADLINES: Friday's at 12:00 Noon Information concerning legals call: 478-825-2432

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.

2ND DUI



Defendant's Name: HOLLY LYNN BIEKER Address: 32 STERLING DR BYRON, GA 31008-5453 Date of Arrest: 4/26/2025 Time of Arrest: 12:32am

NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS STATE OF GEORGIA COUNTY OF PEACH

All creditors of the Estates of Nelda S. Reese 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 me.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF HOUSTON COUNTY STATE OF GEORGIA XAVIER PROPERTIES, LLC, Petitioner

A TRACT OF LAND, BEING KNOWN AS 216 RIDGELAND DR; GEORGIA BEING TAX PARCEL NUMBER 0W061 D 003 000 AND As The Respective Interests May Be Or Appear: TENANT, OWNER OR OCCUPANT OF PROPERTY; BRANDON M. SADDORIS; CITY OF WARNER ROBINS, MAYOR LARHONDA W. PATRICK; Respondents

IN THE JUVENILE COURT OF PEACH COUNTY, GEORGIA IN THE MATTER OF: File No: 7450-J BABY BOY KITCHENS, SEX M, AGE <1, DOB 03/06/2025, CASE #111-2025J-101 CHILD UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE NOTICE OF SUMMONS TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN, AMANDA DRAKE; WILLIAM KITCHENS; AND ANYONE ELSE CLAIMING TO HAVE A PARENTAL INTEREST IN SAID MINOR CHILD

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF PEACH COUNTY, GEORGIA IN RE: ESTATE OF ROBERT H. ALMON ESTATE NO. 2025-PRO-7203

AND REQUIRED to appear before the Juvenile Court of Peach County, Georgia, at the Peach County Courthouse, Ft. Valley, Georgia, on the 13th day of January, 2026 at 9:00 o'clock a.m. for a status hearing (attorney appointment only) and on the 24th day of March, 2026 at 9:00 o'clock a.m. The second hearing is for the purpose of determining whether your parental rights should be terminated.

All THAT TRACT OR PARCEL OF LAND SITUATE, LYING AND BEING IN LAND LOT 214 OF THE NINTH (9TH) LAND DISTRICT OF PEACH COUNTY, GEORGIA, BEING SHOWN ON A PLAT OF SURVEY ENTITLED "PROPERTY OF CORENE R. STANLEY & ANDREW STANLEY", DATED JANUARY 25, 1972, PREPARED BY MILTON V. BECKHAM, G.R.L.S. NO. 1031, A COPY OF WHICH IS OF RECORD IN PLAT BOOK 9, PAGE 82, CLERK'S OFFICE, PEACH SUPERIOR COURT. SAID PLAT AND THE RECORD THEREOF ARE INCORPORATED HEREIN BY REFERENCE FOR ALL PURPOSES.

NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS IN RE: Estate of George Stephen Smith, Deceased All creditors of the Estate of George Stephen Smith, deceased, late of Peach County, Georgia, are hereby notified to render their demands to the Executor named below according to law, and all persons indebted to said estate are required to make immediate payment to me.

NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS IN RE: Estate of George Stephen Smith, Deceased All creditors of the estate of Catherine L. Tarver 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.

NOTICE OF SALE UNDER POWER STATE OF GEORGIA PEACH COUNTY WHEREAS, Catherine Mariah Johnson, an Unmarried woman, as borrower(s), executed a SECURITY DEED to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as grantee, as nominee for Carrington Mortgage Services, LLC, Lender which was dated 6/26/2024, and recorded on 6/28/2024, in Instrument No.: Deed Book 00725, Page 0221, securing the payment of a Note in the amount of \$145,604.00 in Peach County, Georgia Register of Deeds.

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF PEACH COUNTY STATE OF GEORGIA IN RE: ESTATE OF RICHARD WALL WHITTINGTON, DECEASED ESTATE NO. 2024-PRO-7009 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 January 16, 2026. BE

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF PEACH COUNTY, GEORGIA IN RE: ESTATE OF Obed Agustin Diaz Cortes for the Adoption of V.R.A, Minor Child

IN THE JUVENILE COURT OF PEACH COUNTY, GEORGIA IN THE MATTER OF: File No: 7450-J BABY GIRL PERNELL, SEX F, AGE <1, DOB 4/09/2025, CASE #111-2025J-097 CHILD UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE NOTICE OF SUMMONS TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN, ERIN PERNELL, UNKNOWN FATHER, AND ANYONE ELSE CLAIMING TO HAVE A PARENTAL INTEREST IN SAID MINOR CHILD

IN THE JUVENILE COURT OF PEACH COUNTY, GEORGIA IN THE MATTER OF: File No: 7450-J BABY GIRL PERNELL, SEX F, AGE <1, DOB 4/09/2025, CASE #111-2025J-097 CHILD UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE NOTICE OF SUMMONS TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN, ERIN PERNELL, UNKNOWN FATHER, AND ANYONE ELSE CLAIMING TO HAVE A PARENTAL INTEREST IN SAID MINOR CHILD

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IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF PEACH COUNTY STATE OF GEORGIA Civil Action No.: 23-V-0501 DWIGHT AND JANICE CORNELLIUS, Petitioners, vs. A TRACT OF LAND KNOWN AS 222 DAVIDSON DRIVE, PEACH COUNTY, GEORGIA TPID: F04B 128 and ANNIE LANEY, Respondents. NOTICE OF SERVICE BY PUBLICATION TO RESPONDENTS: Any administrator, executor, heir, assignee or beneficiary of the Estate of Annie Laney, and any administrator, executor, heir, assignee or beneficiary of the Estate of Dorothy Lannie (Laney), whose addresses are unknown and may reside outside of this state and are entitled to notice of the above cause and any unknown or known parties claiming any interest in the land known as 222 Davidson Drive, Fort Valley, Peach County, Georgia; TPID F04B 128.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF PEACH COUNTY STATE OF GEORGIA IN RE: ESTATE OF CHARLOTTE ROWLAND LAND, DECEASED NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS 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 JANUARY 16, 2025.

