

TIMES JOURNAL POST

THE TWIGGS TIMES NEW ERA

THE COCHRAN JOURNAL

THE WILKINSON COUNTY POST

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Wilkinson records first traffic fatality of the year



via Washington County Sheriff's Office
The tanker truck overturned Sunday, blocking both lanes of Highway 57.

Christian McKearney
Times Journal Post

A Macon truck driver lost his life on Sunday after losing his lane and crashing off of Ga. 57 in east Wilkinson County, closer to the Washington County line.

Antwan Henley, 34, was transported to an area hospital before later passing away.

Henley's tanker truck was carrying roughly 60,000 pounds of diesel fuel before overturning, setting off a massive cleanup on Sunday afternoon that continued well into the week.

Wilkinson County averaged 5.4 traffic fatalities per year between 2019-2023, according to the Governor's Office of Highway Safety.

Bleckley girls basketball season ends in playoff loss to ACE

Micah Johnston
For the TJP

In a scrappy game with turnovers galore and bonuses for both teams in almost every quarter, the No. 16 Academy for Classical Education Gryphons claimed the school's first-ever basketball playoff win Tuesday night when they defeated the No. 17 Bleckley County Royals 57-47 on their home court in Macon.

It was business as usual for the Gryphons (20-4), who had already defeated the Royals twice in the past few weeks, winning 56-44 back on Feb. 1 and then getting another victory 54-39 Feb. 7.

"With the power rankings, that could happen, you see a region opponent earlier," ACE head coach Todd Whetsel said after the game. "If it was a traditional bracket, you wouldn't see them until the Final Four. But if it was



Mark S. Powell / For the TJP

ACE defeats Bleckley County 57-47 in the first round of the GHSA Class A Division I girls basketball playoffs. Ava Jenkins secures a rebound for the Royals.

See ROYALS, page 10

Jeffersonville seeks solutions to costly water and sewer problems

Mary Helene Hall
Times Journal Post

Jeffersonville city officials are asking residents to be mindful of what they flush down the toilet after experiencing clogging in its sewer system.

At its Feb. 10 meeting, city council members discussed the stinky situation on their hands with wrongly-flushed items and other water and sewer issues Jeffersonville is facing.

One of the city's lift stations, which lift wastewater that's deeper underground to a higher point or pump it directly to a treatment plant, has been getting clogged with items that shouldn't be in the sewage to begin with.

Hair is a large culprit for the clogs in the

city sewer system.

Additional items that should not be poured down the drain or flushed include cat litter, coffee grounds, paper towels, cotton balls, feminine hygiene products, paint and — what Mayor Charles Williams said was one of the city's largest problems — grease, fat and oils. The oil, he explained, hardens and rises to the top of the tank, which makes the station harder to clean.

"In the summer, the grease will flow more because it's hot, it's warm," he said. "But as soon as it turns cold like it is now? Now we have a grease problem."

But those aren't the only things making it down the drain. Williams said they've found

shoes, clothes and condoms.

"They're at least practicing safe sex around here," he joked during the meeting.

To fix these clogs, the city has to hire professionals with specialty equipment such as boom trucks and vacuum trucks, which Williams said is expensive.

Holding contractors accountable for damage

The council discussed ongoing problems with external contractors hired by companies like AT&T and Cox. As they are installing fiber optic cables underground, they are striking water and sewer lines, then the contracted companies leave.

Previously, the city has had to pay for the damages, but Williams said Jeffersonville is changing its approach.

"The city is footing the \$1,500 bill," he said. "You get about three or four of those, it could throw your budget upside down for a small city."

Before the contractors leave, the city will issue fines or citations to those responsible for the damages in order to ensure they get paid, the city attorney advised the council.

Williams said that the companies don't have a problem paying — in fact, they have money set aside for such situations — rather, it's a matter of documenting the damage and having a paper trail.



Russell Davidson

"It Takes 2," a new hot dog joint in Cochran, opened Feb. 14.

All recent local health inspections earn an 'A'

Mary Helene Hall
Times Journal Post

Each local establishment that has undergone a state Department of Public Health inspection in 2025 has received a score of 90% or higher.

In Twiggs, Wilkinson and Bleckley counties, 14 restaurants and food service facilities received a routine inspection so far this year.

A score of 90 or above indicates "food safety excellence,"

according to Georgia DPH.

To operate, establishments must receive at least an 80 for "satisfactory compliance." If a restaurant scores 69 or below, they risk closure if the score does not improve within 10 days.

One restaurant, It Takes 2 in Cochran, received their initial inspection and earned a perfect score. The hot dog joint's grand opening was Feb. 14.

Each score is listed below in order of score, highest to lowest.

— It Takes 2 (112 S. First St., Cochran): 100

— Twiggs County Middle/High School (375 Watson Drive, Jeffersonville): 100

— Jeffersonville Elementary

See FOOD, page 2

Property tax bill picture comes into focus

Christian McKearney
Times Journal Post

The Wilkinson County School Board last week voted to approve its new millage rate, thus paving the way for property tax bills to be mailed out.

Tax Commissioner Amanda Panther told the Times-Journal-Post on Tuesday that the Georgia Department of Revenue is expected to give the county the go-ahead "hopefully by the end of today."

That would put the timetable at "by late next week," in terms of tax bills being sent out, according to Panther.

"I expect that first week in March to be really busy. A lot of people are calling our office and champing at the bit to go ahead and pay," she said. "So, it shouldn't take long (for local government coffers to begin refilling)."

The School Board vote was a 3-2 decision.

A video of the meeting already had been viewed more than 5,000 times as of earlier this week on the Facebook page of David Hadarits, who is the School Board's new chairman. Hadarits implied political partisanship in his Facebook post, listing the party of each School Board member and their vote. Both Democrats on the board — Kimberly Shinholster-Watkins and Charles Pitts — voted yes, as did Republican Leigh Scott, first elected in 2022. Voting no, meanwhile, were the two brand-new Re-



Provided

Amanda Panther was sworn in as Wilkinson County's tax commissioner in late December.

publicans — Hadarits and District 3's Johanna Rogers.

The School Board recently voted in a millage rate of 18.75, a decrease of .931 mills from its most recent millage rate of 19.681. However, due to an increase in the overall property digest, the new millage rate does not qualify as the "recommended rollback rate," which is what Hadarits and Rogers were at least aiming for.

"The...tax increase for a home with a fair market value of \$125,000 is approximately \$78.55 per year and the proposed increase for non-homestead property with a fair market value of \$100,000 is approximately \$62.84

per year," according to a Board of Education release.

At a recent public meeting, Superintendent Angela James was candid when telling the audience that the plan certainly was not to "horde a pile of money so we can blow it on furniture, or blow it on whatever."

"To take the abuse that we've taken (in comments on Facebook) is not right, and it's hurtful, because I've lived and worked in this community my whole life," she said. "I love this community, and my heart is this community."

See TAX, page 2



Upcoming Events

4th Annual Tulsa Stander Memorial Hog Hunt Weigh In

Saturday, Feb 22
Noon

5250 Watson Dairy Road
Presented by Boars N’ Broads & Dixie Doggers at Fieldstone Preserve in Dry Branch. Event will include family fun, food, drinks, music, dog hunting vendors and more.

Bingo for Books

Thursday, Feb 27
5:30 to 7 p.m.
Bleckley County Elementary School
Join us for a night of family fun, snacks and BINGO for BOOKS! Games will be ongoing throughout the event as well as prizes and treats!

Seed Exchange

Wednesday Mar, 5
4 to 6 p.m.
128 E. Main St. in Irwinton
All green thumbs are welcome! Please bring 5 seed packs of any variety to share!

Dandelion Ministries Diaper Give Away

Saturday, Mar 8
10 a.m. to noon
45 Railroad St. W. in Jeffersonville
Helping Moms and their little ones with what they need most.

Health Fair

Saturday, March 8
11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Faulks Chapel Baptist Church
Head to the church to get your blood pressure checked and receive information that can help improve your overall health. For more info, contact Laura Gallemore (478-718-3519), Annette Stephens (478-456-3056) or Linda Brown (478-308-1108).

2025 Father Daughter Dance at Bleckley

Saturday, March 8
6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
242 E Dykes St.
This event is for grades pre-k through 5th grade, and out-of-county students are welcome. Price is \$35 per father-daughter couple and \$10 per additional daughter.

