



Happy Saint Patrick's Day

The Leader Tribune

Peach County's Newspaper

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Legal Organ for Peach County, City of Fort Valley and City of Byron

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Peach Community Mourns 12-Year-Old Who Took Her Own Life, Rallies for Change

By Zoe Hammond, News Editor

PEACH COUNTY, Ga. – The Peach County community is rallying behind one family working to raise awareness about bullying and childhood mental health, after the recent death of Byron Middle School student, 12-year-old Ava Klair Little, who endured prolonged bullying on social media, family and community members say.

Ava died by suicide on Feb. 25, 2026. She would have turned 13 in May.

In the days following her death, there has been an outpouring of support that has spread both online and across the community. A GoFundMe started by Ava's grandmother on Feb. 26 has raised over \$30,400 as of Monday afternoon to help cover funeral expenses and provide relief for her parents in the days ahead.

"Ava Little was a truly caring and loving soul, someone who was never afraid to try anything new. Her adventurous spirit and deep devotion to her family and friends set her apart, and her passion for those she loved was unmatched. She brought light and warmth to everyone around her, always offering kindness and support to those in need," the GoFundMe page reads.

Ava's funeral was on Friday, March 6, at 2:00 p.m. at the Assembly of Warner Robins, with services provided by FairHaven Funeral Home and Cremation Services.

"Ava was a 'girly girl' who wasn't afraid to get dirty. She loved being outdoors, especially hunting and fishing. Athletics was one of Ava's greatest passions. She was

a standout in track and field, competing with strength, speed, and unwavering determination. Her love for sports extended far beyond the track. Ava also played softball, basketball, and kickball, and she eagerly looked forward to one day playing volleyball. Whether on the field or court, she gave her all, inspiring teammates with encouragement and competitive spirit," Ava's obituary, provided by FairHaven Funeral Home and Cremation Services, reads.

Ava's family is asking that everyone teach their children and loved ones to have compassion and to never bully or belittle anyone for any reason, to honor Ava's memory.

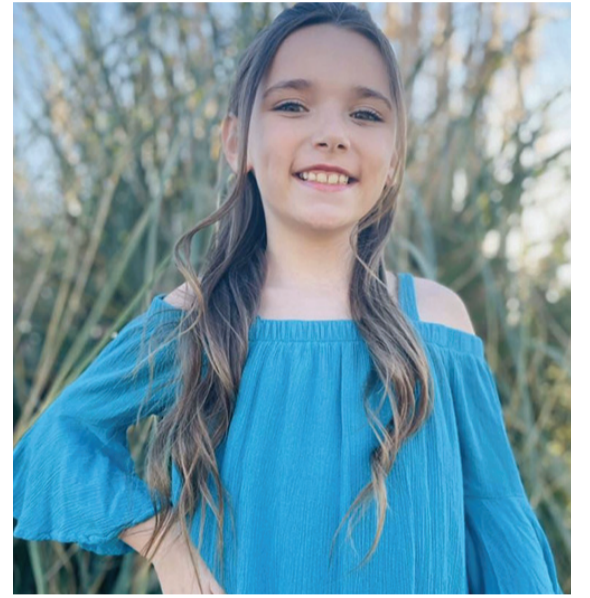
In an email response to The Leader Tribune, Peach County Schools said it is aware of community concerns about bullying and is addressing them through established protocols.

"Our school district and our community are grieving the unexpected passing of one of our students. Any loss of a young person is a tragedy, and our entire school community is deeply saddened right now."

"Out of respect for the student and the family, we cannot discuss details of the situation. Right now, our focus is on supporting our students, staff, and this family during an incredibly difficult time. We are providing counseling and support services at the school for anyone who needs them."

"We ask the community to keep this family and all others who are affected by this tragedy in their thoughts."

If you, or someone you know, is experiencing mental



Ava Little

Contributed

health-related distress, you can contact the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline by calling or texting 988. The Suicide and Crisis Lifeline can also be reached online at 988lifeline.org. 988 is confidential, free, and available all day, every day, all year round.

Remember, you are not alone, and there are people who can help.

Fourth Spring Into Good Health Provides Community With Free Screenings, Resources

By Zoe Hammond
News Editor

FORT VALLEY, Ga. – Spring has sprung in Middle Georgia, and hopping right alongside it is the Peach County Health Department's annual Spring Into Good Health event. Spring Into Good Health took place on Saturday, March 7, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Marvin Crafter Festival Park in Fort Valley.

This is the fourth year of Spring Into Good Health, where the Peach County Health Department provides essential health services and resources in a fun, family-friendly environment to the Peach County community.

Spring Into Good Health is an opportunity to educate the public on the different aspects of their health and to bring resources to the Peach County community. It was also a great opportunity for networking with over 40 vendors in attendance.

These vendors included the Peach County Health Department, North Central Health District, Georgia Department of

Community Affairs, Peach State Health Plan Inc., Crisis Line And Safe House of Central Georgia, Middle Georgia Wound Solution LLC., Atrium Health Navicent, Fort Valley State University, Central Georgia Technical College, Trojan Nation Touchdown Club, Peach Concerned Citizens, IHope Inc., LifeLink Foundation, Head Start, Reign Premium Sanitary Pads, It Takes a Village Maternity Expo, and District Attorney Anita Howard, to name a few.

Those in attendance were able to receive free health screening, such as blood pressure screenings, glucose and cholesterol screenings, and heart monitoring from Atrium Health Navicent. The Atrium Health Navicent Mammography Coach was also on site for women over 40 to get a health screening.

Throughout the event, there were multiple raffles, which had prizes including Bluetooth speakers, Bluetooth coolers, and similar paraphernalia from the Peach County Health Depart-



Photo Zoe Hammond

Community members came out with their families to participate in Spring Into Good Health.

ment.

This year's Spring Into Good Health featured a Health passport, which could be stamped at each booth. Once a person received five stamps on their passport, they received a free meal

ticket, which could be redeemed at Soul to Soul Food or at Sunset Slush.

Millicent Jordan, the Customer Service Representative Supervisor of the Peach County Health Department, previously spoke

with The Leader Tribune about the upcoming 2026 Spring into Good Health. During the interview, Jordan had something

SPRING INTO GOOD HEALTH CONTINUED PG 2A

Man Accused of Arson at Byron Church Appears in Court, Argues He Is Not Competent to Stand Trial

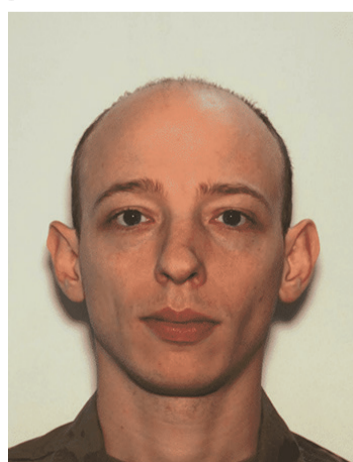
By Zoe Hammond
News Editor

BYRON, Ga. — A man accused of setting multiple fires to a Byron church back in August 2024 appeared in court on Tuesday, March 3, while arguing that he is not competent to stand trial.

On Tuesday, August 20, 2024, the Byron Police Department sent out a press release which stated Luke Westfeld was taken into custody by the Columbia County Sheriff's Office in Columbia County for allegedly setting at least two fires at the Byron United Methodist Church.

Police say Westfeld, originally from Columbia County, drove two hours to set the church fire in Peach County. However, authorities could not determine a motive for his actions.

A federal grand jury indicted



Luke Westfeld

Contributed

ed Westfeld on federal arson charges and psychiatrists have examined Westfeld to determine whether he is fit to stand trial. The psychiatrists will also assess whether he was mentally competent at the time of the fire.



Photo from City of Byron, Georgia/Facebook Page

Byron Methodist Church morning after fire was put out.



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Multiple Law Enforcement Agencies Warn Of Fake Toll Violation Traffic Hearing Notices

By Zoe Hammond
News Editor

PEACH COUNTY, Ga. – Numerous law enforcement agencies are warning Middle Georgians about a scam, titled “Notice of Traffic Citation Hearing – Toll Violation,” that has been circulating via email and text messages.

Peach County law enforcement, alongside many other Middle Georgia counties, has posted about this scam on their social media pages along with information on what to do

if contacted by a scammer.

The document, provided by the Byron Police Department, appears to be from the State of Georgia with threats of arrest, license suspension, or additional charges if payment is not made.

Georgia courts do not send random traffic citation notices with QR codes demanding payment. Official court documents will be properly served or mailed through verified channels, not through social media, email, or text.

Scammers use threats such as “bench war-

rant,” “license suspension,” and urgent court dates to pressure people into paying quickly, while QR codes can direct you to fraudulent payment websites designed to steal an individual’s money and personal information.

Law enforcement wants to remind people that if you receive something like this, do not scan the QR code, do not send money, and do not provide personal information. You can contact the court directly, using a verified phone number from their official website, and report the message to your local law enforcement agency.

SCAM ALERT

STATE OF GEORGIA

IN THE STATE COURT OF FULTON COUNTY
COUNTY OF FULTON

Case No: 26TC-253486

Judge: John Smith

NOTICE OF TRAFFIC CITATION HEARING — TOLL VIOLATION

Our records indicate that payment has not been received for a toll violation associated with your vehicle. You are hereby notified that you are alleged to have committed the following traffic citation:

Violation: Failure to Pay Toll

Authority: O.C.G.A. § 32-10-64 / 32-10-665

You must:

- Appear in person for a hearing on the date and time below; OR
- Admit responsibility and pay the scheduled citation penalty and authorized costs before the hearing date.

HEARING LOCATION:

State Court of Fulton County
185 Central Ave SW
Atlanta, GA 30303
(404) 613-5085

FAILURE TO APPEAR OR PAY MAY RESULT IN:

- A bench warrant for your arrest
- Suspension of your driver's license
- Contempt of court charges

HEARING DATE & TIME:

March 04, 2026
9:00 AM

Scan QR code to pay:



John Smith
Clerk of State Court
Fulton County, Georgia

SPRING INTO GOOD HEALTH

CONTINUED FROM 1A



Photos Zoe Hammond

Fort Valley Fire Department, Peach County DPH and local sororities were a few of the vendors offering healthy information and screenings.

to say to the public about their health.

“Your health matters. Your well-being matters. Your family matters. This year, we are especially proud to share that we have received our highest level of sponsorship support to date, reflecting the growing dedication and investment in the health of our community. Community wellness is a shared responsibility, and we grow stronger when we come together. We encourage you to come out, take advantage of the free services and resources. See firsthand the strong commitment our local partners have toward improving the health and well-being of Peach County,” Jordan said.

The Peach County Health Department is open Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. They offer a wide range of clinical and environ-



mental health services, including child health, women’s health, family planning, STD/HIV test-

ing, immunizations, food service establishment inspections, on-site sewage management inspections, rabies control, and much more. Additionally, the Health Department provides WIC services from Monday to Thursday.

Many services that the Peach County Health Department offers are available free, and all services we provide are low-cost. No one is denied service because of inability to pay or lack of insurance.



For more information on provides, they can be found at office phone number is (478) the Peach County Health De- NCHD52.org/Peach and on 825-6939. partment and the services it Facebook at PeachDPH. Their

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO INTRODUCE LOCAL LEGISLATION

Notice is given that there will be introduced at the 2026 regular session of the General Assembly of Georgia a bill to amend an Act providing a new charter for the City of Fort Valley, approved August 22, 1907 (Ga. L. 1907, p. 651), as amended; and for other purposes.

BEST of 2026 Fort Valley Award Winner in the Florist category

By Dee's Flowers & Gifts, LLC

Dee's Flowers & Gifts, LLC has been officially recognized as the BEST of 2026 Fort Valley Award Winner in the Florist category!

This honor is based on verified Google Reviews data, analyzed and certified by BusinessRate — meaning this recognition comes directly from the authentic voices and experiences of our valued customers.

We did not apply for this award.

We did not campaign for this award.

This recognition was earned through your reviews, your trust, your referrals, and your continued support.

To our loyal customers, community part-

ners, and the beautiful city of Fort Valley — THANK YOU for believing in us and allowing us to serve your special moments with excellence, creativity, and love.

Every bouquet. Every arrangement. Every gift. Made with purpose and passion.

We remain committed to delivering outstanding service, fresh designs, and unforgettable experiences for our community.

Fort Valley, we appreciate you more than words can express!

With gratitude, Drs. Marcus & Shawna Early
Dee's Flowers & Gifts, LLC



Specializing in Natural Gas Engineering • Project Management • Associated Services
P. O. Box 26097 • Macon, GA 31221 • (478) 342-0386 • info@sappengineering.com

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BID

Fort Valley Utility Commission

Crestwood Drive Gas Main & Service Replacement Project

Sealed bids will be received by the Fort Valley Utility Commission Administration Office, 500 Anthoine St., Fort Vally, GA 31030 until: **Wednesday, April 15, 2026, at 10:00 am** for the furnishing of labor, tools, skill, equipment and incidentals for the construction and installation of:

Replacing approximately 1,700 ft of 2" Steel with 2" PE gas main and 12 residential gas services on Crestwood Dr. in Fort Valley, GA.

Bids received after the designated time will not be considered.

Bids should be submitted in a sealed envelope addressed to the above address for the Fort Valley Utility Commission. To be considered, the bid shall include a copy of the Utility Contractors License, appropriate insurance certificate and a summary list of contractor employees showing tasks and expiration dates for Operator Qualification under the current GMA OQ Plan.

Electronic versions of the bid documents and construction specifications are available by contacting Jason Baker at jbaker@sappengineering.com. A mandatory prebid meeting will be held at the above address on **Wednesday, March 25, 2026 at 10:00 am** to answer questions and review the details of the project.

All bid forms must be accompanied by a Bid Bond in an amount not less than ten percent (10%) of the amount bid. The successful bidder, if awarded the Contract, will be required to furnish a Performance Bond and Payment Bond, each in the amount of one hundred percent (100%) of the Contract amount.

The Fort Valley Utility Commission reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive formalities and re-advertise.