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF PEACH COUNTY STATE OF GEORGIA ESTATE NO. 2025-ADM-7174 IN RE: ESTATE OF CHARLOTTE ROWLAND LAND, DECEASED NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS Re: Estate of Charlotte Rowland Land All creditors of the Estate of Charlotte Rowland Land, deceased, late 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 are required to make immediate payment to me.

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF PEACH COUNTY STATE OF GEORGIA ESTATE NO. 2024-PRO-7022 IN RE: ESTATE OF CHARLES HERB, DECEASED NOTICE [For discharge from office and all 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 JANUARY 16, 2025.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF PEACH COUNTY, GEORGIA IN RE: Petition of Obed Agustin Diaz Cortes for the Adoption of V.R.A, Minor Child

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LEGALS

CONTINUED FROM 7A

Civil Action No. 488-A

To: **Mona Lopez biological father of V.R.A. born in 2021 to Imani Diaz Medina**

You are hereby notified that the above-styled Petition for Adoption was filed against you in said Court on August 26, 2025 as the father of the minor child to be adopted, and you are hereby commanded and required to file with the Clerk of said Court and serve upon Sherry Herrera Campbell, petitioner's attorney, whose address is P.O. Box 8504, Warner Robin, GA 31095 and answer to the Petition within sixty (60) days of the date of this Summons.

This 3rd day of December 2025. Sherry Gonzales, Clerk of the Superior Court
Peach County Superior Court
205 W Church St.
P.O. Box 389
Fort Valley, GA 31030
12/10, 12/17, 12/24, 12/31, 2025
3621

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF PEACH COUNTY STATE OF GEORGIA ESTATE NO. 2025-ADM-7220 IN RE: ESTATE OF FRANK LEROY TRACY, DECEASED PETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION NOTICE

TO: ANY AND ALL INTERESTED PARTIES and to whom it may or ne: MICHAEL LEROY TRACY was petitioned for Michael Leroy Tracy to be appointed Administrator of the estate of FRANK LEROY TRACY deceased, of said County. (The Petitioner has also applied for waiver of bond, waiver of reports, waiver of statements, 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 16, 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
PROBATE JUDGE
By: Katrina Corbin
PROBATE CLERK
Probate Court of Peach County
205 West Church Street
Fort Valley, GA 31030
(478)825-2313
12/24, 12/31, 2025 & 1/7, 1/14, 2026
3636

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF PEACH COUNTY STATE OF GEORGIA CIVIL ACTION NO. 25-V-0146 EVERETT'S ESTATES AND REALTY, LLC PETITIONER, VS.

A TRACT OF LAND KNOWN AS 117 HARTLEY STREET, PEACH COUNTY, GEORGIA AND AS THE RESPECTIVE INTEREST MAY APPEAR, TENANT OR OCCUPANT OF PROPERTY AND HERMAN HOLLOWAY, RUDOLPH HOLLOWAY, JR., AND ANY OTHER KNOWN OR UNKNOWN HEIRS OF MATTYE P. HOLLOWAY (DECEASED)
RESPONDENT'S
NOTICE OF SERVICE BY PUBLICATION OF AMENDED ACTION TO QUIET TITLE
PURSUANT TO O.C.G.A. §9-11-4(f)(1)(B)

TO: ALL OTHER PERSONS WHOM IT MAY CONCERN BEING MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS ALL PERSONS KNOWN OR UNKNOWN WHO MIGHT CLAIM ADVERSITY TO PETITIONER'S TITLE IN AND TO A TRACT OF LAND KNOWN AS 117 HARTLEY STREET, FORT VALLEY, PEACH COUNTY, GEORGIA. MAP AND PARCEL NO. F04A005.

By Order of the Superior Court of Peach County, Georgia for service by publication dated the 20th of November, 2025 you are hereby notified that on September 9th, 2025 Petitioner, Everett's Estates and Realty, LLC filed an amended petition seeking to quiet title in its favor to the real property and improvements located at 117 Hartley Street, Fort Valley, Georgia, 31030 also known as Tax Map and Parcel F04A005 according to the records of Peach County Tax Assessor. The legal description of said land is as follows: All that tract or parcel of land situate and lying in the State of Georgia, County of Peach, City of Fort Valley therein, being described by metes and courses as follows: STARTING at a point lying on the Northeast right-of-way line of Hartley Street, which point of Southeast, as measured along the Northeast right-of-way line of Hartley Street, 730.4 feet from the center line of State Route No. 49; thence North