Food, from 1:

(878 Bullard Road, Jeffersonville): 100
— Twiggs County Head Start (12956 Highway 80, Jeffersonville): 100
— Subway (13700 Highway 80, Jeffersonville): 100
— Camp Christian (3735 Dennard Hardy Road, Gordon): 100
— Bleckley PDC/RSAT (179 JAC Arts Road, Cochran): 99
— Subway (107 Railroad St., McIntyre): 98
— AJ’s Wings (185 Milledgeville Road, Gordon): 98
— Poppie’s Place (13864 US Highway 80, Jeffersonville): 97
— Kountry Kitchen & Seafood (101 Magnolia St., Jeffersonville): 94
— Boehner’s Front Porch (260 Milledgeville Road, Gordon): 94
— Twiggs Academy (961 Hamlin Floyd Road, Jeffersonville): 94
— China Wok (101 N. Railroad St., Jeffersonville): 92

Wilco recreation department beginning a brand-new experiment

Christian McKearney
Times Journal Post

The tipping point came last September. It was the opening weekend for football at the Wilkinson County Recreation Department (WCRD) outside of Gordon. All was not well, however. The numbers on the new flag football jerseys already were peeling. Some of the new cheerleader uniforms were still held up in the mail. Coaches and players were filling up bottles out of a water spigot. The quality of the restrooms wasn’t exactly five-star, to say the least. The county commission apparently heard enough about it from enough people and subsequently called a meeting with the recreation department board and parents. That meeting led to further discussions, and the county commission ultimately chose to take relatively drastic action, changing the entire structure of the WCRD. Beginning with this upcoming baseball and softball season, the recreation department essentially will be “vol-

unteer- and parent-led.” “It’s the same model that several other communities in this area with successful recreation department programs use, mainly Jones County,” said Commissioner Flint Shepherd. “Any recreation department is only as good as its volunteers and support from the community.” Catelynn Duncan is leading the volunteer group previously tabbed by the county commission to oversee the recreation department. Duncan still has very fond childhood memories of playing ball at the park as a little girl. “It was booming back then. So many people in the community were involved,” Duncan said. “That’s what we’re trying to get back to.” Registration for baseball and softball continues through March 1. There will be two more in-person registration sessions at the ballfields, one this Saturday and another on March 1. The times are 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. for both days. Or, parents and guardians can register their children through an online form, which includes all

of the necessary paperwork and fine print. The link to the form can be found on the “Wilkinson County Rec Department” Facebook page. Duncan has volunteered at the recreation department for the last two years. Now, she and her team of roughly 20 community members are in the process of forming a non-profit organization. A board is being formed, thanks to help from local attorney Donald Roberts. Fundraising will be essential. The county government has completely removed “recreation funding” from its budget, although the county government still will cut the grass and provide maintenance at the facility. The county commission previously allocated \$100,000 annually for “recreation” and staffed a full-time recreation director. That money is gone and the previous director has been re-assigned, however, and now it’s all on the parents and volunteers. “A strong recreation department means a strong community,” Duncan said. “We want to bring everybody together and bring back the glory days.” Anyone interested in donating, becoming a volunteer and/or anything else can text or call Duncan at 478-233-1959 or leave a message on the WCRD Facebook page.

Tax, from 1:

Instead, James and the WCSD’s finance team spent the first half of the meeting going over specific aspects of the budget. “Core economic inflation places significant pressure on the district,” said James, then rattling off examples such as “transportation, maintenance, utility costs and employee health benefits and insurance.” There’s also the issue of unfunded mandates from the state, including computer science initiatives, counseling services and safety upgrades, according to the superintendent. The WCSD also is anticipating a decrease in funding from the government for the 2026 fiscal year, due to the fact that the district’s enrollment continues to shrink. Overall student enrollment has been cut almost in half during the last three decades. In October 1994, for example, the Georgia Department of Education’s FTE “headcount” for the WCSD was 1,993 students. Fast forward to October 2024, and that number was 1,036 students. Back in the 1990s, there were always closer to 450-500 students at Wilkinson County Middle School. Now, it’s less than 250. Going back several decades, School Board meetings in Wilkinson County drew very little interest from the public and weren’t really on the radar. That all changed when Hadarits last year began recording the videos and scrutinizing the board on Facebook. Other communi-

ty members then joined the chorus on Facebook, and the School Board is no longer operating under the radar, to say the least. The WCSD last month received its annual report card from the state, which covered the 2023-2024 school year, which pre-dated James’ tenure as superintendent. The report card came in the form of a College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) score. Standardized testing results are at the CCRPI’s core. In terms of those testing results, otherwise known as Content Mastery, the Wilkinson County School District finished in the third percentile (174th out of 180) at the Elementary School level, the 11th percentile (160th out of 180) at the Middle School level, as well as the sixth percentile (170th out of 180) at the high school level, in terms of Georgia’s 180 “county” and “city” school districts. In terms of Wilkinson County High School, 18.6 percent of students passed the United States History test, which ranked 164th out of 180 school districts. WCHS came in at 18.3 percent “proficient or above” in Biology, good for 164th out of 180 school districts. In terms of the reading test, a combination of multiple-choice questions and short-answer questions that focus on vocabulary and the ability to interpret text passages, a total of 47.1 WCHS students who took the test were “reading at grade level or above,” which was 150th out of 180 districts in Georgia.

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Republican Party to Hold Caucus and County Convention

On 22 March 2025, at 9:00 AM, the Bleckley County Republican Party will convene Precinct Caucuses to elect Delegates and Alternate Delegates to the Bleckley County Republican Party Convention.

On 22 March 2025, at 10:00 AM, the County Convention will convene to elect Delegates and Alternate Delegates to the District and State Republican Party Conventions. Additionally, the Convention will conduct all other business as necessary.

Both the Precinct Caucuses and the Bleckley County Convention will be held in the CBRD boardroom located at 250 West Dykes Street in Cochran, Georgia.

All Bleckley County residents who are legally registered to vote and believe in the principles of the Republican Party are urged to participate in this process. Delegates and alternates will not be required to pay a fee to cover any costs of the County Convention.

The Eighth Congressional District Convention will convene at 10:00 AM on 19 April 2025 at The Hawkinsville Opera House located at 42 South Lumpkin Street in Hawkinsville, Georgia. The District Convention will be electing Delegates and Alternates to the 2024 National Convention. Pre-Registration fees will be \$40 for Delegates and \$30 for alternates. These fees will be used to cover the costs of the District Convention.

The Georgia Republican Party State Convention will convene at 2:00 PM on 7 June 2025 in Dalton, Georgia, and will elect State Party Officers, in addition to conducting all other businesses necessary. Delegates to the State Convention will be required to pay a fee, which is to cover the cost of the State Convention.

For further information, please contact Bleckley County Republican Party Chairman Ronald Daniels at (229) 425-4391.

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Twiggs seniors make joyful noise

The Twiggs County Seniors Center ladies spent a morning last week at The Nursing Home and Brittany Assisted Living Facility singing and playing bingo with the residents.

- Surinder Brown - Site Manager



Georgia health workers handling flu surge, rare mpox case, measles

Allen Siegler
Healthbeat

Influenza viruses have continued to steadily circulate within Atlanta and Georgia communities as the state contends with other concerning infectious diseases.

Health care visits for flu-like symptoms and community virus levels detected in wastewater sites remain near their highest marks of the winter, according to data released Friday from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Close to 3,000 residents had overnight stays for the flu at metro Atlanta hospitals in January, according to the Georgia Department of Public Health. None of these indicators have reached last year's peak. But Dr. Mark Griffiths, an Emory University pediatric medicine associate professor and director of the Children's Healthcare of Atlanta's downtown emergency department, said his hospital is experiencing one of the largest flu surges he's witnessed.

"We're seeing higher levels of kids testing positive than probably seen the last decade or so," he said. "And they are coming in of all ages."

He attributes the spike in flu hospital visits to multiple factors. During the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, cases of other viruses fell to lower-than-normal rates. But now that some pandemic prevention steps have been relaxed, many airborne diseases have exceeded their baseline numbers.

Additionally, Griffiths said he's seen fewer kids vaccinated against the flu compared to previous winters. The CDC estimates that as of early Feb-



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

An Atlanta pediatrician said he's seen fewer kids vaccinated against the flu compared to previous winters.

ruary, between 33% and 56% of children over 6 months old received this year's shot.

He said the low vaccine uptake is concerning for the health of Georgia kids, as the shots add an extra layer of disease protection.

"Since Covid, we've seen the persistence of this vaccine hesitancy," he said. "Now, we're seeing it as these really high flu surges."

Griffiths said it's not too late for parents to have their children immunized this year, as traditional flu seasons last until March. Additionally, he highlighted new tools, like over-the-counter flu and Covid combination tests, and familiar protections, like wearing a mask when sick, as useful ways for people to prevent respiratory virus spread.

The state is also contending with a variety of other infectious diseases. Over the past few weeks, state and local public health officials have been responding to a small measles outbreak that has infected three members of the same family. None of the family members were vaccinated

against measles. No other Georgia residents have tested positive, according to the state DPH.

A study published by the CDC on Thursday also found that public health officials detected a travel-associated Georgia case of Clade I mpox in January, the second case ever detected in the United States. The report says that Clade I cases lead to death more often than Clade II infections, which are still rare but more common domestically.