All questions should be directed to
Jason Baker
Sapp Engineering & Services
jbaker@sappengineering.com
229-563-6635

Police Beat

★★★★★★★★★★★★

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

Byron Arrests/Citations

Crosby, Troy Norman, 53, Centerville, GA: Driving Across Private Property To Avoid An Intersection, DUI - Combo Any Combination Of A1/A2/A3

Curry, Victoria Valente, 20, Macon, GA: Driving With Suspended License

Demarco, Joseph Vernon, 51, Silver Springs, FL: Illegal Possession Of Controlled Substance, Possession And Use Of Drug Related Objects, Failure To Maintain Lane, Driving Under Influence Drugs/Alcohol

Harvey, Kilbert Lloyd, 24, Madison, IL: Driving Without A Valid License, Possession Of Marijuana, Less Than 1 Oz, Open Container Possession (City Ordinance), Following Too Closely, Reckless Driving, Loitering Or Prowling

Hernandez, Gabriel Lorenzo, 29, Warner Robins, GA: Failure To Obey Flashing Signal, Tag Light Required, Defective Headlights, Driving Without A Valid License

Huerta, Angel Joshua, 21, Byron, GA: Reckless Driving, Fleeing/Attempting To Elude Police, DUI - Alcohol 0.08 Grams Or More 21 YOA Or Over, Failure To Maintain A Single Lane, Failure To Signal Lane Change Or Turn, Driving On Wrong Side Of Road, Impeding Traffic Flow/Impeding In Passing Lane, Criminal Trespass, Possession Of Marijuana, Less Than 1 Oz, Possession Of Drug Related Object, Fail To Rpt Striking Fixed Object, Laying Drag Or Reckless Conduct W/Auto

Jones, Teagan Michelle, 33, Macon, GA: Probation Violation (When Probation Terms Are Altered) - Felony

Jordan, Tyannia Maria, 18, Macon, GA: Tag Light Required, Provisional License Curfew Violation, DUI - Alcohol 0.02 Grams Or More Under 21 YOA

Lundy, Albert Poncherllo, 24, Macon, GA:

Maldonado-Santiago, Michael Angelo, 24, Warner Robins, GA: Defective Headlights, Driving With Suspended License

Morris, Lucas Sikii, 33, Sparta, GA: Driving With Suspended License

Rutherford, Timothy Blake, 29, Fitzgerald, GA: Driving With Suspended License

Salter, Joseph Richard, 41, Warner Robins, GA: Illegal Possession Of Controlled Substance

Shears, Ashley Nicole, 35, Warner Robins, GA: Probation Violation

Smith, Russell Andrew, 35, Macon, GA: Probation Violation (When Probation Terms Are Altered) - Misdemeanor

Stanley, Jamia Dnayshia, 24, Macon, GA: Driving Without A Valid License, Window Tint Violation, Knowingly Driving With Suspended/Canceled Registration, Safety Belt Violation For 18 YOA And Older

Towns, Keandre Cordell, 21, Byron, GA: Defective Headlights, Driving Without A Valid License, Loitering Or Prowling

White, Destin Remon, 21, Macon, GA: DUI - Driving Under The Influence Of Alcohol - Concentration Is 0.08g Or More Within 3 Hrs Or More, Tag Light Required, Defective Or Missing Mirrors

Williams, Courtney Danielle, 36, Lizella, GA: Failure To Appear - Misdemeanor

Williams, Irma Jean, 52, Lithonia, GA: Wanted Out Of Newton Co So

Yates, Zavion Jaquez, 21, Fayetteville, GA: Aggravated Assault

Fort Valley Arrests/Citations

Brown, Trenton N, 37, Fort Valley, GA: Probation Violation (When Probation Terms Are Altered) - Felony

Harden, Rakeem Deshob, 30, Fort Valley, GA: Reckless Conduct

Jones, Cedrick Dewayne, 24, Macon, GA: Theft By Taking - Misdemeanor

Palmer, Zavien Roderick, 26, Savannah, GA: Possession Of A Schedule I Controlled Substance

Peach County Sheriff's Office

Arrests/Citations

Adams, Herman Leon, 44, Gordan, GA: Marijuana-Possess Less Than 1 Oz., Criminal Damage To Property - 2nd Degree

Askelson, Shaun Charles, 47, Byron, GA: Sexual Offender - Fail To Register/Provide False Information

Blas-Reyes, Andres, 20, Warner Robins, GA: Possession Of Marijuana Less Than A Oz, Underage Possession Of Alcohol

Bryant, Christopher Courtney, 43, Fort Valley, GA: Possession Of Open Alcohol Container, DUI - Driving Under The Influence Of Alcohol - Concentration Is 0.08g Or More Within 3 Hrs Or More, Wrong Side Of Road

Blye, Cavell Ceasar, 31, Perry, GA: Probation Violation (When Probation Terms Are Altered) - Misdemeanor

Daniel, Mario Orlando, 46, Warner Robins, GA: Probation Violation (When Probation Terms Are Altered) - Misdemeanor

Dickson, Chandrika Denise, 38, Fort Valley, GA: Court Order

Jackson, Fredrick Lamar, 44, Fort Valley, GA: Driving While License Suspended, Speeding In Excess Of Maximum Limits (State Speed And Zone Limits)

Johns, Clinton Dennis, 50, Byron, GA: Obstructing Or Hindering Law Enforcement Officers, Criminal Trespass, Obstructing Or Hindering Law Enforcement Officers, Obstructing Or Hindering Law Enforcement Officers, Obstructing Or Hindering Law Enforcement Officers, Criminal Trespass, Obstructing Or Hindering Law Enforcement Officers

Lopez Moreno, Jacob, 19, Byron, GA: Possession Of Marijuana, Driving Under Influence Drugs/Alcohol, Furnishing, Purchasing, And Possession Of Alcoholic Beverages By Persons Below Legal Age, Failure To Maintain Lane

Rivera, Steven Joel, 33, Byron, GA: Probation Violation (When Probation Terms Are Altered) - Misdemeanor

Smith, Jimmy Lee, 66, Fort Valley, GA: Probation Violation (When Probation Terms Are Altered) - Felony

Turner, Trevin Daniel, 38, Byron, GA: Driving Under Influence Drugs/Alcohol

Williams, Ajaila Monea:

Wilson, Martayshia, 27, Warner Robins, GA: Speeding In Excess Of Maximum Limits (State Speed And Zone Limits)

Pardons & Paroles Comp. Svs.

Arrests

Engram, Journey Edward, 40, Fort Valley, GA: Parole Violation

Peach County Community CALENDAR

email: news@theleadertribune.com



NOTICE PUBLIC MEETINGS City of Fort Valley Mayor & Council Meetings

Location: City Hall 204 W. Church St., Ft. Valley, GA 31030
WORK SESSION MEETING Tuesday, March 10, 2026 Time 06:00 P.M.
Join Zoom Meeting
Meeting ID: 848 3046 0283
Passcode: 396617

CITY COUNCIL MEETING Thursday, March 19, 2026 Time 06:30 P.M.
Join Zoom Meeting
Meeting ID: 832 3457 1063
Passcode: 262368

City of Fort Valley PUBLIC NOTICE Effective Immediately.
The Mayor's Monday Briefings have been cancelled until further notice. Thank you for your understanding.
Madam Mayor
Shakeena B. Reeves

Peach County Schools Pre-K Registration 2026-2027
Pre-K Registration will be Open, Monday, February 9, 2026 to Friday, March 27, 2026.

Peach County Board of Education Meeting Schedule
Fort Valley, GA - Peach County Schools
The March Board Study Session and Regular Board Meeting will be held as scheduled on March 2, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. and March 3, 2026 at 1:00 p.m. at the Peach County Board of Education.

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.

2026-2027 FORT VALLEY HEAD START RECRUITMENT
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, Well child check, Dental exam, GA public health 3300 (if applicable), www.mgcaa.org

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-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. (775)

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.

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.

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 DDA/CVB
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.

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

Notice to the Public

At this time, The Leader Tribune does not currently have an official Ads Sales Representative or Publisher. If you are interested in running an ad with The Leader Tribune, you can contact us either by our office phone at (478) 825-2432 or by our corresponding email at "sales@theleadertribune.com". The Leader Tribune's current email roster is available on Page 4 in the bottom left corner, any previously used emails that are not listed are no longer associated with The Leader Tribune. When in doubt, any submissions can be emailed to "news@theleadertribune.com" which will be forwarded to the proper email address.

Call or Text 478-955-1999

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110 Commercial Heights, Fort Valley, GA

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Carports
Gazebos
Playhouses
Greenhouses
Metal Buildings
Rent-to-Own

Bullying Isn't Acceptable, It's Time to Say Enough is Enough



By Zoe Hammond
News Editor

This is going to be a tough one. I'm sure if you've gotten to this point in the paper, you are already aware of this, but the Peach County community lost a young girl to suicide last month. Ms. Ava Little took her life after enduring prolonged bullying at Byron Middle School.

Taking a moment to be completely transparent, I am a Byron Middle Alumna who endured relentless bullying during my time there. For three years, I went to the administration about the bullying, and for those three years, all I received were promises to address the issue, but no true action. I was primarily bullied by one person and her occasional tag-alongs.

I say this not to take away attention from the loss of Ms. Ava's and what she endured, but to emphasize that bullying has always been an issue in schools — especially middle school.

According to Stomp Out Bullying, roughly 1 in 6 students have reported that they've either been the victim of some form of bullying or witnessed others being bullied, and 1 in 8 have experienced bigotry and name-calling.

I attended Byron Middle in 2005 to 2008, before social media fully took off as it did. I can't even imagine how much worse the inclusion of social media has made it for those enduring this kind of abuse. Add on to the fact that, for the most part, teachers cannot regulate what students do on social media, especially if it's done after school hours. That responsibility falls solely to the parents.

Parents need to talk openly with their children about the

behavior, set clear expectations for how to treat others, and establish consequences. According to StopBullying.gov, when adults respond quickly and consistently to bullying behavior, they send the message that it is not acceptable.

Teach children to respect others before they start school, and continue to talk about this topic on an ongoing basis. Even small acts of teasing should be stopped in their tracks. Don't fail to correct this kind of behavior due to a child's young age. This is exactly when to stop it.

SchoolSafety.gov writes, "Bullying is a widespread issue in the United States. While bullying can happen to anyone, some groups may be at greater risk. Bullying negatively affects those who are bullied, those who bully others, bystanders, and others in the school community. It is linked to many negative outcomes including impacts on mental and physical health, substance use, educational experience, violence, and suicide."

Bullying comes in many forms. It can be physical, such as hitting, kicking, shoving, and tripping. It can be verbal, such as name-calling and similar verbal insults. It can be emotional, such as manipulation, isolation, and exclusion. It can be social, such as spreading rumors or ostracizing someone. Cyberbullying is bullying through the use of digital technology and can take place on social media, online messaging platforms, and gaming platforms.

Bullying can threaten students' physical and emotional safety at school and can negatively impact their ability to learn.

The Journal of the American Medical Association reports that one-third of U.S. students experience bullying, either as a target or a perpetrator. Only a small percentage of children who are bullied report it. The reason is often that they do not believe adults will help them.

If you are being bullied, please tell a trusted adult, namely one of your teachers and a parent/

**HAMMOND
CONTINUED PG 9A**

Muscle and Economy of Movement



By Wade Yoder
IT Columnist

This is one of my favorite subjects because of its effect on pretty much everyone that can still move. A person's economy of movement simply is a measure of how easily they can do their activities of daily living (ADLs) whether an office worker, elite athlete or someone using a wheelchair. Either way the tasks we face throughout each of our day can either be very fatiguing or we can make them become easier by increasing

the strength of the muscles that move our tendons, ligaments, and skeleton throughout our daily routine, whatever it may be.

Our muscles work a lot like our senses, when we lose one, another tends to become more sensitive helping to compensate for what we lost or don't have." Example: a person that loses usage of the legs can strengthen upper body muscles to compensate for the lost leg strength or usage, thus increasing the economy of movement and her or his independence.

When we are less active and our muscles become weaker, our weight tends to hang much heavier from our tendons and ligaments causing structural problems and premature aging to our joints. And when this happens, our tendency is to move even less to avoid this pain, causing further weakness. If this cycle is not stopped, es-

pecially when combined with increased weight gain, the sheer weight of our vital organs, body fat, untuned muscle on our spine, hips, and knees along with the weight of our head on our neck will cause premature aging to our vertebra, joints, tendons and ligaments, causing a degenerative condition to our mobility and eventually causing a dependence on others for our normal activities of daily living (ADLs).

Things we can do: there are lots of exercises that can strengthen movements we use in real life, and you do not have to have a gym or exercise equipment to strengthen functional lifestyle movements. It's as simple as doing the things you have to do often and at a faster pace.

Example: if you want to strengthen the muscles you use to go up a flight of stairs, by simply repeating this activi-

ty often along with a gradual increase in the speed going up the stairs, it will become easier because of our muscles adapting to the new level of stress put on the muscles that help us go up the stairs. This same method works for an athlete as well, and the reason is simple our body is designed to adapt to new or increased stresses.

Isn't it neat that by simply strengthening the muscles that we use throughout our day, can make so we're a lot less tired at the end of our day making so that we still have the energy for other things and to enjoy the ones we care about?

Strengthening our muscles not only strengthens our movements and makes our days go better, but it also takes a lot of weight off of our load bearing joints!

The high cost of being the 'Top State for Business'



By Charlie Hayslett
Special to the Georgia Trust
for Local News

Last September, Area Development, a trade publication serving the economic development community, crowned Georgia as the nation's "Top State for Business" yet again.

Gov. Brian Kemp, of course, promptly issued a press release headlined "Georgia No. 1 for

Business for 12th Straight Year." The governor and other Republican state leaders naturally reaped a fair-sized PR bonanza from media coverage around the state.

A couple of weeks ago, when the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis issued state- and county-level per capita income data for 2024, it somehow escaped the attention of the governor and his communications team. Or maybe not. After all, "We're 41st in Per Capita Income" doesn't have quite the same ring to it.

These are, I submit, not unrelated stories. This contrast — between celebrated business rankings and sagging incomes — has defined much of Georgia's recent economic history. Indeed, when Area Development bestowed its 2021 honors on Georgia and Texas (co-winners that year), it made the connection explicit, noting:

"Companies choosing locations in Georgia and Texas appreciate the fact that they both have wages below the average in more than half of all other states ..."

Well, yes. Georgia first snared Area Development's "Top State for Business" honors in 2014, just as its per capita income performance was bottoming out (for the first time) under then-Gov. Nathan Deal, the state's second Republican governor pretty much since the dawn of time.

Deal's predecessor, Sonny Perdue, the state's first Republican governor pretty much since the dawn of time, had inherited a statewide PCI that was right at 95% of the national average from Roy Barnes, the last Democratic governor. When Barnes left office at the end of 2002, Georgia ranked 25th nationally among the 50 states; by the time Perdue hung it up eight years

later, we were down to 85.7% of the national average and ranked 40th. No state dropped further in rank during that period.