15 degrees 30 minutes East, 125 feet; thence South 63 degrees 13 minutes East 76.5 feet; thence South 15 degrees 30 minutes West, 125 feet to a point lying on the Northeast right-of-way line of Hartley Street; thence North 63 degrees 13 minutes West, along the Northeast right-of-way line of Hartley Street 76.5 feet to the point or place of beginning. Located on said property is one residential house. Said property and the improvements thereon are more particularly shown and described in a plat entitled, "Property of Bura James Marshall and Jean S. Marshall, Land Lot 214, Ninth District, Peach County, Fort Valley, Georgia", as made by Milton Beckham Company on August 28, 1972, being certified by Milton V. Beckham, Registered Surveyor NO. 1031, on said date; a copy of said plat is recorded in Plat Book No. 9, Page 101, Clerk's Office, Peach Superior Court, Georgia, which plat is incorporated herein and made a part hereof by reference thereto. As described in Deed Book 29, Page 317. Further described as Map & Parcel F04A00. Said petition also names as Respondents: as their respective interests may appear, tenants or occupants of the property, Herman Holloway, Rudolph Holloway, Jr. and any other known or unknown heirs of Mattye P. Holloway., Darrall J. Sparks, George Hamilton, Hallmark Terrace, LLC and All The World.

If you believe that you have a claim adverse to the Petitioner's Quiet Title Action Against All the World, you are hereby required to file with Clerk of Peach County Superior Court, and to serve upon petitioner's attorney, Charles E. Jones, 102 Peachtree Street, Fort Valley, GA 31030, an answer in writing within (60) days of the date of the order of November 20, 2025. Be further advised that you will lose all right, interests, and claims which you should or could be entitled to make or assert within this action to the subject property, as a matter of law, and you will receive no further notice nor be entitled to submit notice. Witness the Honorable Ken Smith, Peach County Superior Court This 10th day of December, 2025
12/24, 12/31, 2025 & 1/7, 1/14, 2026
3632

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF PEACH COUNTY STATE OF GEORGIA ESTATE NO. 2024-PRO-6926 IN RE: CHARLES EDWARD WELLS, DECEASED NOTICE OF PETITION TO FIEL FOR YEAR'S SUPPORT

The petition of LESLIE GAYLE WELLS, for a year's support from the estate of CHARLES EDWARD WELLS, deceased, for decedent's (surviving spouse) (and) (minor children), having been duly filed, all interested persons are hereby notified to show cause, if any they have, on or before DECEMBER 31, 2025, 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 on or before the time stated in the preceding sentence. 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 or 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, Georgia 31030
478-825-2313
12/10, 12/17, 12/24, 12/31, 2025
3626

IN THE PROBATE COURT COUNTY OF PEACH STATE OF GEORGIA ESTATE NO. 2025-ADM-7205 IN RE: ESTATE OF SHANTEEZ L. TOWNS, DECEASED PETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION NOTICE

TO: ANY AND ALL INTERESTED PARTIES and to whom it may concern: JOVON S. TOWNS has petitioned for JOVON S. TOWNS to be appointed administrator(s) of the estate of SHANTEEZ L. TOWNS, 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 December 31, 2025.

BE NOTIFIED FURTHER: All objections to the petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such 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.
This December 3, 2025
Kim Wilson, PROBATE JUDGE
By: /s/ Katrina Corbin

Clerk of the Probate Court
205 West Church Street
Fort Valley, Georgia 31030
(478) 825-2313
ATTORNEY: Tim J. Thompson
(478)471-9900
12/10, 12/17, 12/24, 12/31, 2025
3623

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF PEACH COUNTY STATE OF GEORGIA IN RE: ESTATE OF FELICIA YOLANDA BURDEN, DECEASED ESTATE NO. 2025-ADM-7212 PETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION NOTICE

TO: ANY AND ALL INTERESTED PARTIES, and to whom it may concern: JEANETTE H. DAWSON has petitioned for JEANETTE H. DAWSON to be appointed administrator of the estate of FELICIA YOLANDA BURDEN, deceased, of said county. (The petitioner has also applied for waiver of bond, waiver of reports, waiver of statements, and/or grant of certain powers contained in O.C.G.A. Section 53-12-261.) All interested persons 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 31, 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
12/10, 12/17, 12/24, 12/31, 2025
3624

NOTICE OF SALE UNDER POWER, PEACH COUNTY

Pursuant to the Power of Sale contained in a Security Deed given by Joshua P. Hayes and Rachel Nicole Hayes to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as grantee, as nominee for Rapid Mortgage Company, its successors and assigns, dated 4/26/2022 and recorded in Deed Book 675 Page 871 Peach County, Georgia records; as last transferred to or acquired by NewRez LLC d/b/a Shellpoint Mortgage Servicing, conveying the after-described property to secure a Note in the original principal amount of \$255,290.00, with interest at the rate specified therein, there will be sold by the undersigned at public outcry to the highest bidder for cash before the Courthouse door of Peach County, Georgia (or such other area as designated by Order of the Superior Court of said county), within the legal hours of sale on January 6, 2026 (being the first Tuesday of said month unless said date falls on a Federal Holiday, in which case being the first Wednesday of said month), the following described property: All that tract or parcel of land situate, lying and being in Land Lots 238 & 239 of the Sixth (6th) Land District of Peach County, Georgia, being known and designated as Lot 5, Block B, Sec 1, Phase 2, of Olde English Plantation Subdivision, according to a plat of survey being of record in Plat Book 20, Page 171, Clerk's Office, Peach Superior Court. Said plat and the record thereof are incorporated herein by reference for all purposes. 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 of intent to collect attorney's fees having been given).