The Georgia patient's case was not severe, according to the CDC study. Nancy Nydam, a DPH spokesperson, said the department monitored people who had been in contact with the patient for 21 days — the time in which symptoms usually appear — and none of them contracted the disease.

Allen Siegler is a reporter covering public health in Atlanta for Healthbeat. Contact Allen at asiegler@healthbeat.org.

Reese Bryant was named the Cochran Rotary Club student of the month. She chose her teacher of the month to be coach Shelly Cranford (left). Rotary President Jed Evans (right) presented the certificate.

- Cochran Rotary Club



441/112 roundabout work could start in June

Christian McKearney
Times Journal Post

The Georgia Department of Transportation has officially voted to speed up the timetable for the new roundabout project at the intersection of US 441 and Ga. 112.

The \$4-plus million project will "have two-lane approaches and departures (on 441)," while "(Ga.) 112 would have a single-lane approach and departure," according to the DOT.

The project initially was slated to "go out to bid in June," said DOT Communications Specialist Will Volk. Now, however, the bidding process will begin in April. Construction generally begins roughly two months following the beginning of the bidding process, added Volk.

The summer of 2024 at the intersection was memorable, for all the wrong reasons. Four multi-vehicle accidents were recorded in the area last summer, including a fiery crash that

claimed the life of a Milledgeville truck driver. In December 2024, meanwhile, three people in a Nissan Rogue lost their lives after the driver of the car failed to yield to a big rig traveling north on 441.

"Our crash data shows all crashes at this intersection over the last four years are a result of drivers failing to stop or yield," Volk previously said. "We urge everyone navigating this intersection to approach with caution and obey traffic signs."

The DOT continues to be on a roundabout kick, with roughly 300 roundabout projects currently "under construction" or "in development" around the Peach State, according to its website.

"Roundabouts can reduce crashes that may result in serious injuries or fatalities by 78 to 82 percent compared to conventional intersections controlled by traffic lights or stop signs," according to the DOT's website.

The DOT also asserts that roundabouts cost less than red lights in the long run.

INTENT TO OPT OUT OF HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION

The City of Jeffersonville intends to opt out of the statewide adjusted base year ad valorem homestead exemption for Jeffersonville, Georgia. All concerned citizens are invited to the public hearing on this matter to be held at City Hall 18. North Church St. On February 18, 2025 at 9:30AM, February 20,2025 at 6:00 PM and February 27,2025 at 9:30 AM.

Press Release for City of McIntyre

In compliance with HB 581 and O.C.G.A. § 48-5-44.2, the City of McIntyre has held three public hearings as it considers whether to opt out of the homestead exemption granted by subsection (b) of O.C.G.A. § 48-5-44.2. Those public hearings were held on January 30, 2025, at 4:30 p.m., on February 3, 2025, at 6:00 p.m., and on February 6, 2025, at 4:30 p.m. after being advertised in the *Times Journal Post* and posted on the City of McIntyre's website in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 48-5-44.2(i). Additionally, on January 16, 2025, the City of McIntyre held a special called meeting to discuss HB 581 and the possibility of opting out of it. Members of the public attended and spoke at the January 16, 2025, special called meeting and at each of the three public hearings.

The City of McIntyre will hold a special called meeting on February 24, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. at which it will vote on whether to pass a resolution opting out of the homestead exemption or not. The public is invited to attend this special called meeting and public comments will be allowed prior to the City Council voting on whether to opt out of the homestead exemption or not.

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NEW SOUTHERN DAD

A glimpse inside a modern American family road trip

The family road trip dates back to the period of American history known as the Westward Expansion. Those pioneers really had a lot of guts loading up their covered wagons, telling their kids to climb aboard and hitting the road. For days and months on end, those brave souls pushed forward, not knowing where they were headed and not even exactly what they were looking for. All they had to go on were crudely drawn maps and personal aspirations. At some point surely a child looked up at their father, the courageous patriarch and said: “Are we there yet? I really have to go to the bathroom.” To which the father lovingly looked down and replied: “I don’t expect you to make it. And you should have gone in St. Louis.”

It was quite dangerous crossing the country back then and Bucc-ee’s hadn’t been established yet. Many a life and pair of pants were ruined on the treacherous journey. Of course, in our modern times, anywhere in the country is easily accessible via automobile and taking the family on an annual trek, even multiple times a year if you’re a glutton for punishment, via the highway is a tradition. Though, it still requires a level of bravado. I am a survivor of a recent family road trip. We had a long weekend at Lookout Mountain and Chattanooga. The pioneers of old often kept journals chronicling their adventures, so here is an entry in my travelogue... We departed Sunday afternoon for the roughly four-hour drive. I no

longer trust my beautiful 2011 Honda Pilot on the open road (Honda executives, your window to secure a sponsorship deal is thinning. Please contact my management team before I’m forced to upgrade.) so I borrowed my mother’s new car. It’s a tank of automobile with every imaginable luxury, making travel easier than I thought humanly possible. It really makes you feel like you own the road, and I drove as such; thus, we made excellent time. Soon the surroundings so familiar to us were gone, and Georgia’s coastal plain gave way to Atlanta’s sprawling urban landscape to foothills and then to the mountains. This splendor was lost on my passengers, faces down, eyes entranced by the blue glow of their devices, comfortably nestled into what I can only assume

is Corinthian leather. “Y’all look at that skyscraper? See that mountain?” I said like the bumpkin I am from the helm of the tank. I was answered in small grunts of affirmation, the best possible reaction from a generation that’s always had the whole world at their fingertips. With so much entertainment, gone are the days of the pleading “Are we there yet?” from the backseat. You still get requests for bathroom breaks, but that’s only after the batteries are dead. Time at our destination was more pleasant, with the family enjoying all



Kyle Dominy

the attractions of the area distraction-free, only stopping for the occasional photo. It was a good couple of days, reconnecting without the daily grind. Pouring rain made the return trip a little more grueling, but the tank was the perfect armament for battling flooded, in water and cars, downtown connector. Everyone survived, and we’re ready to go again.

You can reach Kyle Dominy at k.l.dominy@gmail.com or write to 115 S. Jefferson Street Dublin, Ga. 31021.

GARDENING

Tips for getting your garden ready for spring

As winter fades and temperatures rise, now is the perfect time to start preparing your spring garden. Proper planning and early action can make a significant difference in the health and productivity of your plants. As your local County Extension Agent, I often get questions about the best way to get started. Following a few key steps will set you up for a successful growing season. The first and most important step is **soil testing**. A simple soil test, available through your local UGA Extension office, will provide essential information about pH levels and nutrient needs. Many gardens in Georgia benefit



Derrick Bowen

from adding lime to adjust soil acidity and fertilizers to replenish nutrients. Amending your soil with compost or organic matter will also improve structure and fertility. **Garden planning** is equally important. Early spring is the perfect time to plant cool-season vegetables such as carrots, collards, lettuce, spinach, and radishes. Meanwhile, warm-season crops like tomatoes, peppers, and eggplants should be started indoors about six to eight weeks before the last frost to give them a head start. A well-thought-out garden layout helps maximize space, improve airflow, and reduce disease pressure.

Before planting, **ensure your garden beds are properly prepared**. Tilling or turning the soil to a depth of 12 to 15 inches helps aerate the soil and control pests. Raised beds are a great option for improving drainage and soil warmth, especially in heavy clay soils common in Georgia. If using last year’s beds, remove weeds and old plant debris to minimize pest and disease issues. **Irrigation planning** is another crucial step. A consistent watering schedule of about 1 to 1.5 inches per week encourages deep root growth. Drip irrigation or soaker hoses are efficient ways to water plants while minimizing evaporation and disease risk. Mulching around plants helps retain moisture and suppress weeds. Finally, take time to **inspect and maintain**

your gardening tools. Clean and sharpen pruners, shovels and trowels to ensure they are ready for use. Checking your inventory and replacing worn-out supplies now will save you time and frustration once planting begins. By following these steps, you can set yourself up for a productive and enjoyable gardening season. For soil testing, planting recommendations or additional gardening resources, visit your local UGA Extension office or check out UGA Extension’s gardening publications online. Happy gardening! *Derrick Bowen is the County Extension Coordinator of Bleckley and Twiggs counties for the University of Georgia Extension. He received his master’s from UGA in plant protection, pest management and plant pathology.*

No warzone for these newlywed Valentines

Ed Grisamore
The Macon Melody

Stephen and Victoria Krysalika have been married only four months, so they are still on their proverbial honeymoon. But those who know their backgrounds — Victoria was born in Russia and Stephen is a fourth-generation Ukrainian — are tempted to pose the obvious question. “They ask us: ‘Do y’all fight like they do?’” Victoria said. “We get that all the time. We just say we are proof that the Russians and Ukrainians can get along.” February marks the 11th year since the beginning of the Russo-Ukrainian War. Three years ago this month, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine escalated into Europe’s biggest armed conflict since World War II. It’s difficult to imagine the Macon newlyweds, who are both 31, ever quarreling. They are quite the lovebirds. Who knows? They could even be used to broker a peace deal between the two countries. “We just pray they can work it out and come to love each other like she and I do,” Stephen said. Victoria was living in an orphanage in southwest Russia when Michael and Jerilyn Leverett adopted her on her sixth birthday and swept her away to a new life in America. That was 25 years ago this year. She arrived in the U.S., appropriately enough, on the Fourth of July in 2000. Victoria was born with a birth defect that left her with two toes on her right foot, four on her left foot and four fingers on each hand. As a child, she underwent multiple surgeries, and she now uses a service dog, a German shepherd named Buddy, to help with her balance. Her parents were high school sweethearts and married in 1992. Jerilyn has a form of muscular dystrophy and has endured a lifetime of surgeries, braces, casts and wheelchairs.