I should probably pause here to emphasize that improving Georgia's citizens' incomes was once regarded as an important economic development objective. Whether that's still the case is unclear. In the 1980s, Gov. Joe Frank Harris and his economic development chief, the late George Berry, focused heavily on elevating PCI across the state. Berry, who served as commissioner of industry, trade and tourism (since renamed the Department of Economic Development), jawboned the issue in speeches throughout the state.

Toward the end of Harris' time in office, the state developed a job tax credit program designed to steer jobs to the state's poorest counties, based

**HAYSLETT
CONTINUED PG 6A**

Exports, Driving Georgia's Growth, Driven By Tax Policy

Charlie Harper
Guest Columnist

Georgia has been claiming it is the "number one state to do business" for long enough that it often seems it's more of a branding exercise than an objective measurement. With November's elections will come a new Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and enough changes in the legislature that significant changes in direction and policy are not only possible but likely, regardless which party wins the top positions.

A press release from Governor Kemp last week helps us benchmark where we currently are — objectively — while we debate current legislation and future elections. Georgia has now moved into the top ten exporting states, landing at the 9th position in total value for exports. The picture is even better when total trade is considered, as Georgia ranks 7th when imports are also considered.

Why should anyone get excited about being 9th? That kind of ranking in the SEC gets you to the Music City Bowl and not too many remember the achievement.

It's about trend and direction.

Georgia's exports increased by 12.7% last year. The average state did a healthy 5.6% in export growth, but Georgia's growth rate was more than double that.

Statistics are nice, but they're only representative of the underlying story. This isn't about numbers and percentages. It's about our state's and our country's growth, health, and competitiveness.

At the core, more exports means more jobs. It means more Georgians are creating value for themselves and the companies who hire them. And it means Georgia and America are competitive on the world stage. Trade only occurs when both sides see value on their side of the transaction.

Our biggest export in dollar terms may surprise some, especially those in the northern half of the state. Aircraft and aircraft parts are our most valuable exports, at \$16.4 billion annually. Gulfstream, the maker of the world's most prestigious private jets, employs 10,000. Lockheed Martin, the defense contractor, has a Georgia headcount of about 6,000. Engine maker Pratt & Whitney has about 1,000 employees here. Upstart air taxi

maker Archer Aviation also has about 1,000 employees.

Other categories we make here and sell to other countries include Computer Hardware, Motor Vehicles, Networking Communications Equipment, and Medical Devices. Those categories combine for an additional \$11.4 billion in annual sales abroad.

This growth wasn't by accident. While Georgia's governing leadership is still made up of avowed capitalists, they're not above using the tools of federalism to help the market's invisible hand with a thumb on the scale.

While markets are international, the competition for employers to locate and expand domestically is fierce. Every state has natural advantages and disadvantages. States then have a lot of leeway to craft tax and regulatory structures that leverage their advantages and mitigate shortcomings. Georgia's rankings in economic development indicate a mastery of these concepts.

The biggest and most frequently used tool in the Department of Economic Development's arsenal are tax credits. While the headlines associated

with trophy level deals often demonstrate the value of incentives given to an employer to grow with Georgia, the math is often vaguely described as to where the money comes from. Most of the dollars don't come from the state's checkbook. They are instead conceptual, and come from "opportunity cost".

The standard template — open to virtually any employer of size willing to relocate to Georgia or for an existing employer wanting to expand their presence here — is to credit them with taxes that the state wouldn't collect if the factory was never built and Georgians were never hired. The companies instead enter into an agreement to pay local governments a fixed fee over a period of years that is more than the vacant land currently generates in taxes but far less than they would pay on a new factory.

The difference is the "incentive". The state isn't writing checks for most of the package, save for some specific infrastructure upgrades and some site preparation. They're just agreeing not to collect taxes that never existed.

**HARPER
CONTINUED PG 5A**

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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.com, mail it to The Leader Tribune at 109 Anderson Ave, Fort Valley, GA 31030, or drop it off at 109 Anderson Ave in Fort Valley — Monday through Friday.

OUR POLICIES

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

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Where Is The Justice For Marvin Hillman III

Dear Editor,
Where Is The Justice For Marvin Hillman III

My nephew, Marvin Hillman III, was sentenced in 2008 to a life sentence for armed robbery, based on testimony from a co-defendant. Marvin went to court in October 2025 on a motion for a new trial based on newly discovered evidence in Peach County Superior Court. The new evidence was the co-defendant that testified against him in court recanted his testimony.

His co-defendant, sworn under oath, that Marvin never took part in the robbery. He stated that under a plea deal with the DA, he said what the Detective had told him to say. Marvin did not enter the house of the crime nor did he have a gun and no one could identify him as being there. The Judge refused to accept it and denied Marvin a new trial, saying that the defendant was not charged with perjury.

According to the Georgia Parole Board, Marvin will not be eligible for parole until he has

served thirty years because of the gun charges against him. In a subsequent habeas action the Supreme Court of Georgia vacated the Defendant's conviction for being a convicted felon and a position of a firearm but affirmed Defendant's remaining convictions and sentences. (Hillman v Johnson, 297 Ga. 609 (2015)). Yet the GDC is still showing the gun charge so Marvin is not eligible for parole after having served 18 years.

Lady Justice, depicted with scales in a blindfold, embodies

equity and unbiased judgment. Peach and surrounding counties, where is the justice for Marvin Hillman III? Not being able to afford an attorney, Marvin is serving a life sentence whereas his co-defendants all served lesser time. During Marvin's trial, no gun was presented in court, no one could identify him and yet the jury returned a guilty verdict. Marvin was found guilty because he had insufficient representation in court.

Wyonna Smith
Loganville, Ga

Hedge of Protection for Loved Ones



By Billy Powell
Parables to Ponder
LT Columnist

The minister at a church I attended announced to the congregation one Sunday that his oldest son, now 30-years old, had a drug addiction. Everyone had seen the two other younger sons from time to time but didn't know a third son existed. Both younger sons were serving in the Iraqi war at the time. The son's drug problem had been a source of heartache for the entire family. For years the wayward son seldom called home and his whereabouts were not known. Not knowing his condition or what he was doing, the family resorted to their only alternative—prayer that God would intercede in the life of their son and brother.

The next week I saw the minister walking down the street and drove over to the curb to speak with him. I expressed my deep concern about his son and told him of a biblical principal that might rescue his son from the clutches of drugs. It is a principal that another minister conveyed to me years ago. Just as there are constant physical laws such as the law of gravity, there also are untapped spiritual laws that will produce predictable results. This spiritual law involves building a hedge of protection around a loved one who needs providential protection. The ground rules require that you pray every day that God will build a wall of protection so high, so thick, and so impenetrable that evil cannot get to your loved one. It may take 6-months or it may take a year or longer, but I am told this spiritual law always works. Every day you pray, another brick is added to the wall's foundation. After months of prayer, the wall becomes higher, thicker, and stronger. The minister thought it was such a good idea that he decided to preach on the concept at an upcoming sermon. When he did preach

the sermon, he suggested to the congregation that they should pray for concrete blocks and not bricks to construct the wall faster.

The basis for this spiritual law is found in the book of Hosea, chapter 2. The prophet had a wife name Gomer. She was flirting with adultery, and Hosea was very perplexed as to what he could do. Hosea decided to pray that the Lord would build a hedge around Gomer so that evil could not get to her and her evil suitors could no longer tempt her.

Without God's intervention, drugs, alcohol, or cigarettes can have an unbreakable hold on individuals. Also, parents are at wits end in knowing how to deal with children who have left the nest and are living in sin. A friend lamented that his daughter was living out of wedlock with other men and constantly getting into trouble. I suggested he pray the prayer of Hosea. Six months later he told me the prayer was producing results as his daughter was beginning to straighten up her life. Praying daily for a hedge of protection is worth trying.

Crabgrass Control



By Jeff Cook
Extension Agent

I don't care what the groundhog said, spring is here. Red maples and peaches are blooming, and the weather is warming up a little too fast. While listening to the radio or TV this time of year you hear plenty of commercials advertising fertilizers. These commercials remind me of two things. Some companies will tell you things that are not true and that we need to be thinking about crabgrass control and summer weed control.

As temperatures warm and lawns are filled with flowers I receive plenty of calls. This is why I almost always write and article in late fall and again late winter. By making timely herbicide applications we can reduce the amount of weeding and spraying we have to do later in the year.

Now that our soil temperatures have warmed, warm season lawns are in the transition stage.

At this time, we do not recommend post-emergent herbicide applications due to potential damage to desirable grasses. I would suggest lowering the mower deck and chopping off henbit and dandelion flowers to reduce weed seed for next season.

We do still have time to apply pre-emergent products for controlling crabgrass and other small seeded weeds, but that time is also running out. Pre-emergent herbicides kill weeds/seeds as they germinate. This means that if you see crabgrass growing it will not be controlled with these products. These herbicides must be in the soil and activated by rain or irrigation to be effective.

In a perfect world you would apply either liquid or granular pre-emergent herbicides just ahead of a light shower or apply 0.5" of irrigation after application. These herbicides need to be moved into the top two inches of soil. This is the zone that most weed seed will germinate from.

Even though these products are safe for our perennial lawns they can cause damage to newly sprigged, seeded or sodded grasses.

Some of the active ingredients available are Benefin, Dithiopyr, Oryzalin, Pendimethalin, Proflam, and possibly Inda-

zaflam. If it says it is a crabgrass herbicide it is most likely one of these products. Since Crabgrass germinates in soil temperatures just above 55°F we need to put out these herbicides as soon as possible. You can monitor soil temperature online at the following web site <http://www.griffin.uga.edu/aemn/cgi-bin/AEMN.pl?site=GAHW>, or you can do it yourself with a meat thermometer.

If you don't care about monitoring the temperature you can just apply your product of choice in march annually. I would rather get the product out a little too early because if you are too late you will get reduced control. Depending on the level of infestation you may also choose to make a second application in early summer, but this should only be done according to the label.

If you get caught and don't get your pre-emergent herbicide out there are some products that can be used to control crabgrass, but that is for a different time and a different article. Check back in later I will tell you how to control the grasses that are up and making a mess of your lawn.

Contact me with any questions or comments at 478-862-5496, 478-825-6466 or mackiv@uga.edu

Byron Lions Club Pancake Breakfast

Contributed

One of the biggest events of the year in Byron is the very popular Byron Lions Club Annual Jethro Johnson Pancake Breakfast coming up on March 22 at the Mickey Fuller Masonic Lodge #720 at 106 Galan Drive (behind Rooks Funeral Home). For only \$10.00 for adults and \$5.00 for kids (ages 3-12) you will get a full pancake breakfast accompanied by scrambled eggs and sausage, with coffee, orange juice, and milk for the kids.

There may be some new additions to the menu! Come and see!!! Plus, you'll be supporting your community, as all proceeds help the Lions help others.

The breakfast is held each year on a Sunday in early spring in honor of Jethro Johnson, who was a long-serving member of the Byron Lions Club, and a community leader. Breakfast will be hot and ready to eat before church, starting at 7:30 AM, or come hungry up until 1pm. Tickets are available from

any Lions Club member or at the door.

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 8:00 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

Spring Is Just Around The Corner!

Contributed

It won't be long till the peach blossoms, cherry blossoms and Bradford pears are in bloom. In fact, some of them already are blooming! It is a beautiful time of year.

The Byron Lions Club has a way to make your home/porch/deck even more beautiful. We are again selling absolutely gorgeous hanging baskets—both flowering and foliage. There are seven varieties of 10 inch foliage baskets available for \$20.00 each—Spider Plants, Purple

Wandering Jews, Variegated Swedish Ivy, White Wandering Jews, Bridal Veils, Bolivian Jews, and Green Swedish Ivy.

There are seven varieties of blooming 10 inch baskets available—Petunia, Geranium, Fuchsia, New Guinea, Verbena, Scaveola, and Lantana. They are very hardy as well as beautiful. They are \$20.00 each. You can also order a 14 inch wire Cocoa basket filled with a variety of flowers for \$40.00. DEADLINE TO ORDER IS MARCH 14. We won't know for sure when de-

livery will be until we place the orders. (We have asked for delivery on April 10th.)

Baskets will be delivered to you as soon as possible after we receive them. To order call either Frany Washko at (478) 396-0131 or Marlene Humphry at (478) 918-3666, or see any Byron Lions Club member. Don't miss this opportunity to help the Byron Lions provide needed services in the community and add natural beauty to your home at the same time.



CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

email: news@theleadertribune.com

LENTE SCHEDULE ST. ANDREW'S & ST. LUKE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCHES

Please join us - All are welcome! 6:00pm Thursdays during the Lenten Season. Covered Dish, Presentations, Evening Prayers Beginning at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 309 Central Avenue, Fort Valley.

Thursday, March 12 - Ann McGehee, Women's Bible Study Leader & Host

Then at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 1000 State University Drive, Fort Valley

Thursday, March 19 - Anna Holloway, Author of "Be Sure to Wave," Her Latest Book

Thursday, March 26 - Julie Groce, Canon for Special Projects

Friday 6:00pm February 27-March 27 Stations of the Cross in St. Andrew's Church

St. Andrew's & St. Luke's wish you a Holy Lenten Season

USHER'S TEMPLE CME CHURCH

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

Join us each Sunday morning with Pastor Tawanna B. Harris and members at 9:30am for Sunday School followed at 11:00am with holy worship service. You may join us virtually via Facebook Live and Youtube. Bible study is each Wednesday in person at 12:00 and virtually at 7:00pm via Zoom.

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.middlegaanglican.org>

THE LIGHTHOUSE CHURCH OF FORT VALLEY

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

SAINT ANDREW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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

ST. JULIANA'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

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

BAHA'I FAITH

"So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth."

Baha'u'llah

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

Confessions: Thurs., 6:00pm; Sat. 6:30pm; Sun. 10:30am Adoration: Thurs., 7:00pm; Sat. 8-9am; Sun. 6:00pm

ST. LUKE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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

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

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

SAINT PETER A.M.E. CHURCH 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.

HARPER

CONTINUED FROM 4A

Populists in both political parties grumble about these "give-aways". These grumbings grow louder in election years. Many are now even louder still as they believe taking away many of these incentives will pay for various versions of tax reform currently under debate.

Many of those making these proposals will stand for re-election on the long internalized brand of that Georgia is the number one state to do business. They simultaneously want to change the underlying tax structure and incentive packages that have led to demonstrable eco-

nomic growth in all corners of the state.