Said property is commonly known as **135 Ruben Rd, Byron, GA 31008** together with all fixtures and personal property attached to and constituting a part of said property, if any. To the best knowledge and belief of the undersigned, the party (or parties) in possession of the subject property is (are): Joshua P. Hayes and Rachel Nicole Hayes or tenant or tenants. Shellpoint Mortgage Servicing is the entity or individual designated, who shall have full authority to negotiate, amend and modify all terms of the mortgage.

Shellpoint Mortgage Servicing PO Box 10826 Greenville, SC 29603-0826 1-800-365-7107 Note, however, that such entity or individual is not required by law to negotiate, amend or modify the terms of the loan. Said property will be sold subject to: (a) any outstanding ad valorem taxes (including taxes which are a lien, but not yet due and payable), (b) unpaid water or sewage bills that constitute a lien against the property whether due and payable or not yet due and payable and which may not be of record, (c) the right of redemption of

any taxing authority, (d) any matters which might be disclosed by an accurate survey and inspection of the property, and (e) any assessments, liens, encumbrances, zoning ordinances, restrictions, covenants, and matters of record superior to the Security Deed first set out above. The sale will be conducted subject to (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. Pursuant to O.C.G.A. Section 9-13-172.1, which allows for certain procedures regarding the rescission of judicial and non-judicial sales in the State of Georgia, the Deed Under Power and other foreclosure documents may not be provided until final confirmation and audit of the status of the loan as provided immediately above. NewRez LLC d/b/a Shellpoint Mortgage Servicing as agent and Attorney in Fact for Joshua P. Hayes and Rachel Nicole Hayes Aldridge Pite, LLP, Six Piedmont Center, 3525 Piedmont Road, N.E., Suite 700, Atlanta, Georgia 30305, (404) 994-7400. 1263-5031A
THIS LAW FIRM MAY BE ACTING AS A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT. ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.
1263-5031A
12/10/2025, 12/17/2025, 12/24/2025, 12/31/2025
3218

NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS GEORGIA, PEACH COUNTY

All creditors of the estate of ANTONIO MAURICE WOODARD, 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 the undersigned. This 22nd day of December, 2025.
DERIC AMANDO WOODARD
P. O. BOX 833
Fort Valley, Georgia 31030
ADMINISTRATOR OF ANTONIO MAURICE WOODARD ESTATE
12/31/2025, 1/7, 1/14, 1/21, 2026
3639

NOTICE OF SALE UNDER POWER STATE OF GEORGIA, COUNTY OF PEACH

By virtue of a Power of Sale contained in that certain Security Deed from Denis C. Onwuallu to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for Imperium Lending, LLC, dated June 21, 2024 and recorded on June 27, 2024 in Deed Book 725, Page 60, in the Office of the Clerk of Superior Court of Peach County, Georgia, said Security Deed having been given to secure a Note of even date, in the original principal amount of Two Hundred Eighty-Five Thousand and 00/100 dollars (\$285,000.00) with interest thereon as provided therein, as last transferred to MCLP Asset Company, Inc., recorded in Deed Book 751, Page 916, aforesaid records, will be sold at public outcry to the highest

bidder for cash before the courthouse door of Peach County, Georgia, or at such place as has or may be lawfully designated as an alternative location, within the legal hours of sale on the first Tuesday in January, 2026, all property described in said Security Deed including but not limited to the following described property:

TRACT ONE: All that tract or parcel of land situate and lying in the State of Georgia, County of Peach and in the City of Fort Valley therein, being described by metes and courses, according to the hereinafter described plat, as follows: STARTING at the intersection of the North right-of-way line of Spruce Street and the West right-of-way line of Central of Georgia Railroad; thence South 88 degrees 11 minutes 47 seconds West, along the North right-of-way line of Spruce Street, 189.76 feet; thence North 37 degrees 25 minutes 0 seconds East, 169.53 feet; thence in a Southeasterly direction, along a curve forming the Southwest right of way line of the Central of Georgia Railroad, which curve has a chord with a bearing of South 33 degrees 57 minutes 30 seconds East and with a length of 155.13 feet to the point or place of beginning. Property now known as 317 Spruce Street according to the present system of numbering. Said property and the improvements thereon are more particularly shown and described on a plat entitled "Property of Norman Fitzgerald, located in the City of Fort valley, Peach County, Georgia" as made by Thomas W. Futral, III GRLS No. 1202 on August 24, 1981, which plat is incorporated herein and made a part hereof for a more complete and accurate description of said herein described property and improvements thereon.

TRACT TWO: All that tract or parcel of land situate and lying in the State of Georgia, County of Peach, and in the City of Fort Valley therein, being described by courses and distances as follows: Starting at the Intersection of the Northwesterly right-of-way line of Allen Street and the Northeastly right-of-way line of Perry Railroad Street; thence in a Northwesterly direction, along a curve forming the Northeast right-of-way line of Perry Railroad Street, which curve has a chord of 45.33 feet in length with a bearing of North 32 degrees 54 minutes 4 seconds West, a distance of 45.34 feet; thence in a Northwesterly direction along a curve forming the Northeastly right-of-way line of Perry Railroad Street, which curve has a chord 39.83 feet in length, with a bearing of North 30 degrees 59 minutes 1 second West, for a distance of 39.83 feet to the point or place of beginning. Starting at the before located point or place of beginning; thence North 63 degrees 33 minutes 22 seconds East. 45.76 feet; thence North 46 degrees 1 minute 22 seconds East 111.90 feet; thence North 41 degrees 43 minutes 51 seconds West 30.67 feet; thence South 42 degrees 40 minutes 54 seconds West 37.35 feet; thence South 49 degrees 11 minutes 7 seconds West. 26.86 feet; thence South 54 degrees 17 minutes 49 seconds West, 86.10 feet to a point

lying on the Northeast right-of-way line of Perry Railroad Street, thence in a Southeasterly direction, along a curve forming the Northeast right-of-way line of Perry Railroad Street which curve has a chord of 29.50 feet in length, with a bearing of South 29 degrees 25 minutes 20 seconds East, for a distance of 29.50 feet to the point or place of beginning.