Photo courtesy of Victoria Krysalika
Victoria and Stephen Krysalika plan to celebrate their first Valentines Day as a married couple by going to see the movie “Wicked.”

She was uncertain she would be able to bear children. Because she and her husband both had careers working with disabled people, they were devoted to adopting a disabled child. Michael is the executive director of Disability Connections, a non-profit in Macon that assists people with a wide range of disabilities by offering community resources and opportunities. Jerilyn has been a mainstay at Disability Connections, and Victoria has been working there with her parents since 2016. Stephen has been a mechanic at Walsh Honda for the past two years. His mother, Myra, died when he was 6, and his father, Stephen Jr., died in 2015.

His grandfather, Rev. Stephen Krysalika Sr., was a first-generation American whose parents immigrated from Ukraine and settled in Pittsburgh. Krysalika and his wife, Juanita, proudly flew the Ukrainian flag at their Macon home on Riverview Road and were active in the Slovic Association of Middle Georgia and the Ukrainian Association of Georgia. The Krysalika family also was instrumental in bringing the Ukrainian swim team to train in Macon in July 1996 for two weeks before the Summer Olympics in Atlanta. Victoria met Stephen when they were students at Macon’s Woodfield Academy.

See LOVE, page 8

TIMES JOURNAL POST

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Bipartisan effort to revive state office to advocate for utility customers

Emily Jones
WABE

This coverage is made possible through a partnership between WABE and Grist, a nonprofit environmental media organization.

Some Georgia state legislators are again trying to revive a state office to advocate for utility customers. A similar effort passed the state Senate last year but floundered in the House. Most states have a consumer utility counsel, or CUC, who represents the interests of utility customers before state and federal regulators and in courts. Georgia used to, until budget cuts during the 2008 financial crisis. A bipartisan group of two dozen senators, led by Republican Chuck Hufstetler of Rome, is sponsoring a bill to revive it. The measure passed the Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee this week. “Forty-six states have seen the wisdom of having an independent person looking out for the consumer that has legal standing,” said Hufstetler in a hearing before that vote. Currently, a group of staff at the Georgia

Public Service Commission is tasked with public interest advocacy, and PSC officials have argued that’s sufficient. The five PSC commissioners are directly elected by voters, and agency representatives have argued that provides another layer of accountability to consumers – though no elections have been held for several years because of legal challenges. “We’re not opposed to [the CUC],” said PSC director of utilities Tom Bond in this week’s Senate committee hearing. “We just think it’s redundant.” But critics disagree that the PSC advocacy staff is doing enough to protect consumers, pointing to repeated rate hikes for Georgia Power electric customers in recent years. The CUC’s purview would also extend beyond the PSC, which deals primarily with the state’s largest electric utility, Georgia Power, as well as landline telephones and natural gas. The proposed CUC office would have legal standing to represent customers of any public utility before federal regulators and in courts. Another bill this session also aims to protect electric utility customers, specifically from the

costs of building new infrastructure to power data centers. Again sponsored by Hufstetler, the bill prohibits those costs from being applied to the power rates of ordinary residents and small businesses. It reinforces steps already taken by the PSC to prevent that kind of cost shift, though unlike the new billing rules approved by the commission, the bill

singles out data centers. Both the bill and the commission’s new rules deal only with Georgia Power, not with other electricity providers that new data centers could choose to contract with, like municipal utilities and electric membership cooperatives. Consumer advocates have argued those utilities’ customers need protections as well.

Georgia lawmakers advance tax breaks to offset hurricane damage for timberland owners



Discarded stumps and roots, right, and a load of salvaged timber in a Treutlen County pine stand damaged by Hurricane Helene.

Jill Nolin
Georgia Recorder

A pair of hurricane-related tax relief bills largely aimed at helping farmers and timberland owners easily cleared both chambers Tuesday as lawmakers cobble together proposals meant to aid the hardest-hit areas of Georgia. A House measure would create a \$200 million program that would allow timberland owners to recover some of their losses through a tax credit – but only if they replant. This is like a program set up in the wake of Hurricane Michael in 2018. That proposal would also waive the income tax on federal disaster payments or crop insurance proceeds tied to Hurricane Helene, which devastated communities along the eastern side of the state and killed 34 people. And it would suspend the sales tax on materials to repair or replace livestock barns, greenhouses and other farm structures. “I have the first of what I hope to be many bills seeking to help in the relief of Hurricane Helene’s damage,” said Rep. James Burchett, a Waycross Republican. Hurricane Helene caused an estimated \$5.5 billion in damage to the state’s agriculture industry. The state is also in line to receive federal aid through a congressional package passed late last year. Over in the Senate, lawmakers passed a companion bill that would lift the tax normally paid on timber that was harvested late last year through the rest of 2025 for dozens of counties. And it creates a grant program for local governments that would otherwise be missing out on an important revenue stream in some rural communities. To illustrate the toll the storm had on the forestry industry, the bill’s sponsor, Cogdell Re-

publican Sen. Russ Goodman, said timber that would usually sell for about \$25 per ton is going for as little as 50 cents. “What this bill is going to do is it’s going to help those that have seen their timber destroyed, people’s retirements, their children’s college fund,” he said. “And it’s also going to help the communities who have been hit with this hurricane, who are going to see such a huge loss of revenue in rural counties like mine.” Democrats in both chambers supported the bills but also pressed the sponsors for a reaction to the Trump administration’s recent decision to deny Gov. Brian Kemp’s request to extend the deadline for local governments to apply for federal disaster assistance. Sen. Nikki Merritt, a Grayson Democrat, blasted the Trump administration’s conclusion that the extension was “not warranted.” “Tell that to the families who lost their homes. Tell it to the local officials who are scrambling to cover costs. Tell it to every Georgian who believes in fairness, in the principle in times of need, that the federal government should step up and not step back,” Merritt said. Goodman said he encouraged the state’s congressional delegation to push for the extension but also said state lawmakers also have to focus on what they can control. “It’s our job to do what we can within this chamber, within the power that we have,” Goodman said. “And I think that’s what this bill does. It shows that we’re in good faith doing what we can to help our fellow Georgians.” The governor and lawmakers are also tapping the budget to aid in the recovery. This year’s budget has been revised to include \$811 million in hurricane-related spending, and that number could continue to grow as the Senate makes its changes to the spending plan.

NOTICE OF SPECIAL ELECTION
TO THE QUALIFIED VOTERS OF THE BLECKLEY COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on March 18, 2025, an election will be held at the regular polling places in all the election districts of Bleckley County, at which time there will be submitted to the qualified voters of Bleckley County for their determination the following question:

() YES

() NO

() NOShall the special 1 percent sales and use tax for education currently in effect in Bleckley County be continued for a period of time not to exceed 20 calendar quarters and for the raising of not more than \$16,600,000 for the purposes of acquiring, constructing, repairing, improving, renovating, adding to, extending, upgrading, furnishing, or equipping school buildings, support facilities, or infrastructure in the Bleckley County School District useful or desirable in connection therewith, including acquiring any necessary property or demolition thereof, both real and personal, including, but not limited to the following: (1) paying all or a portion of the costs of acquiring, constructing, equipping, or furnishing school buildings, or educational, support, maintenance, storage, physical education, or athletic facilities; (2) adding to, renovating, repairing, improving, or equipping existing schools or facilities including, but not limited to, vocational or agricultural facilities, gymnasiums, physical education or athletic facilities, or HVAC repairs, improvements, or additions (3) acquiring new equipment, fixtures, or furnishings for the School District, including, but not limited to textbooks, band instruments, computer technology equipment or software, interactive boards, safety or security technology, food service equipment, tables, desks or chairs, school buses, or other vehicles; (4) acquiring any capital property necessary or desirable for the School District, both real or personal (5) paying costs of issuing the below described Bonds, paying debt service on the Bonds, debt service on the School District’s previously incurred Series 2020 general obligation bonds; (6) paying expenses incident to any of the foregoing purposes; or (7) any combination of the foregoing purposes?