Current and future employers are watching both legislative proposals and campaign rhetoric closely. They may not yet be taking everything that is said literally, but they are quite certainly evaluating them seriously.

Subscribe Today!
478-825-2432

Republicans in Georgia House fail first attempt at property tax cuts

By Ty Tagami
Bureau Chief

Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — The Georgia House of Representatives rejected a proposal to nearly eliminate homeowner property taxes.

The Republican-driven measure would have put a constitutional amendment to voters. To get on the ballot, it required support from some Democrats to win the necessary two-thirds majority.

Only one Democrat backed the resolution when it came to a vote Tuesday night.

Republicans said Georgia

needs to redesign its tax system because property taxes are too high. Democrats countered that renters would suffer if the tax were nearly eliminated, and they observed that everyone would pay more for groceries and other essentials, since the proposal would have made up for lost revenue in part by raising sales taxes.

Rep. Sam Park, D-Lawrenceville, said the change would have opened a \$5 billion hole in local government budgets. Cities and counties use property taxes to pay for basic services including police, roads and schools.

"If you care about public education, vote no," Park said.

Republicans said homeowners need tax relief.

Rep. Shaw Blackmon, R-Bonaire, the lead author of the legislation, read a letter from a Georgia man whose adult daughter was stricken by illness.

The family ran through their savings after his wife quit working to care for her, and they decided not to pay their property taxes in case they needed the money for a funeral.

The daughter survived, but Blackmon used the story to illustrate the urgency.

"We can't put property tax relief on hold for people like this," he said.

The proposal had gone

through many re-designs since lawmakers arrived in January, and it was still being amended this week, the deadline for the House to send bills to the Senate and vice versa.

It called for gradual reduction in the proportion of a primary residence's value that is subject to property tax. Currently, 40% is taxable, but Blackmon proposed reducing that to 10% over a decade. His plan would have forced cities and counties to levy new sales taxes and assessments if they wanted to recoup enough revenue to preserve services.

Rep. Carolyn Hugley, D-Columbus, said the proposal was

a political stunt that was never meant to pass.

House Resolution 1114 failed by a vote of 99-73.

"What we are seeing here today is an exercise in cold hard politics," said Hugley, the House minority leader. "It's simply about what voters do you want to drive out to the polls."

But Rep. Trey Kelley, R-Cedartown, said Democrats were the ones playing politics by keeping the measure off the ballot.

"They want to deny your right to vote," he said, "because they're scared of the impact that it will have on the electoral turnout in November."

House Speaker Jon Burns, R-Newington, has said that property tax relief is a top priority during an election year when affordability is on voters' minds. The Republican-led Senate has its own affordability strategy, having sent the House several bills that would sharply reduce income taxes.

Burns' plan may not be dead yet. After HR 1114 failed, Blackmon moved for reconsideration. Burns said it would get another vote Wednesday.

Georgia senators seek increased fine for blocking roads

By Ty Tagami
Bureau Chief

Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — The Georgia Senate adopted legislation Tuesday

that would increase the fine for protesting in streets.

Senate Bill 443 started as a measure that would have allowed felony charges against protesters who block roads.

But the author, Sen. Carden Summers, R-Cordecle, agreed to amendments that reduced

the significantly enhanced criminal charge he had proposed. Currently, the offense is a misdemeanor, but SB 443 would increase that to a high and aggravated misdemeanor.

Both could net the perpetrator up to a year in jail. But the maximum fine for a high and

aggravated misdemeanor is \$5,000 while the maximum fine for a misdemeanor is \$1,000.

Summers said protesters who block roads are preventing the passage of ambulances, firetrucks and parents trying to get to their child's school.

"It is a simple common-sense

bill," he said. "It is something that parents should have taught people a long time ago: Don't block the streets."

The measure passed 35-17 and now goes to the House.

Georgia
CITIES WEEK

For City of Byron
Residents Only

A CITY WIDE
CLEAN UP

In an effort to keep our local
waterways clean.



FREE TIRE
RECYCLING

Please note, tires exceeding 54" in height and 16" in width will not be accepted. Please make sure all tires are removed from the rims before recycling.

Byron Public Works Yard
104 New Dunbar Road
Byron, Georgia 31008

April 20th through April 24th, 2026 8:00 am – 5:00 pm

April 18th and April 25th 8:00 am – 12:00 pm

If you have any questions, please contact the City of Byron Public Works Department at 478-956-2411.



The City of Byron presents to you the annual
Spring-Cleaning Event!



April 19th – April 25th 8:00 am – 5:00 pm
Dumpsters will be available at two locations:

405 Boy Scout Rd
204 GA Hwy 49 N

This event is held for City of Byron residents only. Please DO NOT dump any hazardous waste items such as paints, motor oil, fertilizers, fluorescent light bulbs, aerosol cans, batteries, cleansers, insecticides, tires, etc.

If you have any questions, please contact the City of Byron Public Works Department at 478-956-2411.

School Board Appreciation Week is Here!

From March 9–13, we proudly recognize the leadership, service, and dedication of our district's board members. Their thoughtful decision-making and vision help shape opportunities for every student we serve. We will be sharing videos this week that were created by our schools and students to say "Thank You".

THANK YOU SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS!



 Mr. Scott Hodges Chair Post 4	 Mr. Ben McDaniel Vice-Chair Post 1
 Mr. Drenon Everett Post 2	 Mr. Alfred Ellis Post 3
 Mr. B.J. Walker Post 5-At Large	

HAYSLETT

CONTINUED FROM 4A

on a formula that combined the unemployment, poverty and PCI rates of all 159 counties. That program was implemented under Gov. Zell Miller, who oversaw continued progress in PCI. Barnes, who followed Miller into the governor's office, told me in an interview a few years ago that Harris had "educated me" on the importance of PCI. Perdue may not have had the

benefit of Harris' tutorial. He oversaw a downhill slide in PCI performance that extended through Deal's two terms and has shown little sign of recovering under Kemp. The latest batch of PCI data, for 2024, puts Georgia's statewide average at 86.1% of the national average; the 41st-place rank is the state's lowest in at least a half-century. That statewide drop, though, hides an even starker divide once you drill down to the county level.

A dead-even 100 of Georgia's 159 counties landed in the bottom national quartile for 2024 PCI performance. If those counties constituted a state unto themselves, it would replace Mississippi at the bottom of the nation's PCI rankings. Mississippi's 2024 per capita income was \$52,074, according to the latest BEA report.

The Not-So-Great State of Bottom Quartile Georgia could only muster an average PCI of \$45,038 — more than \$7,000 less than Mississippi. This continues a pattern that has been developing and hardening for more than a decade now. Further, those 100 counties are home to 3.3 million Georgians, more than any other state but Texas.

Texas, with triple our population, had 3.6 million people living in the bottom quartile in 2024. Hapless Wheeler County, Georgia, ranked dead last, 3,115th out of 3,115 counties, and not for the first time.

That bottom-quartile list includes not just rural counties but also most of the state's major regional hub cities, which play a vital role in anchoring neighboring rural areas. These include Dalton (Whitfield County); Rome (Floyd County); Athens (Clarke County); Augusta (Richmond County);

Statesboro (Bulloch County); Dublin (Laurens County); and Valdosta (Lowndes County).

A few made it into the third national quartile: Columbus (Muscogee); Macon (Bibb); and Albany (Dougherty). Savannah (Chatham) and Thomasville (Thomas) made the second national quartile. The only South Georgia county to make the top national quartile for PCI in 2024 was Glynn County.

In one of Georgia's great political ironies, the small rural counties at the bottom of the state's PCI rankings are overwhelmingly Republican. In the 2022 governor's race, 86 of Georgia's 100 bottom-quartile counties sided with Kemp and over Democrat Stacey Abrams and gave him, collectively, 73.1% of their vote. The average 2024 per capita income for those 86 counties was \$45,570, just over 62% of the national average. At the risk of being uncharitable, it seems fair to suggest that Gov. Kemp and his team are earning their No. 1 State for Business honors, in part, on the backs of their poorest supporters.

Also clear from the latest batch of PCI data: Georgia continues to lose ground to North Carolina when it comes to the economic livelihood of their citizens.

North Carolina now outperforms Georgia in PCI and is expanding its advantage. From 1980 through 2005, Georgians enjoyed higher average per capita incomes than North Carolinians. But that began to change amid the collapse in Georgia's PCI performance. The Georgia and North Carolina PCI lines crossed in 2007, and North Carolina has maintained a higher average PCI for most of the time since then.

Since 2020, North Carolina has been steadily expanding

its advantage, to the point that PCI in the Tar Heel state is now more than \$2,600 higher than in Georgia.

Perhaps more significantly, North Carolina has whittled steadily away at its bottom quartile population while pulling more and more of its residents into the top quartile. The two states have nearly identical populations — 11.18 million for Georgia versus 11.05 for North Carolina — and North Carolina has managed to cut the number of people living in bottom quartile counties to just under 530,000.

Meanwhile, 14 of its counties — and the 4.3 million people living in them — made the top quartile. That compares to 3.5 million Georgians living in 11 top-quartile counties and 3.3 million in the bottom-quartile counties.

This contrast with North Carolina holds clues of something deeper than two neighboring states simply trading places on an income chart. It begs a string of questions about why and how these patterns have evolved and taken hold.

Georgia's "Top State for Business" reputation may be good for press releases and political chest-thumping, but the apparent inability to lift nearly a third of the state's population out of the nation's economic cellar may well prove more costly in the long run — not just for the people left behind, but for the state budget that will have to cover their costs.

Charlie Hayslett, a retired journalist and public relations executive, researches and writes about the challenges of rural life in Georgia. Follow his blog at substack.com/@mortlach.

JOB OPPORTUNITY FORT VALLEY ACCOUNTS PAYABLE/PAYROLL CLERK

The City of Fort Valley is seeking a qualified professional for the position of **Accounts Payable/Payroll Clerk**. This position is responsible for performing skilled accounting and administrative work in processing accounts payable, payroll, and related financial transactions for the City. The Accounts Payable/Payroll Clerk shall ensure timely and accurate payments to vendors and employees while maintaining compliance with city policies, municipal code, state, and federal laws.

Qualified applicants should possess a high school diploma or GED, with an associate's degree in Accounting, Finance, or a preferred related field, along with a minimum of two (2) years of experience in payroll and/or accounts payable processing, preferably in a government or municipal setting. Experience with accounting and payroll software systems is required, with preference given to candidates familiar with municipal finance systems. An equivalent combination of education and experience that provides the required knowledge, skills, and abilities may also be considered.

The applicant must possess or have the ability to readily obtain a valid driver's license issued by the State of Georgia. The Accounts Payable/Payroll Clerk must demonstrate knowledge of accounting principles, payroll processing, tax withholding, and reporting requirements, along with proficiency in accounting software, Microsoft Excel, and related applications. This position is responsible for processing vendor invoices, preparing and issuing payments, maintaining accounts payable and 1099 records, and processing weekly payroll with accurate deductions and benefits tracking. The role also includes submitting required federal and state tax reports, reconciling accounts monthly, assisting with audits and budget reporting, and responding to vendor and employee inquiries. The employee must maintain confidentiality, perform other related duties as assigned, and ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

The Middle Georgia Regional Commission will receive all application materials and conduct initial screening. Interested candidates should email a cover letter, resume, and three references by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 1, 2026, or until the position has been filled, to:

Middle Georgia Regional Commission
Attn: Keristen Layrock
Klayrock@mg-rc.org
3661 Eisenhower Parkway | Suite MB102
Macon, Georgia 31206

Additional information will be made available upon request to Keristen Layrock, Middle Georgia Regional Commission, who can be reached at 478-751-6160.

Salary for this position is commensurate with qualifications and experience.

Only the top candidates will receive an interview. The City of Fort Valley reserves the right to reject any and all applications received, including applications received after the due date and time.

The City of Fort Valley is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Legals

Legal Advertising Information

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

For information concerning billing, please contact The Leader Tribune at (478)-825-2432. Notices cancelled after

Legal Advertisements

E-Mail: legals@gtnl.org

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

12:00 Noon on Friday will be billed for insertion in that edition. Legal ads may be sent via Federal Express for Saturday delivery. Legal ads may be sent via email to legals@gtnl.org, please use word document or pdf text. Many legal notices are billed at the rate of \$15.00 per 100 words or a portion thereof for each insertion for the first four insertions. Some specific types of ads, such as divorce articles, articles of incorporation, articles of merger, petition to adopt, name changes and DUI notices have fees set

based on the number of times the notice is inserted. All rates are set by the Georgia General Assembly.

For billing purposes, every word shall be counted as one word including words such as; the, of, a, etc. Grouped numbers shall be counted as one word.

The deadline for foreclosure notices and tax sales for disposal is Thursday the week before the first publication.

Incorporation Notice - These are notices concerning a business which is to be incorporated with the office located in Peach County. Related incorporation notices can include an intent to dissolve a corporation, a name change of the corporation and mergers of a corporation. These notices typically run two weeks at a cost of \$40.00.

Driving Under the Influence - State law requires publication of a picture and a brief notice of any conviction in Peach County of a third Driving Under the Influence charge. The fines and related matters of settlement are included. The fee for these

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

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

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

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

Publisher's Affidavit fee is \$10.

LT26-012 AUCTION PUBLIC SALE NOTICE OF SALE. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE UNDERSIGNED INTENDS TO SELL THE PERSONAL PROPERTY DESCRIBED BELOW TO ENFORCE A LIEN ON SAID PROPERTY PURSUANT TO THE GEORGIA CODE SECTIONS 10-4-210 TO 10-4-215. The undersigned will sell at public sale by competitive bidding on Wednesday, March 18, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. online at www.storage-treasures.com, property found in the following units:

Unit A11 Veulah Homes Household Items

Unit E14 Mija L Felton Household Items

Unit C21 Rickey Lockett Household Items

Unit D19 Gwendolyn D. Walden Household Items

Unit G11 Ulse S Oates, Jr. Household Items

Tenants have the right to redeem prior to sale.

PEACH MINI STORAGE PUBLIC SALE - AUCTION- PEACH MINI STORAGE March 11, 18, 2026

LT26-009 IN THE JUVENILE COURT OF HOUSTON COUNTY IN THE STATE OF GEORGIA IN THE INTEREST OF:

C. M. , SEX M , AGE 17 , DOB 10/11/2008 , CASE #2501714 **CHILD UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN, SHAMICA MONLYN (mother); CHRISTOPHER CORBIN (father); ANY UNKNOWN PUTATIVE FATHER, AND ANYONE ELSE CLAIMING A PARENTAL INTEREST IN THE ABOVE CHILD**

You are notified that a Petition for a Finding of Dependency with Temporary Custody Placed with the Paternal Aunt was filed against you in said court on 12/11/25, an Order for Service by Publication was entered on 12/15/25.