Now known as 210 S. Perry Railroad Street according to the present system for numbering. The above described property is more particularly shown and described on a plat entitled, Property survey for Norman Fitzgerald, Located as shown in the City of Fort Valley, Peach County, Georgia; as made by Thomas W. Futral, III, GRLS No. 1202, on December 22, 1997, which plat is incorporated herein and made a part hereof by reference thereto.

Said property may more commonly be known as 210 Perry Railroad St, Fort Valley, GA 31030. The debt secured by said Security Deed has been and is hereby declared due because of, among other possible events of default, non-payment of the monthly installments on said loan. The debt remaining in default, this sale will be made for the purpose of paying the same and all expenses of this sale, including attorney's fees (notice of intent to collect attorney's fees having been given).

The individual or entity that has full authority to negotiate, amend and modify all terms of the loan is MCLP Asset Company, Inc., 75 Beattie Place, Greenville, SC 29601, 1-800-365-7107.

Said property will be sold on an "as-is" basis without any representation, warranty or recourse against the above-named or the undersigned. The sale will also be subject to the following items which may affect the title: a) zoning ordinances; b) matters which would be disclosed by an accurate survey or by an inspection of the property; c) any outstanding ad valorem taxes, including taxes, which constitute liens upon said property whether or not now due and payable; d) special assessments; e) the right of redemption of any taxing authority; f) all outstanding bills for public utilities which constitute liens upon said property; g) all restrictive covenants, easements, rights-of-way and any other matters of record superior to said Security Deed. To the best of the knowledge and belief of the undersigned, the owners and party in possession of the property are - Denis C. Onwuallu and/or tenant(s). The sale will be conducted subject to 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.

MCLP Asset Company, Inc. as Attorney-in-Fact for Denis C. Onwuallu Contact: Padgett Law Group: 6267 Old Water Oak Road, Suite 203, Tallahassee, FL 32312; (850) 422-2520 12/10/2025, 12/17/2025, 12/24/2025, 12/31/2025
3628 (Case#: 25-013418-2)

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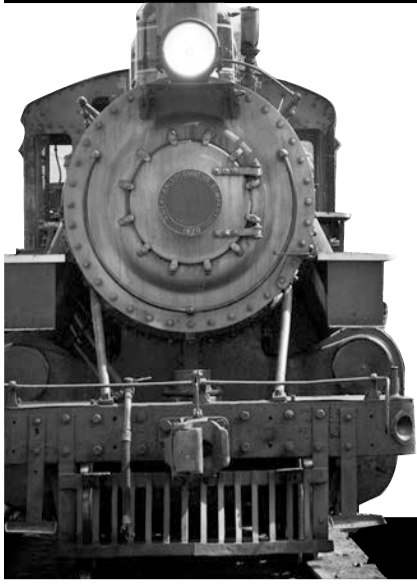
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2025 GA CONTINUED FROM 1A

malevolent students before they could do harm and to bolster mental health services.

July 25: About 8,500 students secured approval to begin the school year in private schools, their tuition covered by a new state-funded voucher program that was expected to cost taxpayers \$55 million.

July 28: State authorities announced an investigation of a company accused of operating a Ponzi scheme that bilked investors while funding Republican political campaigns. The announcement by Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger followed the filing of a lawsuit by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission against First Liberty Building and Loan and its operator Edwin Brant Frost IV.

Aug. 6: Four soldiers and a civilian were shot by a gunman at the U.S. Army's Fort Stewart near Savannah. All survived and a sergeant was charged with attempted murder

Aug. 25: Kemp announced his decision to deploy about 75 military members across the state to aid U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Sept. 4: Federal agents detained 475 workers at Hyundai's electric vehicle battery plant near Savannah, most of them Korean nationals, causing friction with the South Korean government.

Sept. 5: Kemp announced plans to send 316 members of the Georgia National Guard to Washington, D.C. to support Trump's use of troops to patrol the nation's capital.

Nov. 4: Republicans felt a chill as voters soundly defeated two

GOP incumbents on the Public Service Commission, choosing two Democrats instead. The monopoly regulator had raised electricity rates several times, leading to a backlash that pushed "affordability" to the top of the political agenda.

Nov. 21: U.S. Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, the Rome Republican who forged a political brand as a staunch ally of Trump, solidified her break with the president by announcing her resignation a year early, in January. She disagreed with Trump on several issues, including artificial intelligence, military action overseas and release of the federal files concerning deceased sex abuser Jeffrey Epstein.

Nov. 26: A Fulton County judge granted dismissal of the criminal election conspiracy charges against Trump and his remaining co-defendants after a prosecutor took the case from District Attorney Fani Willis when the courts sidelined her over ethical concerns.

Dec. 19: The state Public Service Commission, with less than two weeks to go in the terms of two Republicans ousted by voters in November, granted a controversial expansion of electrical generation capacity for Georgia Power. The monopoly secured approval to build five gas-powered plants while sourcing other power to supply speculative demand by future data centers. The expansion raised concerns about the environmental impact of burning more fossil fuel and the cost to current customers for the nearly 10 gigawatts in new capacity proved unnecessary.