If continuation of the tax is approved by the voters, such vote shall also constitute approval of the issuance of general obligation debt of the Bleckley County School District in the principal amount of up to \$3,000,000, repayable from the proceeds of the aforesaid sales and use tax, for the purposes of (a) funding such portions of the above projects as may be acquired, constructed, or equipped with the proceeds of general obligation debt; (b) paying expenses associated with issuing the bonds; (c) paying capitalized interest on the bonds; or (d) any combination of the foregoing purposes.

All qualified voters desiring to vote in favor of continuing the one percent (1%) sales and use tax for education currently in effect (the “**Sales Tax for Education**”) shall vote “Yes” and all qualified voters opposed to continuing the Sales Tax for Education shall vote “No”. If more than one-half of the votes cast are in favor of continuing the Sales Tax for Education then the Sales Tax for Education shall be continued beginning July 1, 2027, or the first day of the calendar quarter immediately following the quarter in which the Sales Tax for Education now in effect is terminated. The maximum period of time for which the Sales Tax for Education shall be re-imposed shall be twenty consecutive calendar quarters. The maximum cost of the capital outlay projects for educational purposes described in the above ballot question to be funded with Sales Tax for Education proceeds, including interest, capitalized interest, principal, and costs of issuance on general obligation debt (including previously incurred debt) to be paid, shall be \$16,600,000. To the extent available, the Bleckley County School District may combine available funds from any state or federal governmental source to which the Bleckley County School District may be entitled to pay the costs of its capital outlay projects, and it may choose what capital outlay projects to undertake or not undertake or to delay until additional funding is available to the extent that the proceeds of the Sales Tax for Education and general obligation debt are insufficient to complete any of the capital outlay projects. Plans and specifications for the capital outlay projects described in the above ballot question have not been initiated and bids have not been received. Depending upon acquisition and construction costs and available funds, the Bleckley County Board of Education may add to, modify, or delete specific projects. If the Sales Tax for Education is to be reimposed, the Bleckley County School District may issue general obligation debt in an aggregate principal amount not to exceed \$3,000,000. The proceeds from such general obligation debt, if issued, shall be used to fund all or a portion of the above-described capital outlay projects. The maximum rate or rates of interest on such debt shall not exceed six percent (6.00%) per annum and the maximum amount of principal to be paid in each year during the life of the debt shall be as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Principal Amount</u>
2028	\$565,000
2029	585,000
2030	600,000
2031	615,000
2032	635,000

The School District may issue general obligation debt in an aggregate amount that is less than \$3,000,000 and reduce the principal amounts maturing that are shown above. The debt shall be repayable from the proceeds of the Sales Tax for Education. The debt may be issued in one or more series, and on one or more dates of issuance as the School District may approve; provided, however, that the aggregate principal amount of such debt shall not exceed \$3,000,000. The debt may be made subject to redemption prior to maturity, to the extent permitted by law, upon terms and conditions to be determined by the School District. The principal and interest on the Debt shall be secured by the proceeds of the sales and use tax and shall be payable in lawful money of the United States of America at a paying agent bank that will be designated by the Bleckley County School District prior to the issuance of the debt. Any brochures, listings, or other advertisements issued by the Bleckley County School District or by any other person, firm, corporation, or association with the knowledge and consent of the Bleckley County School District shall be deemed to be a statement of intention of the Bleckley County School District concerning the use of the proceeds of the Bonds. All persons who are not registered to vote and who desire to register to vote in the special election may register to vote through the close of business on February 18, 2025. Advance In Person Voting will be held February 24, 2025 – March 14, 2025. Mandatory Saturday Early Voting will be held on March 1, 2025, and March 8, 2025. Polls will be open during Advance In Person Voting from 8:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Mandatory Saturday Early Voting will occur between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. on Election Day, March 18, 2025. Those residents of Bleckley County qualified to vote at such election shall be determined in all respects in accordance with the election laws of the State of Georgia. This notice is given pursuant to a resolution of the Board of Education of Bleckley County and the consent of the Bleckley County Board of Elections and Registration as Election Superintendent.

/s/ Shanna Evans

Chairman, Board of Education of Bleckley County, Georgia

/s/ Cheryl Ates

Election Supervisor on behalf of the Bleckley County Board of Elections and Registration as Election Superintendent

February 6, 13, 20, 27, 2025

Wilkinson Co. Legals

W25-013
IN THE PROBATE COURT OF
WILKINSON COUNTY
STATE OF GEORGIA
IN RE: ESTATE OF JACK HAROLD
UPSHAW, SR., DECEASED
ESTATE NO. 250
PETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMIN-
ISTRATION
NOTICE

TO: Edward Travis Gall, Steven Dobson, Debra Elaine Gall and to whom it may concern:

Debra Elaine Gall has petitioned to be appointed administrator of the estate of Edward Nicholson Gall, 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 10, 2025.

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.

Sarah A. Holder
Judge of the Probate Court
BY: Bradasia A. Mims
Clerk of the Probate Court
Wilkinson County Probate Court
100 Bacon Street
Irwinton, GA 31042
478-946-2222

February 13, 20, 27, March 6, 2025

W25-009
STATE OF GEORGIA
COUNTY OF WILKINSON

NOTICE OF SALE UNDER POWER

Pursuant to the power of sale contained in the Security Deed executed by THOMAS E. RYALS to THE CIT GROUP/SALES FINANCING, INC. in the original principal amount of \$91,922.00 dated January 2, 1998, and recorded in Deed Book 235, Page 221. Wilkinson County records, said Security Deed being last transferred to U.S. BANK NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, AS TRUSTEE, FOR LEHMAN ABS MANUFACTURED HOUSING CONTRACT SENIOR/SUBORDINATE ASSET-BACKED CERTIFICATE TRUST, SERIES 2001-B in Deed Book 416, Page 882, Wilkinson County records, the undersigned will sell at public outcry to the highest bidder for cash, before the Courthouse door in said County, or at such other place as lawfully designated, within the legal hours of sale, on March 04, 2025, the property in said Security Deed and described as follows:

ALL THAT TRACT OR PARCEL OF LAND SITUATE, LYING AND BEING IN LAND LOT 189 OF THE 23RD LAND DISTRICT OF WILKINSON COUNTY, GEORGIA, BEING KNOWN AND DESIGNATED AS TRACT 6, CONTAINING 4.21 ACRES, MORE OR LESS, AND TRACT 8, CONTAINING 3.27 ACRES, MORE OR LESS, ACCORDING TO A PLAT OF SURVEY PREPARED BY HERBERT B. ORR, DATED MARCH 3, 1997, OF RECORD IN PLAT BOOK 18, PAGE 6, CLERK'S OFFICE, WILKINSON SUPERIOR COURT. SAID PLAT AND THE RECORDED COPY THEREOF ARE HEREBY INCORPORATED HEREIN BY REFERENCE FOR ALL PURPOSES. TOGETHER WITH 1998 SKYLINE MOBILE HOME SERIAL NUMBER 8U620399KA AND 8U620399KB

THE IMPROVEMENTS THEREON BEING KNOWN AS 3625 OLD MACON ROAD, DANVILLE, GEORGIA - 31017.

Said property being known as: 3625 OLD MACON RD, DANVILLE, GA 31017

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

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

Said property will be sold subject to the following: (1) any outstanding ad valorem taxes (including taxes which are a lien, whether or not yet due and payable); (2) the right of redemption of any taxing authority; (3) any matters which might be disclosed by an accurate survey and inspection of the property; and (4) any assessments, liens, encumbrances, zoning ordinances, restrictions, covenants, and matters of record superior to the Security Deed first set out above.

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

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

NEWREZ LLC D/B/A Shellpoint Mortgage Servicing
75 Beattie Place, Suite 300
Greenville, SC 29601
866-825-2174

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

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

U.S. BANK NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, AS TRUSTEE, FOR LEHMAN ABS MANUFACTURED HOUSING CONTRACT SENIOR/SUBORDINATE ASSET-BACKED CERTIFICATE TRUST, SERIES 2001-B, as Attorney-in-Fact for THOMAS E. RYALS

Robertson, Anschutz, Schneid, Crane & Partners, PLLC
13010 Morris Rd., Suite 450
Alpharetta, GA 30004
Phone: 470-321-7112
Firm File No. 24-266936 - KaK
February 6, 13, 20, 27, 2025

W25-016

Ocmulgee EMC Announces The Following Job Opening

Cashier

This is a Full Time Position

Deadline to Apply is: Friday, February 28th at 5:00 p.m.

For more information call 478-374-7001 ext. 107.

Job Applications may be obtained from:

Ocmulgee EMC
5722 Eastman Street, Eastman, GA 31023

Ocmulgee EMC is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF
WILKINSON COUNTY
STATE OF GEORGIA
IN RE: ESTATE OF MARJORIE ANN
YOUNG, DECEASED
ESTATE NO. 249

PETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMIN-
ISTRATION
NOTICE

TO: BEN EUGENE PAYNE and to whom it may concern:

BEN EUGENE PAYNE has petitioned to be appointed administrator of the estate of MARJORIE ANN YOUNG, 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. 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.