YOU ARE COMMANDED AND REQUIRED TO BE AND APPEAR before Houston County Juvenile Court, held at Houston County Juvenile Court, Warner Robins, Georgia on 05/13/26 at 8:30 o'clock a.m., for a hearing following service by publication. See an answer on Petitioner's Attorney, James E. Patterson, P. O. Box 1006, Forsyth, Georgia 31029. You may obtain a copy of the petition by contacting Houston County Juvenile Court Clerk.

WITNESS the Honorable Judges of this court, this 4th day of March, 2026. CHRISTINA HARPER, DEPUTY CLERK HOUSTON CO. VENILE COURT March 11, 18, 25, April 1, 2026

LT26-003 APPLICATION TO REGISTER A BUSINESS TO BE CONDUCTED UNDER TRADE NAME, PARTNERSHIP OR OTHERS

STATE OF GEORGIA COUNTY OF PEACH

The undersigned does hereby certify that I do hereby conducting a business as Macon Trading Co in the City of Byron, County of Peach in the State of Georgia, under the name of Macon Trading Co and that the nature of the business is Retail and that the names and addresses of the persons, firms or partnership owning and carrying on said trade or business are I do Romero

3025 Barnett Rd Byron, GA 31008 Subscribed and sworn to before me this 24 day of February, 2026 Andrea Youngblood Notary Public Filed in office, this 24th day of February, 2026 at 9:55A.M. Book B Phillis L. Ballow Clerk Superior Court, Peach County, Ga. March 4, 11, 2026

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF PEACH COUNTY STATE OF GEORGIA CIVIL ACTION FILE NUMBER 26-V-0068

IN RE THE NAME CHANGE OF NICHOLAS HARPER, PETITIONER.

NOTICE OF PETITION TO CHANGE NAME OF ADULT

Nicholas Harper filed a petition in the Peach County Superior Court on February 6, 2026, to change the name from: Nicholas Alexander Harper to Damu Akbar Manetane. Any interested party has the right to appear in this case and file objections within 30 days after the petition was filed. 2/18, 2/25, 3/04, 3/11, 2026 3684

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF PEACH COUNTY STATE OF GEORGIA ESTATE NO. 2026-PRO-7229 IN RE: ESTATE OF A.J. RILEY, DECEASED NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS

Re: Estate of A.J. Riley All creditors of the Estate of A.J. Riley, 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. This 10th day of February, 2026.

Tara Tourville, Esq, Attorney for Estate of A.J. Riley 446 S. Houston Lake Road Warner Robins, GA 31088 (478)333-6502 2/18, 2/25, 3/04, 3/11, 2026 3685

LT26-001 IN THE PROBATE COURT OF PEACH COUNTY STATE OF GEORGIA

IN RE: ESTATE OF JUDITH LOIS HOLLY, DECEASED ESTATE NO. 2026-ADM-7238 PETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION NOTICE

TO: ANY AND ALL INTERESTED PARTIES AND to whom it may concern: JEFFREY SCOTT HOLLY has petitioned for JEFFREY SCOTT HOLLY to be appointed administrator(s) of the estate of JUDITH LOIS HOLLY 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 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 MARCH 18, 2026.

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

Kim Wilson, Judge of the Probate Court By Katrina Corbin, Clerk of the Probate Court 205 WEST CHURCH STREET FORT VALLEY GA 31030 478-825-2313 March 4, 11, 18, 25, 2026

LT26-006 NOTICE OF SALE UNDER POWER GEORGIA, PEACH COUNTY

Under and by virtue of the Power of Sale contained in a Security Deed given by Caitlin Coleman, Judge A Martinez to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as grantee, as nominee for Mortgage Solutions of Colorado, LLC, its successors and assigns dated June 9, 2023, recorded in Deed Book 702, Page 304, Peach County, Georgia Records, as last transferred to MORTGAGE SOLUTIONS OF COLORADO, LLC D/B/A MORTGAGE SOLUTIONS FINANCIAL by assignment recorded in Deed Book 761, Page 254, Peach County, Georgia Records, conveying the after-described property to secure a Note in the original principal amount of THREE HUNDRED TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED AND 0/100 DOLLARS (\$325,900.00), with interest thereon as set forth therein, there will be sold at public outcry to the highest bidder for cash before the courthouse door of Peach County, Georgia, or at such place as may be lawfully designated as an alternative, within the legal hours of sale on the first Tuesday in April, 2026, the following described property

SEE EXHIBIT "A" ATTACHED HERETO AND MADE A PART HEREOF

The debt secured by said Security Deed has been and is hereby declared due because of, among other possible events of default, failure to pay the indebtedness as and when due and in the manner provided in the Note and Security Deed. The debt remaining in default, this sale will be made for the purpose of paying the same and all expenses of this sale, as provided in the Security Deed and by law, including attorney's fees (notice pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 13-1-11 has not been given).

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

MORTGAGE SOLUTIONS OF COLORADO, LLC D/B/A MORTGAGE SOLUTIONS FINANCIAL is the holder of the Security Deed to the property in accordance with OCGA § 44-14-162.2.

The entity that has full authority to negotiate, amend, and modify all terms of the mortgage with the debtor is: Mortgage Solutions Financial Servicing, a division of Mortgage Solutions of Colorado, LLC, 7450 Campus Dr, Suite 200, Colorado Springs, CO 80920, 1-866-552-6118.

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

Upon information and belief, said property is more commonly known as **114 Caleb Way, Byron, GA 31008**. Should a conflict arise between the property address and the legal description, the legal description shall control.

ATTENTION ALL PROSPECTIVE BIDDERS: On March 1, 2026, the data collection and reporting requirements under the U.S. Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) new Anti-Money Laundering Rule (the "Rule"), found at 89 FR 70258, will go into effect. The Rule applies to certain residential real estate sale transactions (including nonjudicial foreclosures) where the transfer is to a legal entity or trust, and which includes cash purchases, private financing or financing provided by an institution not subject to a federal Anti-Money Laundering or Suspicious Activity Report requirement. As part of this Rule, purchasers and sellers are required to provide additional information and documentation about themselves, their legal entities, and/or the source of funds used in the reportable transaction. The collection of this information and documentation is required to comply with the Rule's federal reporting requirements. This notice is provided for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. You are encouraged to consult with your own independent legal counsel if you have questions about how the FinCEN Anti-Money Laundering Rule affects your transaction and whether your transaction is reportable.

The sale will be conducted subject (1) to confirmation that the sale is not prohibited under the U.S. Bankruptcy Code, (2) to final confirmation and audit of the status of the loan with the holder of the Security Deed, and (3) to confirmation that the successful bidder has timely provided all information required for reporting under the Rule, 89 FR 70258.

MORTGAGE SOLUTIONS OF COLORADO, LLC D/B/A MORTGAGE SOLUTIONS FINANCIAL

as Attorney in Fact for Caitlin Coleman, Judge A Martinez McCalla Rayner Leibert Pierce, LLP 1544 Old Alabama Rd Roswell, GA 30076 www.foreclosurehotline.net EXHIBIT "A"

All that tract or parcel of land lying and being in Land Lot 60 of the 5th Land District, Peach County, Georgia, being known and designated as Lot 7, Block "G", Phase I, Carrington Estates Subdivision, according to a plat of survey recorded in Plat Book 24, Page 79, Clerk's Office, Peach County Superior Court. Said plat and the recorded copy thereof are incorporated herein for all purposes.

Subject to all easements, ordinances, covenants, conditions, restrictions and rights-of-way of record, if any.

Address under current system of numbering: 114 Caleb Way, Byron, Georgia. MR / D April 7, 2026 Our file no. 26-21304GA-FT17 26-21304GA

March 11, 18, 25, April 1, 2026

LT26-005 NOTICE OF SALE UNDER POWER GEORGIA, PEACH COUNTY

By virtue of a Power of Sale contained in that certain Security Deed from JEANETTE K HUFF to METLIFE HOME LOANS, A DIVISION OF METLIFE BANK, N.A., dated August 26, 2009, recorded September 1, 2009, in Deed Book 429, Page 618-629, Peach County, Georgia Records, said Security Deed having been given to secure a Note of even date in the original principal amount of Two Hundred Ten Thousand and 00/100 dollars (\$210,000.00), with interest thereon as provided for therein, said Security Deed has not been last sold, assigned and transferred to Mortgage Assets Management, LLC, there will be sold at public outcry to the highest bidder for cash at the Peach County Courthouse, within the legal hours of sale on the first Tuesday in April, 2026, all property described in said Security Deed including but not limited to the following described property

ALL THAT TRACT OR PARCEL OF LAND, LYING AND BEING IN LAND LOT 216, 9TH LAND DISTRICT OF PEACH COUNTY, GEORGIA, BEING KNOWN AND DESIGNATED AS LOT 8, BLOCK A, FLEETWOOD ESTATES SUBDIVISION SECTION 2, ACCORDING TO A PLAT OF SURVEY PREPARED BY THOMAS W. FUTRAL III, GEORGIA REG. SURVEYOR, DATED AUGUST 10, 1976 AND RECORDED IN MAP BOOK 10, PAGES 156, CLERK'S OFFICE, PEACH SUPERIOR COURT. THE SAID PLAT AND RECORD THEREOF ARE INCORPORATED HEREIN BY REFERENCE FOR ALL PURPOSES. THIS CONVEYANCE IS SUBJECT TO A 10 FOOT DRAINAGE AND OR UTILITY EASEMENT ALONG REAR OF SAID LOT, ACCORDING TO AFORESAID PLAT. SAID PROPERTY IS IDENTIFIED AS 233 FLEETWOOD DR. FORT VALLEY, ACCORDING TO THE PRESENT SYSTEM OF NUMBERING. PARCEL # 012D-120. BEING THE SAME PREMISES GRANTED AND CONVEYED TO JEANETTE K. HUFF BY DEED FROM JEANETTE K. HUFF AS EXECUTRIX UNDER THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF MCDONALD HUFF, DECEASED, DATED 09/01/2006 AND RECORDED 09/01/2006 IN THE CLERK OF COURTS OFFICE IN AN FOR PEACH COUNTY, GEORGIA IN DEED BOOK VOLUME AND PAGES 362 PAGE 478.

Said legal description being controlling, however the property is more commonly known as **233 FLEETWOOD DRIVE, FORT VALLEY, GA 31030**.

The indebtedness secured by said Security Deed has been and is hereby declared due because of default under the terms of said Security Deed. The indebtedness remaining in default, this sale will be made for the purpose of paying the same, all expenses of the sale, including attorneys' fees (notice to collect same having been given) and all other payments provided for under the terms of the Security Deed.

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: any outstanding ad valorem taxes (including taxes which are a lien, whether or not now due and payable); the right of redemption of any taxing authority; matters which would be disclosed by an accurate survey or by an inspection of the property all zoning ordinances; assessments; liens; encumbrances; restrictions; covenants; and any other matters of record superior to said Security Deed.

To the best of the knowledge and belief of the undersigned, the owner and party in possession of the property is JEANETTE K HUFF, or tenants(s).

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

The entity having full authority to negotiate, amend and modify all terms of the loan (although not required by law to do so) is: PHH Mortgage Corporation, Loss Mitigation Dept., 1661 Worthington Road Ste. 100, West Palm Beach, FL 33409, Telephone Number: 866-503-5559. Nothing in O.C.G.A. Section 44-14-162.2 shall be construed to require a secured creditor to negotiate, amend, or modify the terms of the mortgage instrument.

MORTGAGE ASSETS MANAGEMENT, LLC

as Attorney in Fact for JEANETTE K HUFF THE BELOW LAW FIRM WILL BE HELD TO BE ACTING AS A DEBT COLLECTOR, UNDER FEDERAL LAW. IF SO, ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. Attorney Contact: Ruben Lublin, LLC 3145 Avalon Ridge Place, Suite 100, Peachtree Corners, GA 30071

Telephone Number: (877) 813-0992 Case No. RMU-24-03269-2 rslaw.com/property-listing March 11, 18, 25, April 1, 2026

LT26-004 IN THE PROBATE COURT OF PEACH COUNTY STATE OF GEORGIA IN RE: JOHN WILLIAM FLOWERS, DECEASED ESTATE NO. 2026-YS-7235 NOTICE OF PETITION TO FILE FOR YEAR'S SUPPORT

The petition of TRACY J FLOWERS for a year's support from the estate of JOHN WILLIAM FLOWERS, deceased, for decedent's (surviving spouse)(and) (minor child(ren)), having been duly filed, all interested persons are hereby notified to show cause, if any they have, on or before MARCH 25 2026 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 for the required amount of filing fees. If any objections are filed, a hearing will be scheduled at a later date. If no objections are filed the petition may be granted without a hearing.

Kim Wilson, Judge of the Probate Court By Katrina Corbin, Clerk of the Probate Court 205 WEST CHURCH STREET FORT VALLEY GA 31030 478-825-2313 March 4, 11, 18, 25, 2026

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF PEACH COUNTY STATE OF GEORGIA ESTATE NO. 2026-YS-7236 IN RE: DEVIN LEMOINE HILL, DECEASED NOTICE OF PETITION TO FILE FOR YEAR'S SUPPORT

The petition of KIMBERLY HILL, for a year's support from the estate of DEVIN LEMOINE HILL, 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 MARCH 17, 2026, 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 2/25, 3/04, 3/11, 3/18, 2026 3691

LT26-008 NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS

GEORGIA, PEACH COUNTY All creditors of the estate of JAMES EDWARD MONROE, SR., deceased, late of Peach County, are hereby notified to render in their demands to the undersigned according to law, and all persons indebted to said estate are required to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This 2nd day of March, 2026. LAURENS C. LEE, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OF ESTATE OF JAMES EDWARD MONROE, SR. P. O. BOX 1553 Fort Valley, Georgia 31030 March 11, 18, 25, April 1, 2026

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF PEACH COUNTY STATE OF GEORGIA ESTATE NO. 2026-ADM-7231 IN RE: ESTATE OF ARTHUR FELCH WILLIAMS JR., DECEASED PETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION NOTICE

TO: ANY AND ALL INTERESTED PARTIES

and to whom it may concern: SHANNON DANIELLE WILLIAMS has petitioned for SHANNON DANIELLE WILLIAMS to be appointed Administrator(s) of the estate of ARTHUR FELCH WILLIAMS JR., 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 MARCH 11, 2026.