Congressman Bishop Opposes House Republican Bill That Fails To Lower Healthcare Insurance Premiums For Millions Of Americans

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

WASHINGTON - Today, Congressman Sanford D. Bishop, Jr. (GA-02) opposed, H.R. 6703, a bill prepared by U.S. House Republican leaders that fails to extend Affordable Care Act (ACA) tax credits. Without Congressional action to extend the credits before December 31, the cost of health insurance could double or triple and make it unaffordable for 20 million Americans. This

includes 92,000 people in Georgia's Second Congressional District who will see their monthly premiums drastically increase next month.

"I have always been open to working across the aisle to improve healthcare for Americans. I know that many Republican colleagues agree that Affordable Care Act tax credits should be maintained for hardworking Americans," said Congressman Bishop. "Unfortunately, today's bill is a bait and switch, profess-

ing lower costs but really delivering less care. It would allow healthcare plans that destabilize the insurance market, offer patients less protection, and leave patients with big medical bills not covered by insurance."

"Sadly, House Republican leaders forced a vote on today's bill and prevented Democrats and Republicans from putting forward a bipartisan solution to this crisis. Without extending the ACA tax credits, Georgians are going to be hit with sticker

shock as their health insurance costs skyrocket in January," added Congressman Bishop. "They will not be able to pay the high cost and will be forced to drop coverage."

The much-needed ACA tax credits are being allowed to expire by Republican leaders to help pay for permanent tax breaks for billionaires that were included in H.R. 1, the "big, ugly bill" which was passed and signed into law by President Trump in July.

Year End Review : A Few Highlights from Peach County Sports

Trojans Baseball Team Region 1-AAA Champs



Photo Contributed

Trojan baseball team after win vs. Cairo Syrupmakers for region 1-AAA championship.

By Chris McKenzie, Sports Reporter

With a win against the Syrupmakers of Cairo, the Trojans (20-2) secured the Region 1- AAA championship. This is the Trojans first Region Championship since 2009. The team will travel to Jacksonville, Florida to face Fernandina Beach High School on Thursday, April 03, 2025, to take on the Pirates. With only 8 games left in the regular season, The bats look to remain hot, while the defense look to remain stingy.

BMS Lady Eagles Soccer Team League Champions



Photo Contributed

(May 3, 2025) BYRON, Ga. BMS Lady Eagles Soccer team coming back to Byron today as LEAGUE CHAMPIONS! The girls won against Howard Middle in the championship game. Final score: 1-0.

Peach County Rolling Trojans WIN JV Wheelchair Basketball State Championship, Team Members and Coach Honored



By PCSS

The Peach County Rolling Trojans win JV Wheelchair Basketball State Championship, Team Members and Coach Honored

(Saturday, March 1st) The Trojans rolled into the state championship with a 6-0 record in 1st place. During the semifinal game the Trojans faced the Clarke County Classic City Dawgs. The Classic City Dawgs played tough defense, but the Trojans well rounded offensive attack overwhelmed them. Caleb Watters (PCHS) 14 points and Jace Harter (PCHS) 12 points led the Trojans offense. Sannitra Colbert (PCHS) 4 points and Jeremiah Rhodes

(PCHS) 6 points contributed as well. Jace Tolliver (BES) and Nick Long (PCHS) worked hard on defense to hold off the Dawgs late game rally. The Trojans advanced to the championship game with a 36-24 victory.

During the championship game, the Trojans went head-to-head with the Ga Storm. The GA Storm ended their season 6-0 tied for 1st. The Trojans knew they had a battle ahead of them. The championship truly lived up to the hype from the jump ball. Jace Harter stepped up huge leading his team with 23 points!!! Caleb Watters poured in 9 points and Sannitra Colbert contributed 6 points. Nick Long worked

hard helping his teammates to get open to score. Jeremiah Rhodes and Jace Tolliver played heads up defense turning on the pressure not allowing the Storm to score during the 6th period.

The Trojans defeated the Ga Storm 38-23 to capture the 2025 State JV Wheelchair Basketball Championship!!

What a season for the Trojans!!

- Rolling Trojans- 2025 State Basketball Champions!!

- Sannitra Colbert and Jeremiah Rhodes - All State Honorees

- Coach Walter Johnson-GHSA Adapted Sports Coach of the Year for Georgia and NFHS.

Byron Middle School Lady Eagles Capture Macon Softball League Championship

By Chris McKenzie Sports Reporter

The Byron Middle School Lady Eagles soared to victory in commanding style, capturing the Macon Softball League Championship with a 12-0 shutout win over Miller Middle School. The championship triumph capped off a remarkable season for the Lady Eagles, who showcased teamwork, determination, and pure dominance from the first pitch to the final out.

From the opening inning, Byron Middle made their championship intentions clear. The Lady Eagles' bats came alive early, stringing together timely hits and smart base running to jump out to a lead that Miller Middle could never recover from. On the defensive side, the Lady Eagles were impenetrable — led by stellar pitching and airtight field-



ing that kept Miller scoreless throughout the game.

The victory not only secured the championship title but also highlighted the growth and spirit of the Byron Middle School softball program. Players and fans alike celebrated the win as a proud moment for the school

and the community.

With their 12-0 victory, the Lady Eagles cemented their place at the top of the Macon Softball League — champions through and through.