Sarah A. Holder
Judge of the Probate Court
BY: Bradasia A. Mims
Clerk of the Probate Court
Wilkinson County Probate Court
100 Bacon Street
Irwinton, GA 31042
478-946-2222

February 20, 27, March 6, 13, 2025

W25-010

NOTICE OF SALE UNDER POWER, WILKINSON COUNTY

Pursuant to the Power of Sale contained in a Security Deed given by Johnny T. Williams and Sharon Hayes-Williams to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as grantee, as nominee for Nationstar Mortgage LLC d/b/a Mr. Cooper, its successors and assigns dated 12/28/2017 and recorded in Deed Book 377 Page 750 Wilkinson County, Georgia records; as last transferred to or acquired by Select Portfolio Servicing, Inc., conveying the after-described property to secure a Note in the original principal amount of \$186,000.00, with interest at the rate specified therein, there will be sold by the undersigned at public outcry to the highest bidder for cash before the Courthouse door of Wilkinson County, Georgia (or such other area as designated by Order of the Superior Court of said county), within the legal hours of sale on March 4, 2025 (being the first Tuesday of said month unless said date falls on a Federal Holiday, in which case being the first Wednesday of said month), the following described property:

The land hereinafter referred to is situated in the City of Irwinton, County of Wilkinson, State of GA, and is described as follows:

All that tract or parcel of land situate, lying and being in Land Lot #77 of the 4th Land District and 327th G.M. District of Wilkinson County, Georgia, containing Ten and Four hundredths (10.04) Acres, more or less, and being more particularly described and delineated on a plat of survey by Frank R. Eady, Jr., dated June 24, 1990, of record in Plat Book 14, Page 177, In the Office of the Clerk of the Superior Court of Wilkinson County, Georgia, said plat and its record by reference being incorporated herein as a part of this description. Said tract being now or formerly bounded as follows: North by the right-of-way of Bethel Church Road, lands of Cecil A. Ward and Mary G. Ward, lands of Laverne Symonds, and lands of Wilkinson County Board of Education: East by lands of Paul Bacon; South by lands of Newton Anderson; West by lands Newton Anderson.

Being the same property conveyed from Ruby I. Ward to Johnny T. Williams and Sharon Hayes-Williams by deed dated July 15, 1999 and recorded July 19, 1999 in Book 246 Page 757 of official records. The debt secured by said Security Deed has been and is hereby declared due because of, among other possible events of default, failure to pay the indebtedness as and when due and in the manner provided in the Note and Security Deed. The debt remaining in default, this sale will be made for the purpose of paying the same and all expenses of this sale, as provided in the Security Deed and by law, including attorney's fees (notice of intent to collect attorney's fees having been given).

Said property is commonly known as 465 Lavender Road, Irwinton, GA 31042 together with all fixtures and personal property attached to and constituting a part of said property, if any. To the best knowledge and belief of the undersigned, the party (or parties) in possession of the subject property is (are): Estate and/or Heirs to Johnny T. Williams and Sharon HayesWilliams or tenant or tenants.

Select Portfolio Servicing, Inc. is the entity or individual designated, who shall have full authority to negotiate, amend and modify all terms of the mortgage. Select Portfolio Servicing, Inc. Loan Resolution Department 3217 South Decker Lake Drive Salt Lake City, UT 84119 (888) 818-6032

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

Said property will be sold subject to: (a) any outstanding ad valorem taxes (including taxes which are a lien, but not yet due and payable), (b) unpaid water or sewage bills that constitute a lien against the property whether due and payable or not yet due and payable and which may not be of record, (c) the right of redemption of any taxing authority, (d) any matters which might be disclosed by an accurate survey and inspection of the property, and (e) any assessments, liens, encumbrances, zoning ordinances, restrictions, covenants, and matters of record superior to the Security Deed first set out above.

The sale will be conducted subject to (1) confirmation that the sale is not prohibited under the U.S. Bankruptcy Code; and (2) final confirmation and audit of the status of the loan with the holder of the Security Deed. Pursuant to O.C.G.A. Section 9-13-172.1, which allows for certain procedures regarding the rescission of judicial and non-judicial sales in the State of Georgia, the Deed Under Power and other foreclosure documents may not be provided until final confirmation and audit of the status of the loan as provided immediately above.

Select Portfolio Servicing, Inc. as agent and Attorney in Fact for Johnny T. Williams and Sharon Hayes-Williams Aldridge Pite, LLP, Six Piedmont Center, 3525 Piedmont Road, N.E., Suite 700, Atlanta, Georgia 30305, (404) 994-7400. 1012-735A THIS LAW FIRM MAY BE ACTING AS A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT. ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. 1012-735A

February 6, 13, 20, 27, 2025

W25-015

Wilkinson Superior Court
Trade Name Registration

Personally appeared the undersigned who on oath deposes and says that: Paula Dennard, 114 Waverly Drive, Gordon, GA 31031 is/are doing business in Wilkinson County, Georgia under the name of: BM Squared, Limited Holdings and that the nature of the business to be carried on at such address is: Business and Residential Cleaning Service /s/ Paula Dennard

February 20, 27, 2025

W25-012

NOTICE TO CREDITORS AND DEBTORS
GEORGIA, WILKINSON COUNTY

All creditors of the estate of Jeannette A. Davis, deceased, as of late November 6, 2024, Wilkinson 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 the undersigned:

Wilkinson County Probate Court Clerk, 100 Bacon Street, Irwinton, Georgia 31042 Tis is the 4th day of February, 2025.

Donald Lewis Roberts, Attorney
February 13, 20, 27, March 6, 2025

W25-011

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF
WILKINSON COUNTY
STATE OF GEORGIA

IN RE: ESTATE OF JACK HAROLD
UPSHAW, SR., DECEASED
ESTATE NO. 250

PETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMIN-
ISTRATION
NOTICE

TO: Deborah Jill Upshaw and to whom it may concern:

Deborah Jill Upshaw has petitioned to be appointed administrator of the estate of Jack Harold Upshaw, Sr., 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 3, 2025.

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.

Sarah A. Holder
Judge of the Probate Court
BY: Bradasia A. Mims
Clerk of the Probate Court
Wilkinson County Probate Court
100 Bacon Street
Irwinton, GA 31042
478-946-2222

February 6, 13, 20, 27, 2025

Twiggs County Board of Commissioners

Job Posting: Laborer – Road Department

The Twiggs County Board of Commissioners is seeking a qualified individual for the position of **Laborer for the Road Department.**

Job Summary:

The **Laborer** is responsible for performing manual labor and maintenance tasks to support the operations of the Twiggs County Road Department. This position assists in road construction, repair, and maintenance, as well as the upkeep of county roads, rights-of-way, and drainage systems. Work is performed under the direction of the Road Department Supervisor.

Essential Job Duties:

The following duties are representative of the work required for this job. These are not to be construed as exclusive or all-inclusive. Other duties may be assigned.

- Performs **manual labor** in the repair, maintenance, and construction of county roads and infrastructure.
- Assists with the **installation and repair of culverts, drainage ditches, and right-of-way maintenance.**
- Operates **hand tools, power tools, and light equipment**, such as shovels, rakes, weed eaters, chainsaws, and compactors.
- Loads, unloads, and transports materials, tools, and equipment as required for road maintenance projects.
- Clears debris, trims vegetation, and assists with storm cleanup on county roads and properties.
- Assists in the **operation and maintenance of heavy equipment**, including dump trucks, backhoes, and excavators under supervision.
- Flags traffic and ensures work zones are properly marked for public and worker safety.
- Maintains county-owned facilities and properties, including general labor tasks as assigned.
- Follows **safety procedures and regulations** to prevent accidents and injuries.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

The Laborer must be knowledgeable in the following areas:

- Basic understanding of **road maintenance, construction, and repair.**
- Safe operation of **hand tools, power tools, and light machinery.**
- Ability to perform **heavy manual labor** for extended periods in **various weather conditions.**
- Ability to follow **instructions and work as part of a team.**
- Knowledge of **basic traffic control procedures** and safety measures.
- Ability to communicate effectively with supervisors, co-workers, and the public.

Minimum Qualifications:

- High School Diploma or GED** preferred, but not required.
- At least one (1) year of experience in construction, road maintenance, or a related field preferred.
- Must possess a valid Georgia Driver's License.
- Must be able to lift up to 50 pounds and perform strenuous physical labor.

Necessary Special Requirements:

- Must be available for on-call work, emergency repairs, and storm cleanup as needed.
- Must pass a pre-employment drug screening and background check.

Application Process:

The Twiggs County Board of Commissioners and the Road Department Superintendent will review applications and conduct the initial screening for this position.