BE NOTIFIED FURTHER: All objections to the Petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections. All objections should be sworn to before a notary public or before a Probate Court Clerk, and filing fees must be tendered with your objections, unless you qualify to file as an indigent party. Contact Probate Court personnel for

the required amount of filing fees. If any objections are filed, a hearing will be scheduled at a later date. If no objections are filed, the Petition may be granted without a hearing.

KIM WILSON, Judge of the Probate Court By Katrina Corbin, Clerk of the Probate Court 205 West Church Street Fort Valley, GA 31030 478-825-2313 2/25, 3/04, 3/11, 3/18, 2026 3692

DEBTORS AND CREDITORS STATE OF GEORGIA COUNTY OF PEACH

All persons having claims against the estate of Arlene Amerson and her estate are required to present the same to the undersigned, properly itemized and prove, within the time required by law. And all persons indebted to said deceased, or her estate, are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This 10th day of February, 2026. Angela Spinks, Executor Attorney Patrick C. Smith, Jr. 349 Margie Drive, Ste. 120 Warner Robins, GA 31088 Estate of: Arlene Amerson 2/18, 2/25, 3/04, 3/11, 2026 3689

LT26-014 NOTICE OF SALE UNDER POWER STATE OF GEORGIA COUNTY OF PEACH THIS LAW FIRM IS ACTING AS A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT. ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.

NOTICE OF SALE UNDER POWER GEORGIA, PEACH COUNTY. THIS LAW FIRM IS ACTING AS A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT. ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. Under and by virtue of Power of Sale contained in that certain Security Deed given by James N. Morris and Stacey J. Ripple, to Mania H. Rising, dated 02/27/2022 and filed October 18, 2022, recorded in Deed Book 687, Pages 506-509, Peach County, Georgia Records, conveying the hereafter described property to secure a Promissory Note in the original principal amount of Forty Three Thousand and 00/100 dollars (\$43,000.00), with interest thereon as set forth therein, there will be sold at public outcry to the highest bidder for cash before the courthouse door of Peach County, Georgia, within the legal hours of sale on Tuesday, April 7, 2026, the following described property

All that tract or parcel of land lying and being in the State of Georgia, County of Peach and in Elwood Estate Subdivision in Land Lot 20 of the Fifth Land District therein, containing 1.02 acres and being more particularly identified as Lot 2 of the subdivision of Lot 38 in Block A in said Elwood Estate Subdivision. Said Lot 2 has such metes and bounds, courses and distances as are shown on a certain plat of the subdivision of said Lot 38 by Broxton Surveying Co. dated November 2, 1972, and recorded in Plat Record 9, page 228, Clerk's Office, Peach County, Georgia, to which said plat and the record thereof reference is here had and made for a more complete description of said Lot 2.

Subject to existing easements and restrictive covenants of record.

Also including the following items: storage building, cement front porch, and septic tank

There is located on said property a dwelling known under the present system of numbering for the City of Byron, Georgia as 107 Gassett Court, Byron, Georgia 31008.

This is the same property described in a Warranty Deed dated July 27, 2022, from Mania H. Rising, to James N. Morris and Stacey J. Ripple, and recorded in Deed Book 687, Pages 503-505, Clerk's Office, Peach Superior Court.

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 Promissory 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 has not been given).

Said property will be sold subject to any outstanding ad valorem taxes (including taxes which are a lien, but not yet due and payable), any matters which might be disclosed by an accurate survey and inspection of the property, any assessments, liens, encumbrances, zoning ordinances, restrictions, covenants, and matters of record superior to the Security Deed given by James N. Morris and Stacey J. Ripple to Mania H. Rising, dated 02/27/2022, and filed October 18, 2022, recorded in Deed Book 687, Pages 506-509, Peach County, Georgia Records, conveying the above described property to secure a Note in the original principal amount of \$43,000.00.

To the best knowledge and belief of the undersigned, the party in possession of the property is James N. Morris and Stacey J. Ripple.

In compliance with Georgia law, please find below the contact information for the entity who has authority to negotiate, amend and modify the terms of the loan documents which may include a note, mortgage, security deed or deed to secure debt. Shirley R. Watson, 1520 Watson Blvd., Warner Robins, Georgia 31093; (478) 328-7464. The sale will be conducted subject (1) to confirmation that the sale is not prohibited under the U.S. Bankruptcy Code and (2) to final confirmation and audit of the status of the loan with the holder of the Security Deed. Shirley R. Watson, as Attorney in Fact for Mania H. Rising, 1520 Watson Blvd., Warner Robins, Georgia 31093 (478) 328-7464 phone (478) 922-3680 fax

Signed, sealed and delivered in the presence of: Shirley R. Watson, as Attorney-in-Fact for Mania H. Rising

March 11, 18, 25, April 1, 2026

LT26-015 Notice Of Qualified Candidates For May 19, 2026. General Primary/Non-Partisan Election. Democrats:

Ashley T. Ballard (Board of Education Post 2) Drenon Everett (Board of Education Post 2) Kelvin T. Melzar (Board of Education Post 4) Shanita Wilkerson Howell (County Commission Post 2) Columbus Henry Alderman III (County Commission Post 4) Lionel Erastus Brown (Board of Education Post 5 at Large) Shakia T. McCrary (Board of Education Post 5 at Large)

Republicans: Ken Allen Banter (Board of Education Post 2) Martin H. Moseley Jr. (County Commission Post 4) Buford James Walker III (BJ Walker) (Board of Education Post 5 at Large) Ervin Shane Scott Jr. (Board of Education Post 5 at Large) Robert Scott Hodges (Scott Hodges) (Board of Education Post 4) March 11, 2026

LT26-010 IN THE PROBATE COURT OF PEACH COUNTY STATE OF GEORGIA

IN RE: ESTATE OF KEVIN DEVAZIO WILSON DECEASED ESTATE NO. 2026-ADM-7242 PETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION NOTICE

TO: ANY AND ALL INTERESTED PARTIES AND to whom it may concern: KATINA SHERRI TUCKER has petitioned for KATINA SHERRI TUCKER to be appointed administrator(s) of the estate of KEVIN DEVAZIO WILSON 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 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 MARCH 18, 2026

LEGALS

CONTINUED FROM 7A

WHEREAS, Demon L. Laurie, 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 10/24/2020, and recorded on 1/19/2021, in Book 639, Page 310, securing the payment of a Note in the amount of \$148,000.00 in Peach County, Georgia Register of Deeds.

NOW, THEREFORE, notice is hereby given that the entire indebtedness has been declared due and payable as provided in said Security Deed by the Holder, and by virtue of the power of sale and authority vested in it, will on 5/5/2026 sell at public outcry to the highest bidder for cash Before the Courthouse door of the Peach County Courthouse, 205 W. Church Street, Fort Valley, Georgia 31030 of Peach, the following described property situated in Peach County, Georgia, to wit:

ALL THAT TRACT OR PARCEL OF LAND SITUATE, LYING AND BEING IN LAND LOT 45 OF THE 5TH LAND DISTRICT OF PEACH COUNTY, GEORGIA, AND BEING KNOWN AND DESIGNATED AS LOT 30, SECTION NO. 2, PHASE NO. 2, CUMBERLAND SHORES SUBDIVISION AND HAVING SUCH SHAPES, METES, BOUNDS, COURSES AND DISTANCES AS ARE SHOWN ON A PLAT OF SURVEY PREPARED BY TERRY M. SCARBOROUGH, DATED IN NE 8, 2006 AND RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 25, PAGES 162-163 AND PLAT BOOK 25, PAGE 189, CLERK'S OFFICE, PEACH SUPERIOR COURT. SAID PLAT OF SURVEY AND THE RECORDED COPY THEREOF ARE HEREBY MADE A PART OF THIS DESCRIPTION BY REFERENCE HERETO FOR ALL PURPOSES, AS FURTHER IDENTIFIED BY THAT CERTAIN PLAT OF SURVEY PREPARED BY DEMON L. LAURIE AND FELICIA M. CLARK-REID BY JOHN W. STANZILIS, JR., SURVEYOR, AND INCORPORATED BY REFERENCED HEREIN.

Tax Parcel ID: 053B 159
Being real property commonly known as **113 CHRISTOPHER DRIVE BYRON, GA 31008**

The debt remaining in default, this sale will be made for the purpose of paying the debt and all expenses of this sale including attorney's fees (notice of intent to collect attorney's fees has not been given).

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

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

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

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

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

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

Carrington Mortgage Services, LLC as Attorney in Fact for Demon L. Laurie
Attorney Contact:

Tromberg, Miller, Morris & Partners, PLLC
3000 Langford Road, Building 100
Peachtree Corners, GA 30071
Phone: 404-793-1447
Fax: 404-738-1558
TS # 26-39044

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

March 11, 18, 25, April 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, 2026

LT26-013

NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE SALE UNDER POWER OF SALE NOTICE OF SALE UNDER POWER CONTAINED IN SECURITY DEED STATE OF GEORGIA, COUNTY OF PEACH Pursuant to a power of sale contained in a certain security deed executed by LEE C ARMSTRONG and DEBBIE A CLARK, hereinafter referred to as Grantor, to The United States of America Acting through the Rural Housing Service or Successor Agency, United States Department of Agriculture, dated November 8, 1994, and recorded on November 8, 1994 in Deed Book 0153, beginning at page 782, of the deed records of the Clerk of the Superior Court of Peach County, Georgia, and by virtue of a default under the terms of said security deed, and the related note, the undersigned attorney-in-fact for the aforesaid Grantor (which attorney-in-fact is the present holder of said security deed and note secured thereby) will sell at public outcry before the door of the courthouse in Peach County, Georgia, or at such place as has or may be lawfully designated as an alternate location, within the legal hours of sale, for cash, to the highest bidder on the first Tuesday in April, 2026, all property described in said security deed including but not limited to the following described property: All that tract or parcel of land situate and lying in the State of Georgia, County of Peach, City of Fort Valley and in Beria Steppes Subdivision therein, being known and described as Lot Number 3 of said Beria Steppes Subdivision, as shown by a plat of said subdivision recorded in Plat Book 19, page 80, Clerk's Office, Peach Superior Court, Georgia, which plat is incorporated herein and made a part hereof by reference thereto for a more complete and accurate description of said Lot Number 3. According to said plat, said property is described by metes and courses as follows: From the intersection of the east right-of-way line of Morris Street and the south right-of-way line of Spruce Street, thence North 87 degrees 58 minutes 55 seconds East, 1451.98 feet; thence South 19 degrees 2 minutes 13 seconds East, 127.89 feet; thence South 19 degrees 2 minutes 13 seconds East, 75 feet to the point or place of beginning. Starting at the before located point or place of beginning, thence North 70 degrees 57 minutes 47 seconds East, 130 feet to a point lying on the westerly right-of-way line of Leventi Drive; thence South 19 degrees 2 minutes 13 seconds East, along the westerly right-of-way line of Leventi Drive, 75 feet; thence South 70 degrees 57 minutes 47 seconds West, 130 feet; thence North 19 degrees 2 minutes 13 seconds West, 75 feet to the point or place of beginning. The above described property and the improvements thereon are more particularly shown and described on a plat entitled, "Survey for Lee C. Armstrong and Debbie E. Clark, Lot 3,

Beria Steppes, Land Lot 182, 9th District, Peach County, Fort Valley, Georgia, as made by Story and Company, Inc., on October 31, 1994, being certified by Robert L. Story, Registered Surveyor No. 1853, on said October 31, 1994, which plat is recorded in Plat Book No. 19, page 143, Clerk's Office, Peach Superior Court, Georgia, and said plat is incorporated herein and made a part hereof by reference thereto for a more complete and accurate description of said herein described property. Subject to a drainage and utility easement 10 feet in width along the northwest property line of the subject property; subject to a 30 foot building line restriction from Leventi Drive; and subject to existing and recorded easements, rights-of-ways, building line restrictions and protective covenants. Said property may more commonly be known as **104 LEVRENTI DR, FORT VALLEY, GA 31030** 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 be subject to the following items which may affect the title: any outstanding ad valorem taxes (including taxes which are a lien but not yet due and payable); any matters which might be disclosed by an accurate survey and inspection of the property; any assessments, liens, encumbrances, zoning ordinances, restrictions, and all other matters of record superior to the said Security Deed. The sale will be conducted subject (1) to confirmation that the sale is not prohibited under the U.S. Bankruptcy Code and (2) to final confirmation and audit of the status of the loan with the holder of the Security Deed. Dawson Management is the entity with full authority to negotiate, amend and modify the terms of the Note and Security Deed, and it may be contacted at: Address: 3775 Venture Drive, Duluth, GA 30096 Phone: 770-962-4981 To the best of the undersigned's knowledge and belief, the party in possession of the property is believed to be LEE C ARMSTRONG and DEBBIE A CLARK, or tenant(s). United States of America, acting through the Rural Housing Service, its successors and assigns, United States Department of Agriculture, as Transferee, Assignee, and Secured Creditor As attorney-in-fact for the aforesaid Grantor Please note that if any borrower or obligor has received a discharge in a bankruptcy case filed under Title 11 of the United States Code, no personal liability will arise from this foreclosure action against that individual. This foreclosure action is being pursued solely against the real property to enforce the lien created by the Security Instrument. Respectfully, Marinocsi Law Group, P.C. 16415 Addison Road, Suite 725 Addison, TX 75001 (401) 234-9200 (401) 398-2594 THIS LAW FIRM MAY BE HELD TO BE ACTING AS A DEBT COLLECTOR,

UNDER FEDERAL LAW. IF SO, ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE A-4867205
March 11, 18, 25, April 1, 2026

IN THE JUVENILE COURT OF PEACH COUNTY, GEORGIA
IN THE INTEREST OF: WENILE FILE #7471-J
C. J., SEX MALE, AGE <1, DOB 10/24/2025, CASE #111-2026J 001 CHILD UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN, CATHERINE JOHNSON; JERMEL TANEHILL; ANY UNKNOWN PUTATIVE FATHER(S), AND ANYONE ELSE CLAIMING A PARENTAL INTEREST IN THE ABOVE CHILD.
You are notified that a Dependency Petition with Custody Placed with Maternal Grandparents was filed against you in said court on February 10, 2026, and an Order for Service by Publication was entered on February 9, 2026.