Photo Contributed
Byron Middle softball team hoisting championship trophy

Fort Valley Middle School Trojans Capture Bibb County Championship with Perfect Season



By Chris McKenzie, Sports Reporter

Photo Contributed

The Fort Valley Middle School Trojans completed a dream season on Thursday night, capturing the Bibb County Middle School Football Championship with a commanding 34-14 victory over Weaver Middle School. The win capped off an undefeated 7-0 season under first-year head coach Jaquez Jackson, marking a historic moment for the program.

From the opening kickoff, the Trojans showed why they were the team to beat all season. Their high-powered offense and relentless defense controlled the tempo of the game, keeping Weaver on its heels throughout the night. The Trojans' explosive playmaking and disciplined execution reflected the growth and focus Coach Jackson instilled in his players since day one.

The championship victory was the perfect ending to a dominant season that saw the Trojans overcome every challenge in

their path. Fort Valley's defense was a force all year, while the offense showcased balance and big-play ability in every match-up.

With the title secured and an undefeated record in the books, the Fort Valley Middle School Trojans have set a new standard of excellence for the program.

The Trojans' 2025 campaign will be remembered not only for the wins, but for the heart, teamwork, and determination that carried them to championship glory.

2025 Jag Cup Invitational Soccer Champions



By Chris McKenzie, Sports Reporter

Congratulations to the Peach County Girls Soccer team. The annual JAG CUP at Spalding High School in Griffin, GA, is a premier preseason soccer tournament designed to help teams prepare for the upcoming season.



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Tips To Stay The Course With A New Year's Resolution

Special to
The Leader Tribune

The holiday season is steeped in tradition. Many of those traditions are rooted in celebrants' faith, but one of the last customs people embrace each year is largely secular.

The tradition of making New Year's resolutions is older than many people may realize. According to History.com, the ancient Babylonians are believed to be the first people to make New Year's resolutions when they began doing so roughly 4,000 years ago during a 12-day festival known as Akitu. That festival was religious in nature, but many people now make resolutions with a goal toward self-improvement unrelated to their faith. As people ponder their resolutions for the year ahead, the following strategies might help them stay the course over the next 12 months.

Give serious thought to a prospective resolution. Statistics regarding New Year's resolutions vary, but a 2024 survey from the Pew Research Center found that 13 percent of adults polled indicated they kept none of their resolutions. Numerous variables can affect whether or not a person keeps a resolution, but giving a potential resolution little thought ahead of time can make achieving a goal unlikely. Give any potential change ample thought before committing to a resolution. If you aspire to lose weight, identify the ways you're going to go about that. Find a local gym to join, identify ways to eat a more nutritious diet and, perhaps most impor-

tantly, study how you can make time to stay the course. A little legwork in advance of declaring a resolution can pay off in the long run.

Set periodic goals. Small goals along the way to the larger goal can serve as motivation to keep going. If you aspire to watch less television and read more, resolve to read 100 pages per week and then gradually increase that total if you so desire. Small goals can provide a great means to measure incremental progress that will ultimately make achieving a larger goal more likely.

Be realistic. Realistic goals are more likely to be achieved than ones that seem good on the surface but are too difficult to keep. For example, if you aspire to exercise for an hour each day but obligations to work and family leave little time for physical activity, then you may need to reduce those expectations in favor of a more realistic, achievable goal. Taking on too much will only discourage you when hurdles inevitably appear, and that is likely to compel you to abandon the resolution entirely. If your initial goal is realistic, then any challenges that arise are less likely to derail your efforts.

Don't go it alone. Many people employ the buddy system as a means to stay motivated with fitness-related resolutions, and that approach can be applied to any goal you set at the beginning of the year. Having someone there to hold you accountable, and doing the same for a partner, increases the chances you'll stay the course.

New Year's resolutions are an ancient tradition, even if the

majority tend to be abandoned rather quickly. But anyone can

buck that trend and stay the course by employing a few sim-

ple, yet effective strategies.



The New Year's Eve Countdown

10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1...

Come New Year's Eve, it's customary to count down the last 10 seconds until the clock strikes midnight and the new year officially begins. It seems like the 10-second countdown is as old as time itself, but the tradition actually is much more modern. According to Alexis McCrossen, a history professor at Southern Methodist University, prior to the twentieth century, New Year's Day was celebrated rather than New Year's Eve. And even up until the mid-twentieth century, countdowns were not associated with New Year's Eve or even festive occasions. However, the tides turned on countdowns with the Apollo moon launch in 1961. After that, countdowns for radio hits and other fun activities began. Although some TV announcers in the 1960s began counting down to the new year, it wasn't until 1979 that the crowd at Times Square in New York City began joining in. This was despite the first New Year's Eve ball drop being held more than 70 years earlier in 1907. Publisher Adolph Ochs organized the first New Year's Eve party in Times Square in 1904, while the first-ever ball drop took place three years later when the city banned fireworks for the celebration. Yet it was not until the final year of the 1970s for it to be fashionable for a crowd to gather and participate in shouting out the 10-second countdown, a practice that is now tradition.