The position will remain open until filled. Interested candidates should submit the following materials by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, March 3, 2025:

- Completed application (available at the Twiggs County Road Department, Board of Commissioners' office, or online at www.twiggscounty.us under the Employment tab)
- Resume (if available)

Submission Instructions:

Mail or email application materials to:
Twiggs County Board of Commissioners
Attn: Wilmarie Liz
P.O. Box 202
Jeffersonville, GA 31044
Email: wliz@twiggscounty.us

Salary & Hiring Process:

- Salary is commensurate with qualifications and experience.
- Only top candidates will be contacted for an interview.
- Twiggs County reserves the right to reject any or all applications, including those received after the deadline.

Twiggs County is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

Sealed Bids: Sealed bids for the construction of the project titled **Water System Improvements – FY2023 CDBG** will be received until, **March 7th 2025 at 11:00 A.M** at the Ivey City Hall, 148 Hwy. 243, Ivey, Ga. 31031, at which time and place all Bids will be publicly opened and read. No bid may be withdrawn after the closing time for receipt of bids for a period of sixty (60) days.

Contractor License: Any Contractor submitting a bid must be licensed by the State of Georgia. License numbers must be written on the face of the bid envelope. See Instructions to Bidders for additional bidding requirements.

Work to Be Done: The work to be done shall consist of furnishing all labor, materials, and equipment necessary to construct the project titled **Water System Improvements – FY2023 CDBG** as shown on the construction drawings. In general, construction consists installation of + 3,697 L.F. of 8" and 4,498 L.F. of 6" water main, fire hydrants, gate valves, sidewalk replacement, grading, erosion control, and all other appurtenances necessary for a complete project. This work will be awarded in one (1) contract.

Plans and Contract Documents: Plans and Contract Documents are on file for review only at the City of Ivey and the Dodge Room. Copies for bidding purposes can be obtained from Ingram & Associates, L.L.C., 332 New Street, Macon Georgia 31201, Phone: (478) 745-3996, Fax: (478) 742-4690, Email: ashley@ingrameng.com upon payment of **\$200.00** for each hard copy set OR **\$75.00** for a digital set (non-refundable).

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Funding: Any Contract or Contracts awarded under this Advertisement for Bids are expected to be funded by a grant by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs – Community Development Block Grant Program and city funds.

The Owner: reserves the right to reject any or all bids, including without limitation, the right to reject any and all non-conforming, non-responsive, unbalanced or conditional bids and to reject the bid of any bidder whom the owner believes would not be in the best interest of the project to make an award to that bidder whether because the bid is not responsive, the bidder is unqualified, or of doubtful financial ability, or fails to meet any other pertinent standard or criteria established by the owner.

This is a Section 3 Covered Project under the HUD Act of 1968 and Section 3 Residents and Business Concerns are encouraged to apply. The city is committed to providing all persons with equal access to its services, programs, activities, education, and employment regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, disability or age.

U.S. senators criticize staffing cuts in health care program for Sept. 11 responders

Jennifer Shutt
States Newsroom

WASHINGTON — Two U.S. senators are raising questions about how staffing cuts to the World Trade Center Health Program will affect 9/11 first responders, survivors and residents affected by the terrorist attacks who now live throughout the country.

In a letter to Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., the New York Democrats wrote the Trump administration’s 20% cut in the number of federal workers who administer the program “will have a direct impact on the quality and accessibility of care provided to those who answered the call on 9/11 and are now sick with respiratory ailments, cancer and other conditions.”

“As you know, the WTCHP has provided critical screenings, services, research and medications to thousands of Americans at zero cost for 9/11-related health conditions and diseases,” Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand wrote.

“Since the establishment of the WTCHP in 2011, the number of program enrollees has more than doubled from 61,000 to 132,000,” they added. “This growing population of first responders and survivors, which was just expanded by bipartisan legislation to cover additional 9/11 Military and Civilian responders to the Pentagon and Shanksville PA crash site, highlights the need for elevated staffing and funding levels, rather than a nonsensical and dangerous 20 percent staffing reduction which puts the effective functioning of this vital program at risk.”

Schumer and Gillibrand asked HHS to provide them with a briefing about how exactly the staffing cuts will impact administration of the program.

HHS did not immediately respond to a request for comment from States Newsroom.

Health program coverage

The World Trade Center Health Program was created in January 2011 after Congress voted to send then-President Barack Obama the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act of 2010.

Prior to that, Congress provided funding for health care and monitoring in a piecemeal fashion, according to a timeline from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The program, administered by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, has specific criteria for coverage, according to a report from the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service.

“Current categories of covered conditions include (1) acute traumatic injuries, (2) airway and digestive disorders, (3) cancers, (4) mental health conditions, and (5) musculoskeletal disorders (WTC responders only),” it states. “Members must receive WTCHP services through several Clinical Centers of Excellence in New York or through a nationwide provider network of certified clinics.”

‘Outrageous and insulting’

Schumer said in a written statement accompanying the letter that the Trump administration’s decision to fire staff administering the program as part of its effort to eliminate “government waste is outrageous and insulting.”

“These brutal cuts mean layoffs for staff who have dedicated their careers to caring for our 9/11 survivors,” Schumer wrote. “It means delayed care for our sick first responders. It is telling 9/11 survivors that after they risked everything to protect us, we can’t support their healthcare needs.

“I’m demanding HHS Secretary Kennedy immediately reverse these cuts and terminations of the people who provide the healthcare to those who answered the call of duty on 9/11 and now suffer from cancer, respiratory illness and more.”

Love, from 4:

She was 11. He was six months younger. In those days, everyone called him by his middle name – Roger – because his father and grandfather both went by Stephen.

“I always had a crush on Victoria,” Stephen said. “I thought she was sweet and beautiful. She was very kind. I chased her around on the playground.”

He never caught her.

“I knew he liked me,” Victoria said. “He was always smiling when he was around me. He gave me a Valentine. But he was my best friend, and I didn’t want to ruin that. So we were just friends.”

Although they never dated, they stayed in touch, even after Victoria left Woodfield and was home-schooled. Two years ago, she reached out to ask if he could help her with one of her clients at Disability Connections.

After almost 20 years, Cupid’s arrows finally began to find their mark.

Their first date was Oct. 12, 2023. They went to the Georgia National Fair in Perry. A week later, he asked if she would attend a Halloween office party with him.

“I was looking for someone who was devoted to God,” Victoria said. “I knew he had

a heart of gold. He had been a caregiver to his grandparents.”

Stephen checked all the boxes. His grandparents were a huge influence on his life. Stephen Krysalika Sr. had come from a Catholic family before his parents began attending the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Pittsburgh, and his mother had hoped he would become a priest.

During World War II, he was sent to Camp Wheeler in Macon, where he met Juanita. After the war, he became a Baptist preacher, serving more than a half-century in the ministry. He was ordained in 1950 at East Side Baptist on Church Street in Macon. Juanita was a pastor’s wife for 53 years, teaching Sunday School and singing in the choir. She died in 2014. Her husband was 101 when he passed away in 2019.

Victoria had strong church ties, too. Her uncle, Macon-native Mo Leverett, founded Desire Street Ministries in New Orleans. Her maternal grandfather, the late Tommy Jones, was pastor at Vineville Baptist for 17 years and Wesleyan Drive Baptist for 11 years. He also served as president of the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Her grandmother, Barbara Jones, has a family farm in

Monroe County and Victoria said it is her “favorite place in the world.”

It is also where her future husband proposed on the front steps of the house last May. They married five months later at her grandfather’s former church, Wesleyan Drive Baptist.

Victoria said they wanted to have a small wedding. The attendance somewhat took care of itself after they selected Oct. 19 as their wedding day, bucking the time-honored Southern taboo of getting married during football season.

“It was the night of the Georgia-Texas game,” Victoria said, laughing. “Some people were not happy about that.”

They now live in the house next to her parents and just down the street from Ingleside Baptist, where they attend church.

Their friends are welcome to bring up the unique Russian-Ukrainian nuptials, but the newlyweds figure their marriage already has been battle-tested.

After all, they bought their house and have been renovating it together.

“That’s one way to build a relationship,” she said. “It needed a lot of work. We had to do the floors four times. But we got through it, and that’s what matters.”

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Twiggs County Board of Commissioners

Job Posting: Administrative Assistant – Road Department

The Twiggs County Board of Commissioners is seeking a qualified professional for the position of **Administrative Assistant for the Road Department**.

Job Summary:

The **Administrative Assistant** is responsible for overseeing all office operations and financial activities within the County’s Road Department. This includes managing accounts payable, processing invoices, maintaining accurate financial records, preparing reports, and handling all clerical and administrative duties. The role ensures compliance with governmental accounting standards while supporting department operations through effective record-keeping, communication, and financial management.

Qualifications:

To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform each essential duty satisfactorily. The requirements listed below represent the knowledge, skills, and abilities required.