YOU ARE COMMANDED AND REQUIRED TO BE AND APPEAR before Peach County Juvenile Court, held at Peach County Courthouse, Ft. Valley, Georgia on 2/24/26 at 9:00 o'clock a.m., and on 4/14/26 for a hearing following publication. Serve an answer on Petitioner's Attorney, James E. Patterson, P. O. Box 1006, Forsyth, Georgia 31029. You may obtain a copy of the petition by contacting Peach County Juvenile Court Clerk.

WITNESS the Honorable Judges of this court, this 10th day of February, 2026.

Whitney Nelson, CLERK, PEACH COUNTY PEACH COURT
2/18, 2/25, 3/04, 3/11, 2026
3687

LT26-011
NOTICE OF INTENTION TO INTRODUCE LOCAL LEGISLATION

Notice is given that there will be introduced at the 2026 regular session of the General Assembly of Georgia a bill to amend an Act providing a new charter for the City of Byron, approved February 13, 1941 (Ga. L. 1941, p. 1210), as amended; and for other purposes.

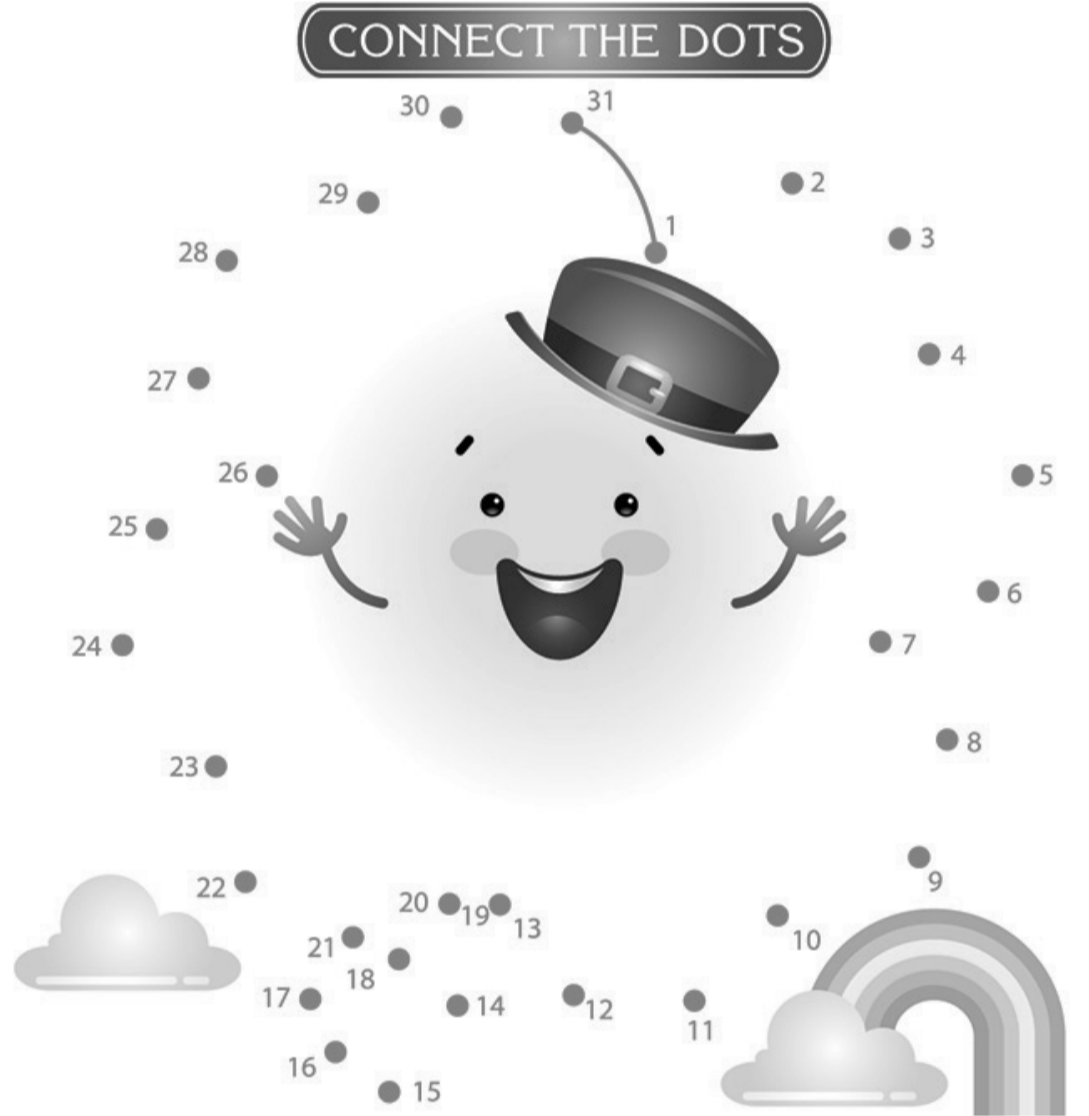
March 11, 2026

WE ACCEPT TIPS!

(478) 825-2432
FAX (478) 825-4130

Email:

news@theleadertribune.com



ST. PATRICK'S DAY WORD SEARCH

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

WORDS

- CELEBRATION
- CELTIC
- CLOVER
- EMERALD
- ERIN
- FORTUNE
- GAELIC
- GOLD
- HARP
- IRELAND
- IRISH
- ISLAND
- JIG
- LEGEND
- LEPRECHAUN
- LUCK
- MAGIC
- MARCH
- MISCHIEF
- PARADES
- PATRICK
- SAINT
- SHAMROCK
- TRADITION

Leprechaun Laughs

How do you know if a leprechaun likes your jokes?

He'll be Dublin over with laughter!

Where do leprechauns hang out on sunny days?

The Paddy-o!

Why did the leprechaun lose the race?

He jiggered instead of jogging!

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

Welcoming Mr. Bernard Young to Peach County Schools

By PCSS

Please join us in welcoming Mr. Bernard Young to Peach County Schools. Mr. Young will be joining Peach County Schools as our Assistant Superintendent and Principal Supervisor in the 2026-2027 school year.

Bernard Young is an experienced educational leader with more than two decades of professional leadership spanning education and organizational management. He currently serves as Principal of Southwest Magnet High School and Law Academy, where he has led significant improvements in student achievement, school culture, and operational effectiveness. Under his leadership, the school's graduation rate increased from 69 percent to 92 percent, disciplinary incidents were reduced by 30 percent, and teacher performance ratings improved by 20 percent. Mr. Young previously served as Assistant Principal at Southwest and as an Instructional and Academic Coach at Twiggs County Comprehensive High School, where he strengthened instructional practices, developed the school's first gifted and high-achiever academic track, and launched its initial Move on



When Ready dual enrollment cohort.

His career in education began in Peach County as a mathematics instructor, where he taught students at the standard, remedial, and advanced levels while aligning instruction with district and state standards. During his time in Peach, he also coached football, soccer, and basketball. Prior to entering education, he served in branch leadership roles in the financial services industry, bringing organizational and operational experience to his educational leadership. He holds an Educational Specialist and Master's

degree in Educational Leadership from Georgia College and State University and a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration from Clark Atlanta University. He is currently a Doctoral Candidate in Educational Leadership at Georgia Southern University.

Mr. Young is married to the Honorable Chéferre Young, who is the Chief Judge of the Macon Judicial Circuit Juvenile Court, which encompasses Bibb, Peach, and Crawford Counties. They are the proud parents of two sons, Ian and Aidan.

Lawmakers consider harms of artificial intelligence, social media, particularly for children

By Ty Tagami
Bureau Chief

Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — Concern about the effects of algorithms and artificial intelligence has been driving an onslaught of legislation at the Georgia General Assembly.

Lawmakers have unleashed more than half a dozen bills that would hold companies or individuals to account for the way they deploy these computational tools, especially when used to connect children with obscenity, erode privacy or exploit identities.

"There are artificial intelligence platforms that allow a person to take an ordinary photograph of someone — your wife, your daughter, your coworker, your friend — and with a few clicks digitally remove their clothing to fabricate an explicit image," said Sen. Bo Hatchett, R-Cornelia, while presenting his artificial intelligence restraint bill on the Senate floor last month. "It's being used as a bullying tactic in schools. It's being used for revenge, and it's being used to destroy reputations. As a father of daughters, I cannot ignore that."

Senate Bill 398 would make "virtual peeping" a felony punishable by up to 10 years in prison. The maximum prison term would double when a manipulated image depicts a minor.

The Senate passed it 48-1 last month. It was a rare bipartisan vote that revealed the depth of concern about the tools that tech companies have been handing the public.

Georgia lawmakers have been trying to address child safety online since at least 2024 when they passed a law to limit social media companies' access to children.

The industry sued in federal court in Atlanta and convinced a judge to block enforcement, asserting the law violated First Amendment speech protections.

Lt. Gov. Burt Jones backed that measure. The Republican then empaneled a bipartisan Senate committee to study the issue.

Sen. Sally Harrell, D-Atlanta, co-chaired the committee with a Republican senator. She said she became concerned after watching her own children interact with social media on the smartphones they had gotten in middle school, back when the devices and platforms were new

and parents were less wary. "I think the way the algorithmic feed works is damaging to kids, and I know that it fundamentally changed my kids," she said during a hearing last week on Senate Bill 495, her attempt to tame social media. "It leaves a pit in my stomach."

At that hearing, Angela Flanigan, the executive director of the Georgia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, said social media platforms had been linked to disrupted sleep, reduced academic achievement and weakened emotional regulation, raising the risk of anxiety, depression and eating disorders. The algorithms must be regulated because the companies will not change their designs voluntarily, Flanigan said. "They're irresponsible."

SB 495 sought to regulate how platforms harvest personal data and use it to feed algorithms that then drive "addictive" usage. It would have applied special restrictions to platforms that could gauge from their user data that at least 2% of their audience comprised minors.

The committee did not vote on the bill, making passage unlikely. The deadline to move bills from the Senate to the House and vice versa is Friday. Some committees, including the one charged with reviewing Harrell's bill, do not plan to meet this week.

Senate Bill 467 suffered a similar fate. The measure by Sen. Bill Cowsert, R-Athens, sought to give parents more control over their children's access to phone apps.

Other bills have emerged from committee hearings and still have a chance.

Senate Bill 540 by Sen. Jason Anavittarte, R-Dallas, the Senate majority leader, passed a committee last week and could get a vote on the Senate floor before "crossover" day on Friday.

It would empower the state attorney general to fine owners of any "conversational artificial intelligence" application or service that fails to clarify to users that they are not communicating with a human or that fails to implement guardrails against sharing sexually explicit material with children.

Senate Bill 418 by Sen. Max Burns, R-Sylvania, also got the nod from a Senate committee last week. Like Hatchett's bill, it would hold people to account if they were to manipulate and distribute a person's image in

a sexually explicit way. Senate Bill 488 by Sen. Ed Setzler, R-Acworth, also passed out of committee last week. It would allow liability lawsuits against product sellers who expose minors to artificial intelligence that was "not merchantable and reasonably suited to the use intended."

And the House could pass its own measure by Friday.

House Bill 566 by Rep. Soo Hong, R-Lawrenceville, would ban artificial intelligence knockoffs of licensed voices and likenesses.

Many of the measures found support from religious groups but opposition from free speech advocates and technology companies.

Industry lobbyists complained about cost and asserted that the legislation would put users' private information at risk of exposure.

Justin Hill, a representative from the tech trade association NetChoice — the group that tied up Georgia's 2024 law in court — said at a hearing about the app store age legislation that companies want to do more to protect children.

"They recognize this has been a problem," he said. "They're making it a priority, and I would just encourage you to allow the free market to fix this problem."

Harrell, the Democrat who led the committee that studied how to protect children online, said the Legislature has not fielded strong enough measures.

"We did nothing to help parents monitor their kids' online activities, we did nothing to make social media and gaming less addictive for kids, and we did nothing to address design features that promote connecting kids with adults who might use them for sexual exploitation," she said. "There is so much more to do, but we are up against some serious monied interests."

At a hearing last week, Anavittarte was clear-eyed about the opposition to his bill and the others that would restrain the tech industry. He was the lead co-sponsor of the legislation that established the 2024 law that NetChoice blocked with a lawsuit.

"All these laws are going to get caught up in federal court just like when we wrote Senate Bill 351," he said. "If I think that it's not, then I'm being foolish."

PCHS Service Club Donates Over 500 Books to Local Elementary Schools



Photo Contributed

Service Club donated over 500 books (from Mrs. Poole's collection) to the 3 Peach County elementary schools. Hunt, Kay Road and Byron each received 2 containers full of books.

By PCHS

March 6, 2026 - Students in the Peach County High School Service Club are making a meaningful impact in their community through a generous book donation to local elementary schools.

The club recently donated more than 500 books to the three Peach County elementary schools: Hunt Elementary, Kay Road Elementary, and By-

ron Elementary. Each school received two large containers filled with books that teachers can use to help build and expand their classroom libraries.

The books will provide additional reading opportunities for students and support teachers as they continue encouraging a love of reading in their classrooms.

Members of the Service Club organized and helped distribute the books, demonstrating

their commitment to serving others and supporting younger students across the district. Efforts like this highlight the positive leadership and community spirit shown by Peach County High School students.

Peach County High School is proud of the Service Club members for their initiative and dedication to making a difference in local schools.

HAMMOND

CONTINUED FROM 4A

guardian. Bullying is unacceptable, and there are ways to address and stop it.

For the adults and teachers, if a child comes to you seeking assistance with bullying, spend time listening to them and provide affirmation and support before taking action.

It is vital for teachers and administrators to take note when students come to report bullying, as well as to pay attention to behaviors in and out of the classroom. Bullying is less likely in schools where adults are involved and firm about stopping bullying behaviors. Send out a clear message at your school that bullying will have negative consequences.

The National Institute of Health writes, "By promoting kindness, inclusivity, and respect, we can contribute to creating workplaces where every-

one feels valued and respected. Together, we have the power to make bullying a thing of the past and build a better, more compassionate world."

I sincerely hope Peach County Schools starts to fully look into combating bullying, because one death from bullying is already too many.

For more information and resources about bullying and how to address and stop the issue, go to stopbullying.gov and school-safety.gov.

If someone you know is at risk for suicide, you can watch for warning signs, which can include being isolated, increased anxiety, extreme mood swings, increased anger, talking about being a burden, feeling trapped, or being in unbearable pain, substance abuse, looking for access to lethal means, sleeping too little or too much, express-

ing hopelessness, talking or posting about wanting to die, and/or making plans to commit suicide.