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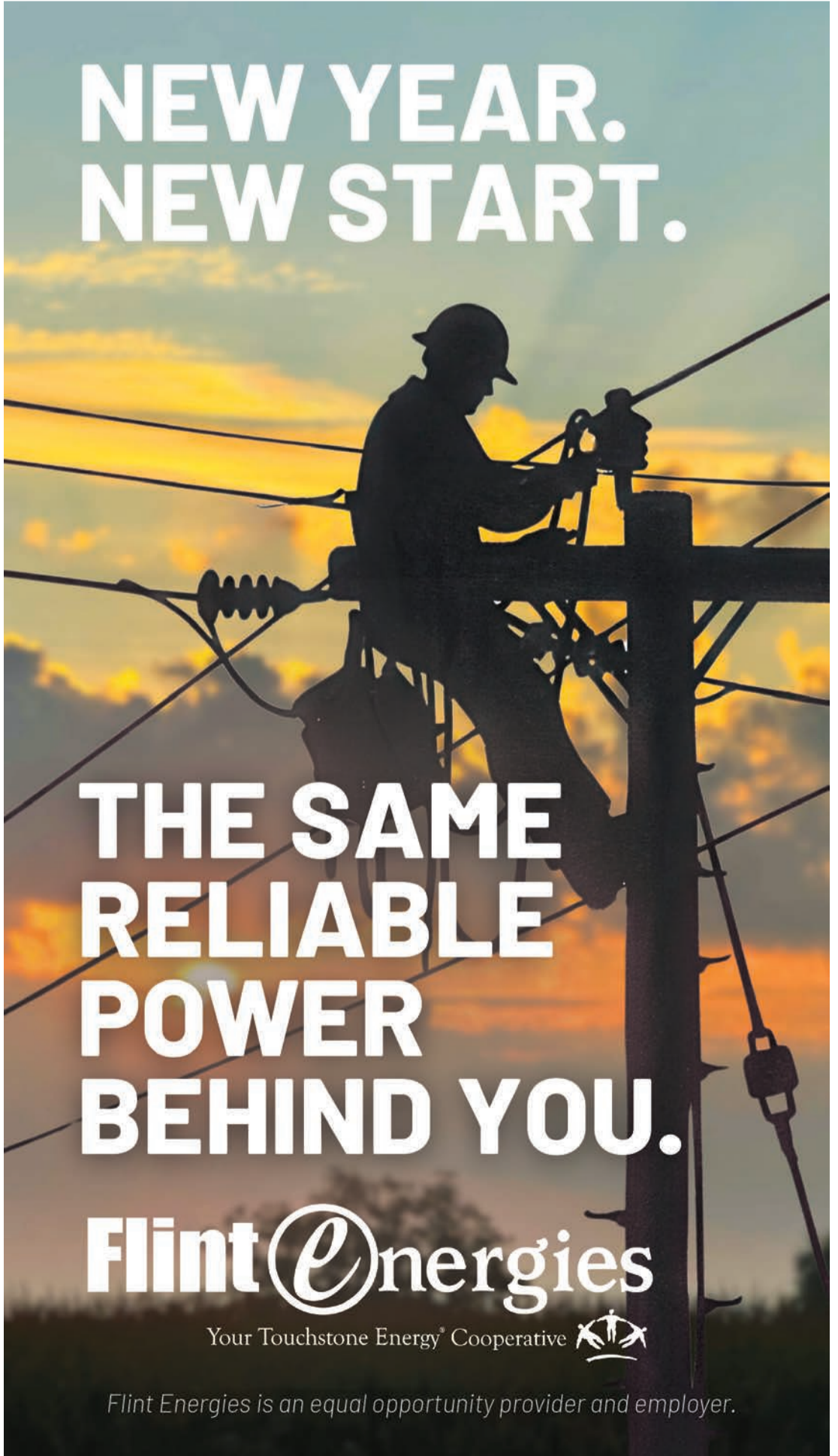
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NEW YEAR'S WORD SEARCH

W	M	E	X	P	E	C	T	A	T	I	O	N	S	I	E	M	I	T	T
M	L	H	O	L	I	D	A	Y	R	P	M	D	A	P	Y	A	J	S	B
L	O	P	R	H	W	P	J	S	Y	K	O	G	O	C	U	P	A	T	L
O	W	M	A	G	P	P	G	Y	N	S	F	H	E	L	L	O	L	L	X
K	G	R	E	R	H	G	C	R	W	O	R	R	D	N	T	O	A	B	W
R	L	E	N	N	T	F	N	A	N	A	I	L	I	J	D	B	C	C	S
K	K	S	Y	O	T	I	B	I	E	F	A	T	J	E	T	I	G	K	E
X	P	O	P	O	I	O	E	Y	N	N	O	A	A	O	N	C	N	F	M
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D	H	M	E	M	O	R	I	E	S	P	A	R	A	D	E	S	I	Y	W
G	N	I	C	N	A	D	P	F	Y	L	I	M	A	F	M	N	M	R	D

WORDS

- | | |
|----------------|-------------|
| AULD LANG SYNE | HAPPY |
| BALLOONS | HOLIDAY |
| BEGINNING | HOPE |
| CELEBRATIONS | JANUARY |
| CHAMPAGNE | JOY |
| CLOCK | MEMORIES |
| CONFETTI | MIDNIGHT |
| COUNTDOWN | MOMENTOUS |
| CROWD | NEW |
| DANCING | NOISEMAKER |
| ENDING | OLDER |
| EXPECTATIONS | PARADES |
| FAMILY | PARTIES |
| FOOD | PLANS |
| FOOTBALL | RESOLUTIONS |
| FRESH | SINGING |
| FRIENDS | TIME |
| GAMES | TOAST |
| | YEAR |

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally & diagonally throughout the puzzle.


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