Essential Job Duties:

The following duties are representative of the work required for this job. These are not to be construed as exclusive or all-inclusive. Other duties may be assigned.

- Manages **financial records**, including **accounts payable and budget tracking**.
- Prepares and submits **financial reports** for the Road Department.
- Processes **invoices, purchase orders, and work orders**.
- Assists in **monitoring and reconciling department expenditures**.
- Provides **clerical and administrative support**, including **data entry, document filing, and correspondence preparation**.
- Coordinates **financial documentation and transactions** with vendors, contractors, and county departments.
- Answers **telephone calls, provides customer service, and manages inquiries** related to the Road Department.
- Assists with **grant reporting and project funding documentation**.
- Maintains **accurate records** for audits, financial reporting, and compliance reviews.
- Prepares **correspondence and reports** as directed by the Road Department Supervisor or County Administrator.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

The Administrative Assistant must be knowledgeable in the following areas:

- Governmental accounting principles and financial reporting**.
- Proficiency in **Microsoft Office Suite (Excel, Word, Outlook)** and **accounting software**.
- Strong attention to detail and ability to **maintain accurate financial records**.
- Ability to manage multiple tasks and meet deadlines.
- Effective written and verbal communication skills.
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team.
- Knowledge of general office procedures and records management.

Application Process:

The Twiggs County Board of Commissioners and the Road Department Superintendent will review applications and conduct the initial screening for this position.

The position will remain open until filled. Interested candidates should submit the following materials by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, March 3, 2025:

- Cover letter
- Resume
- Three (3) professional references

Submission Instructions:

Mail or email application materials to:

Twiggs County Board of Commissioners
Attn: Wilmarie Liz
P.O. Box 202
Jeffersonville, GA 31044
Email: wliz@twiggscounty.us

Salary & Hiring Process:

- Salary is commensurate with qualifications and experience.
- Only top candidates will be contacted for an interview.
- Twiggs County reserves the right to reject any or all applications, including those received after the deadline.

Twiggs County is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

SPORTS NOTEPAD

Both Wilkinson teams make playoffs, boys get home game in Round 1

Micah Johnston
For the TJP

High school basketball playoffs are here, with the first round of games beginning Tuesday and Wednesday for girls and boys teams.

The Bleckley County girls team got the unusual chance to face a region opponent, the ACE Gryphons, in the opening round Tuesday night. Read our recap for full coverage of the first round tilt between the two Middle Georgia teams.

The Bleckley County boys were less lucky in seeding, as the Royals will have to face Business Engineering Science Tech Academy, a powerhouse program out of Atlanta.

B.E.S.T. spent much of the year ranked highly in multiple polls and finished No. 3 in the Top 10 rankings by basketball outlet

Sandy’s Spiel, but only earned a No. 15 seed in the tournament thanks to being in a region with several dominant private schools, including top-tier squads Walker and St. Francis.

The Eagles (20-7) held their own against those private schools, though, and established themselves as one of the better teams in the state at the A-Division I level. They defeated both Mount Bethel and Landmark Christian in the region tournament despite losing to St. Francis to get forced into a lower seed.

Jacob and Joshua Mickell are the players to watch for B.E.S.T., as the brothers were all-region team picks for the Eagles.

No. 18 Bleckley County (16-13) will need to lean on its stars like All-Region First Team guard Nykez Farrow to pull them along. It should be noted, though, the Royals are no

strangers to the first-round upset. They took down favorite Woodville-Tompkins out of Savannah in the tournament opener last year on their way to the Elite Eight.

The Wilkinson County boys also earned a playoff spot, finishing second in Region 5-A Division II after a heartbreaking 58-43 overtime loss to rival Hancock Central in the region title game.

The Warriors now face Mitchell County at home in the first round of the state playoffs. The Eagles (16-12) out of Camilla played close games throughout the season, only losing to high-powered Top-10 Manchester by a single basket and even defeating some higher classification teams like A-Division I Dodge County.

Mitchell County will still have its work cut out for them, though, as Wilkinson Coun-

ty has built a reputation for winning playoff games at The Palace. It may not be as fierce a squad as the 2023 title team, but the Warriors are still a formidable foe.

Twiggs County’s boys team also earned a playoff spot by finishing fourth in the region. The Cobras get a very difficult matchup, facing powerhouse Randolph-Clay (25-2). The Red Devils are ranked as the No. 2 A-Division II team in the state by Sandy’s Spiel.

The Wilkinson County girls also played Tuesday night after the Times Journal Post went to print, facing off against the Randolph-Clay girls (21-6).

The Twiggs Academy girls team (6-15) played in the opening round of the GIAA Class A playoffs as the No. 12 seed, traveling to Savannah to go up against the No. 5 Memorial Day Matadors (12-8).

Royals, from 1:

a traditional bracket, neither one of us would’ve been in the playoffs, so we’re grateful to be here.”

ACE and Bleckley both failed to make the semifinals of the Region 2-A Division I tournament, normally meaning elimination from the playoffs under the GHSA format used in past years. But with the possibility for at-large teams this time around, both schools had good enough records and resumes to get a playoff spot.

“Playing a team that’s in our region, it makes it even tougher, because they know your ins and outs,” Bleckley County head coach John Stanley said after the game. “With that being said, we have some older girls, but we have some younger girls coming back. We have two starters that were seniors, Amiyah Roberts and Jordan Mathis. The others will be back.

“Those two seniors will be greatly missed. It was a great season.”

Roberts was a key contributor for the Royals all year and made her presence known again Tuesday when she led her team with 13 points, including a trio of 3-pointers. Mathis was also a vocal team leader, according to the head coach.

“Then we have Kalyria Jones, she’s going to be phenomenal next year. This season was also big for her growth. She’s a junior, and she’ll step into those [seniors’] shoes,” Stanley said. “And we have Ava Jenkins coming back, she’s only a freshman.”

Jenkins finished with 12 points while Jones followed with 11, showing a glimpse of potential stars for Bleckley come next season.

Even with the three double-digit scorers, though, the Royals couldn’t get enough shots to fall against the Gryphons. They had a tough time containing ACE’s two sets of twins, as the seniors Karlee and Karsyn Yates made noise down low while the freshmen Khloie and Zhoie Stanley made things happen at the top of the key.

Khloie Stanley finished with 22 points for the Gryphons, with 15 of them coming in the second half.

Bleckley County also missed 10 free throws on the night — a reflection of their struggles shooting, but also an indicator of a night filled with lots of fouls.

Some of those calls, particularly some shooting fouls and physicality on inbounds passes that caused Royals defenders to hit the deck, frustrated Stanley all evening.

“I know it happens, that’s a part of the game. But it was tough when I had to sit my starters at certain points in the game,” he said. “I think my team played great, because they could have lost their temper in a hard game. They played great.”

Despite the double-digit deficit at the final buzzer, Bleckley County kept it tight for most of the game thanks to defense and important 3-pointers.

The Royals came out of the gate scrappy, playing pesky defense and regularly picking ACE’s pocket at the top of the key to create opportunities. Even with a little poor shooting, Bleckley county was able to manufacture enough buckets for a 9-5 lead that felt a bit larger than four points with both teams turning the ball over.

The Gryphons got things moving before the quarter ran out, though, sinking some free throws and getting good ball movement from the Stanley twins to make it a 9-8 Bleckley lead going into the second quarter.

What little success shooting the Royals had quickly evaporated as ACE kept the ball at the perimeter for most of the

period. Aside from a big three by Roberts, Bleckley County had to settle for free throws for most of their other points, and they struggled to hit more than one of two on most trips to the line.

ACE was inefficient from the charity stripe as well but made up for it with better shooting toward the end of the half. Both Yates twins had nice putbacks, and Karlee Yates knocked down two free throws to piece together a run that gave the Gryphons a 23-19 lead at the break.

ACE came out of the locker room shooting much better, sinking a couple 3-pointers and getting some layups in transition to eventually stretch the lead to double digits.

But every time it felt like the Gryphons might pull away for good, a Royal would knock something down, be it a pair of foul shots by Jenkins or another bucket from beyond the arc by Roberts.

Bleckley County, down by as many as 11 at points in the second half, used a key block by Jenkins and some quick transition points to get it to 45-40 with about four minutes remaining.

But it wasn’t to be, as Kar-



Mark S. Powell / For the TJP

ACE defeats Bleckley County 57-47 in the first round of the GHSA Class A Division I girls basketball playoffs. Amiyah Roberts (20) takes a shot over the outstretched arm of Sara Rhett Farmer (12).

lee Yates stepped up for ACE in the final two minutes. First she knocked down a layup to make it 49-41, then she hit a smooth shot from beyond the arc that brought the crowd to its feet with about a minute-and-a-half to go, putting the game away for good.

The Gryphons will have to

take a lengthy trip to North Georgia this Friday for the second round of the playoffs, as they’ll face No. 1-seeded Fannin County on the road.

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