There is no reason to feel shame for having a mental illness or experiencing suicidal thoughts. The brain is an organ, and like all organs, it can cease to function in a way that is beneficial to you. It's okay to ask for help.

If you, or someone you know, is experiencing mental health-related distress, you can contact the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline by calling or texting 988. The Suicide and Crisis Lifeline can also be reached online at 988lifeline.org. 988 is confidential, free, and available all day, every day, all year round. Remember, you are not alone, and there are people who can help.

Minimum speed limit on Georgia highways could rise by 10 mph

By Mark Niesse
Staff Writer

Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — Get out of the way, slow drivers. The minimum speed limit on Georgia highways might increase to 50 mph.

Georgia lawmakers are considering raising the speedy minimum speed limit from 40 mph as a safety measure to reduce crashes caused by disparities in speed. The maximum speed limit on some highways is 70 mph.

"I want to limit the number of rear-end collisions," said state Rep. John Carson, R-Marietta, the sponsor of House Bill 809. "I've received fatality reports ... It's horrific."

The max speed limit in Georgia has steadily increased over the last few decades from 55 mph to 70 mph, but the mini-

mum speed limit has remained at 40 mph, Carson said.

Col. William Hitchens, commissioner of the Georgia Department of Public Safety, said Georgia State Patrol officers have seen significant damage and injuries involving slow-moving vehicles.

"Driving below the speed limit can, in some cases, be as dangerous as traveling above the posted speed limit," Hitchens wrote in a letter last month to Carson about his proposal. "Vehicles that are traveling below the minimum speed can cause traffic issues such as long backups and cause motorists to take evasive actions due to approaching the vehicle faster than expected."

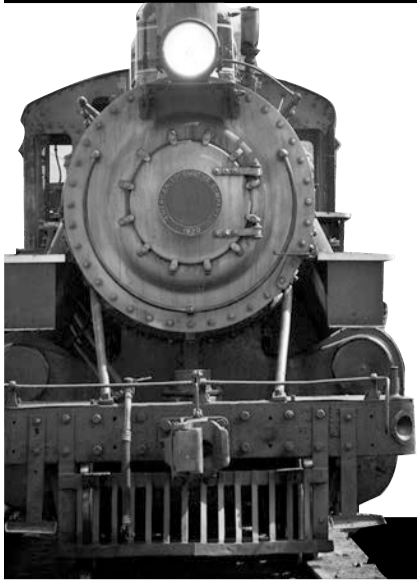
Senior citizens and student drivers might struggle with a higher minimum speed limit, said state Rep. Rhonda Taylor, D-Conyers.

"It would be a better solution ... (to) move to the right," Taylor said. "It almost feel like I'm being penalized because I can't drive 50 miles an hour."

Violations of Georgia's minimum speed law are punishable by fines up to \$1,000, but local jurisdictions across the state generally set penalties much lower, in the \$100 to \$200 range. Fines wouldn't change under HB 809.

The bill calls for the 50 mph minimum speed limit on any part of a highway in Georgia with a speed limit 65 mph or greater.

The House Motor Vehicles Committee didn't vote on the bill after a hearing Tuesday while lawmakers gather more information about crashes and research the cost of replacing speed limit signs. The bill could be brought up for a vote afterward.



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Students who skip school could face new punishments, including loss of driver's license

By Ty Tagami
Bureau Chief

Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — Students with too many unexcused absences would be barred from playing sports and could lose their driver's license under legislation approved by the state Senate Thursday.

"These are privileges," said Sen. Jason Dickerson, R-Canton. "And this bill reinforces the connection between responsibility and opportunity."

He carried the bill to address "chronic" absenteeism in public schools, defined as missing a tenth or more of the school year.

A legislative study committee learned last summer that more than one in five students had missed more than 15 days of school in 2024, nearly double the rate in 2019. The rate missing six to 15 days climbed to

42%, six points higher than in 2019.

The study committee heard proposals to address the problem, such as prohibiting participation in extracurricular and interscholastic sports and suspending driver's licenses. Those are the punishments present in Senate Bill 513, co-sponsored by numerous senators, including several in leadership posts.

The punishment would only be a last resort.

Schools would have to first identify students at risk of missing too many days, then they would have to craft attendance intervention plans with the student and parents.

The student would have to sign the plan, and noncompliance would trigger the sanctions.

The measure was popular with both Republicans and Democrats.

"If we do not have kids' butts in seats, they are not going to learn," said Sen. RaShaun Kemp, D-Atlanta, who was a high school principal and now serves on the board of an Atlanta charter school.

One lawmaker had an issue with it, though.

Sen. Jaha Howard, D-Smyrna, who served on the Cobb County school board, said the idea was "wonderful," but he also thought it burdensome for teachers, since the state would not help fund the mandates.

Among the requirements are that school districts assemble systemwide attendance review teams, with school-based teams required at schools with at least 15% of students chronically absent.

The measure passed 46-1, with Howard opposed. It now heads to the state House.

Trojans Cast Their Lines at Clarks Hill Qualifier

By Chris McKenzie,
Sports Reporter

The Peach County High School Trojans Bass Fishing team recently competed in Qualifying Round 3 at Clarks Hill Lake, taking on a competitive field of anglers from across the region.

Representing the Trojans were the teams of Landon Latour and Landon Austin, along with Fisher Fuller and Landyn Barton. Each duo battled changing conditions on the water while working to locate productive fishing spots throughout the day.

Latour and Austin finished the tournament in 66th place,

turning in a solid effort against a large and talented field of high school anglers. Their persistence on the water helped them secure the Trojans' top finish for the event.

Fuller and Barton also represented Peach County well, finishing in 118th place. Despite the challenges of the day, the pair continued to compete with determination while gaining valuable tournament experience.

Clarks Hill Lake, known for its expansive waters and strong bass population, provided both opportunity and difficulty for the competitors. Anglers had to adapt to conditions and make

quick adjustments in order to find bites throughout the round.

While the results may not have landed the Trojans near the top of the leaderboard, the event served as another important step in the growth of Peach County's bass fishing program. Competing against many of the state's best high school anglers continues to sharpen the skills of the Trojan fishermen.

With more tournaments ahead, the Peach County Bass Fishing team will look to build on the experience gained at Clarks Hill and continue improving as the season progresses.

Georgia lawmakers seek to reduce insurance costs

By Ty Tagami
Bureau Chief

Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — After approving one-time income and property tax rebates for Georgians earlier this week, the state House returned with four more affordability measures, this time aimed at insurance costs.

The legislation passed by the House Thursday aims to curb excess insurance industry billing and profits while increasing what's covered and punishing drivers for inadequate insurance.

"Georgia is leading the nation in tackling affordability and driving down the cost of living for our neighbors — from energy and healthcare to housing and now insurance," House Speaker Jon Burns, R-Newington, said in a statement after the insurance bills passed with commanding bipartisan majorities, one of them unanimously.

This was one day after the House and Senate approved a midyear budget that returns \$2 billion to taxpayers in the form of one-time property and income tax rebates.

The insurance measures now headed to the Senate take several

al approaches.

House Bill 1262 would increase fines against insurance companies for surprise billing, failure to cover mental health treatment, and other violations. House Bill 1263 would reduce the amount of time companies can take before seeking refunds for premium tax payment errors.

House Bill 1274 would require rate decreases by insurance companies that notch profits exceeding 5% of projections for three straight years.

House Bill 1344 would increase nearly 40 outdated insurance fines in state law, and it would hand the Office of the Insurance Commissioner John King more authority to levy fines. It also would amend uninsured motorist laws by allowing police to cite drivers who operate a vehicle while "excluded" from the owner's insurance. Owners who give excluded drivers the keys would face a misdemeanor charge that could result in up to a year in jail, plus a \$1,000 fine.

Rep. Matt Reeves, R-Duluth, introduced the latter two bills. He also led a study committee on insurance rates that Burns appointed last year and that

shaped the House's new approach to insurance.

Reeves said King asked for some of the measures, adding that the insurance commissioner told him a Florida bill like HB 1274 had resulted in a \$1 billion rebate to customers there.

It might be a while before something like that happens in Georgia. Insurance companies would need to be highly profitable first.

During a hearing in mid-February on HB 1274, a fellow Republican asked Reeves to remind him the last time a Georgia insurer had profits over 5%.

"For three straight years?" Reeves asked him.

"For three straight years," responded his colleague, Rep. Bruce Williamson, R-Monroe, a member of the House Insurance Committee.

"That's been a while," Reeves said.

Williamson said insurance company profitability was the problem in Georgia. He said he applauded the goal of limiting profits. "But I do want to point out for the benefit of the audience that this has not happened in a very long time."

Reeves agreed.

Trojans Stay Red-Hot: Peach County Sweeps Week to Improve to 12-2

By Chris McKenzie,
Sports Reporter

The Peach County High School Trojans baseball team continued its strong start to the season with a dominant 3-0 week, overwhelming their opponents and improving their overall record to 12-2 while moving to 2-0 in region play.

Peach County opened the week with an explosive offensive performance against Westover High School, cruising to a 22-1 victory. The Trojans wasted little time setting the tone, scoring early and often as their bats stayed hot throughout the game. Peach County's lineup delivered hit after hit, while the Trojans' pitching staff kept Westover's offense quiet, allowing only a single run.

The Trojans carried that momentum into their next matchup against Luella High School. Peach County once again dominated from the start, shutting out Luella in a 15-0 victory. Strong pitching and solid defense backed another powerful offensive showing as the Trojans controlled the game from the first inning to the final out.

Peach County closed out the week by facing Westover High School for a second time. While Westover managed to get more offense going in the rematch, the Trojans still proved too much to handle. Peach County pulled away for a 14-3 win, completing the season sweep and securing their third victory of the week.

Across the three games, the Trojans showcased a balanced

attack—combining explosive hitting, disciplined pitching, and reliable defense. The offense produced 51 runs in three games, demonstrating the depth and firepower throughout the lineup.

With the perfect week, Peach County continues to build momentum as the season progresses. Now sitting at 12-2 overall and 2-0 in region play, the Trojans appear to be hitting their stride at the right time and positioning themselves as a strong contender as region competition intensifies.

If the Trojans continue playing with the same energy and consistency they showed this week, Peach County baseball could be in for a very exciting season.

Georgia's famous lemon pepper wings could become the state's official wing flavor

By Mark Niese
Staff Writer

Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — Move over, peaches, peanuts, and pecans.

Lemon pepper wings could soon join the ranks of official Georgia foods, according to a bipartisan bill considered by lawmakers Wednesday.

Lemon pepper wings are a "cultural and culinary phenomenon," said state Rep. Eric Bell, D-Jonesboro, the bill's sponsor. "Lemon pepper is something that's synonymous with the state of Georgia, and people

across our nation have come to know Georgia as famous for its lemon pepper wings," Bell said. "This is a homegrown identity."

The renown of Georgia's lemon pepper wings has grown in recent years through references by hip-hop artists Rick Ross, Quavo and Gucci Mane, Bell told the House Special Rules Committee.

Forget Buffalo wings, invented in Buffalo, New York.

Lemon pepper wings have become a source of Georgia pride and heritage that could attract tourists to local restaurants, Bell said.

Based on the reaction from the committee's chairman, the bill has a chance of becoming law.

"I'll have to agree with you that is my favorite wing too is the lemon pepper wing. I do like them better than any other kind," said Special Rules Chairman Mitchell Scoggins, R-Cartersville.

The committee could soon vote on House Bill 1013. If approved, it would advance to a vote in the full state House of Representatives.

SGTC waiving application fee in March

By SGTC

South Georgia Technical College is providing an application fee waiver for students who apply during the month of March. March is "Apply to College Month" and students who apply during "No Fee March" can have the \$25 application fee waived.

Students interested in applying to South Georgia Technical College can visit the SGTC website at www.southgatech.edu and complete an application online. Click on the "Apply Now" button

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Wildcats Spike Past Emmanuel in Four-Set Victory

By Chris McKenzie,
Sports Reporter

The Fort Valley State University men's volleyball team delivered a strong performance on the court, defeating Emmanuel University (Georgia) in four sets to secure an impressive victory. The Wildcats took the match 25-19, 25-16, 24-26, and 25-20, showcasing their offensive efficiency and resilience.

From the opening serve, Fort Valley State set the tone with aggressive attacking and solid defensive play. The Wildcats captured the first set 25-19, capitalizing on key errors by Emmanuel

while maintaining a balanced offensive attack. Fort Valley State continued its momentum in the second set, pulling away with a convincing 25-16 win behind consistent hitting and strong net play.

Emmanuel responded in the third set with its most effective stretch of the match. The Lions edged out the Wildcats 26-24 in a tightly contested battle, using a .281 hitting percentage to keep the match alive and force a fourth set.

However, the Wildcats quickly regrouped and returned to form in the final frame. Fort Valley State controlled the pace and closed out the match with a 25-20 victory, sealing the four-set win.

Statistically, the Wildcats were dominant on of-

fense. Fort Valley State finished the match with 55 kills and a .271 hitting percentage, compared to Emmanuel's 41 kills and .153 hitting percentage. The Wildcats also demonstrated consistent production across the match, recording double-digit kills in every set while limiting costly mistakes.

Fort Valley State's ability to maintain offensive pressure and respond after dropping the third set proved to be the difference. The Wildcats' bal-

anced attack and disciplined play allowed them to keep Emmanuel from building sustained momentum.

With the victory, the Wildcats continue to build confidence and momentum as the season progresses. Fort Valley State will look to carry the strong performance forward as they prepare for upcoming matches and continue representing the university with pride.

Trojans Look to Rebound After Loss to Bainbridge

By Chris McKenzie,
Sports Reporter

The Peach County Trojans boys soccer team suffered a tough setback this week, falling 8-0 to Bainbridge High School. Despite the difficult result, the Trojans remain focused on the bigger picture as the season continues to unfold.

Bainbridge controlled the match from the opening whistle, capitalizing on several scoring opportunities and building mo-

mentum throughout the game. Peach County battled to slow the attack and continued to compete, but the Bearcats were able to maintain offensive pressure and secure the victory.

With the loss, the Trojans now sit at 4-5 overall on the season and hold a 1-1 record in region play. While the scoreline was not the outcome Peach County hoped for, the team understands that one game does not define the season.

The Trojans still have plenty

of soccer left to play, with several important region matchups ahead that will help determine their postseason chances. As the schedule continues, Peach County will look to regroup, learn from the loss, and build momentum moving forward.

With the season nearing its midpoint, the Trojans remain determined to improve each game and position themselves for a strong finish in region competition.



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