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County health rankings reveal troubling trends in Twiggs, Bleckley, Wilkinson

Photo via Labcorp

Mary Helene Hall
Times Journal Post

Recently released data from the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute shows that Twiggs, Bleckley and Wilkinson counties have worse health outcomes compared to Georgia and the United States.

The report, County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, tracks and outlines factors that contribute to overall health in each county, including birth weight, physical inactivity, excessive drinking, teen births, employment, preventable hospital stays and number of health providers.

In most of the 30+ categories measured, each of the three counties performs worse than both the state and country.

Where rural Middle Georgia falls short

The rankings, for instance, measure premature death by total years of potential life lost. In Georgia, it is estimated that 8,900 years of life per 100,000 people were lost due to premature death. In Wilkinson County, which fared the worst among the three counties, 14,700 years of life were lost per 100,000 people.

Many factors in the data indicate potential issues in local communities that may need to be addressed.

In Wilkinson County, a disproportionately high percentage of driving deaths involve alcohol — 36% compared to Georgia's 20% and 26% for the U.S.

Wilkinson County also has the highest percentage of adult obesity — a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or more — compared to Twiggs and Bleckley, both at 37%, but those counties' percentages are higher than Georgia and the U.S. percentage of 34%.

The data gave Twiggs a drastically low figure for access to exercise opportunities at just 9%. The factor measures the percentage of the population with adequate access to locations for physical activity. The Georgia average is 74%. Bleckley has 75%, and Wilkinson doesn't have enough data to provide a measurement.

All three counties have remarkably low access to healthcare professionals. There is only one primary care physician in Twiggs County. Bleckley and Wilkinson fare relatively better, but both are still

See HEALTH, page 3

Border wall goes up in Wilkinson

Christian McKearney
Times Journal Post

They are building a border wall in Wilkinson County, sort of.

Work continues on a stretch of US 441 in the southern part of the county, right around Mile Marker 4. The most important piece of the puzzle is a 20-foot border wall that's designed to prevent another slope failure, according to Will Volk, a Georgia Department of Transportation spokesperson.

The stretch of highway has been an issue for several years. The original slope failure occurred in early 2020, and the DOT ultimately installed a concrete barrier that created one lane of southbound traffic.

The most recent project began in late September, when southbound traffic on 441 was re-routed into the northbound lane, thus creating a temporary two-lane road.

The plan is to have the project completed at some point in April or May, Volk added. This would include re-striping of the northbound lane, alongside the engineering work on the southbound side.

Courtesy of Georgia Department of Transportation

On one side of a construction project on US 441 in Wilco, workers are putting the finishing touches on a large border wall, designed to prevent another slope failure. On the other side, a crew is moving in dirt and "backfilling" the future stretch of road.

Photo via United Soybean Board

Ga. lifts poultry suspension after bird flu outbreak

Dave Williams
Capitol Beat

ATLANTA – The state Department of Agriculture has lifted a suspension of poultry activities in Georgia following the successful completion of testing for bird flu with no additional detections.

Two cases of avian influenza (HPAI) were discovered last month in commercial poultry flocks in Elbert County. That outbreak prompted the state agency to suspend poultry activities across Georgia including sales at auction, flea, or livestock markets, meet ups, swaps, and exhibitions. The order exempted the retail sale of poultry products including meat and eggs.

"I'm excited to announce that both commercial poultry producers in the control area and poultry enthusiasts across our state can return to normal operations," Georgia Commissioner of Agriculture Tyler Harper said Monday.

"While this announcement is a great step in the right direction, HPAI remains a significant threat to our No.-1 industry, and the Georgia Department of Agriculture will continue working around the clock to protect our state's flocks and to keep prices as low as possible for Georgia consumers."

Every commercial operation within 10 kilometers (6.2 miles) of the affected area was subjected to increased testing and movement controls. Agency staff completed 4,541 tests representing 49,951 individual chickens and hundreds of flocks with no additional detections of HPAI.

Outbreaks of bird flu across the country have been blamed for record egg prices. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the cost of eggs has nearly doubled from a year ago.

Former head of Fish and Wildlife Service goes to bat for Okefenokee

Dave Williams
Capitol Beat

ATLANTA – The former director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) recently urged Gov. Brian Kemp to block a proposed mine near the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge on her way out the door.

In a letter to Kemp dated Jan 15 – five days before leaving office to make way for the incoming Trump administration – then-FWS Director Martha Williams called the Okefenokee "one of America's greatest natural treasures."

Advocates for the swamp have been fighting Alabama-based Twin Pines Minerals' (TPM) plan to open a titanium oxide mine along Trail Ridge adjacent to the refuge for several years. The project's opponents are looking to a new Fish and Wildlife Service plan to expand the refuge by about 22,000 acres as a way to stop the mine.

"Experts have highlighted that the proposed mine significantly risks the ecosystem and cultural values of Okefenokee," Williams wrote. "The (Interior) Department, the state of Georgia, and private landowners have the opportunity to stand together to protect this unique swamp ecosystem within Georgia.

"I urge you to exercise your leadership and authority as governor of Georgia to help us achieve a mutually acceptable solution."

Twin Pines Minerals (TPM) is seeking state permits for the mine. While company executives have said the project would not harm the swamp, scientific studies have concluded the proposed mine would significantly damage the largest blackwater swamp in North America by drawing down its water level and increasing the risk of drought and fires.

Josh Marks, president of Georgians for the Okefenokee, praised the Fish and Wildlife Service for its advocacy on behalf of the refuge.

"This letter correctly highlights the scientific consensus that mining along the swamp's hydrologic boundary is a terrible idea," he said. "Hopefully, Governor Kemp will agree, deny TPM's permit applications, and instead accept FWS' offer of collaboration around conserving Trail Ridge, so that Georgia's greatest natural treasure can finally be saved for future generations."

Martha Williams

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Upcoming Events

'Fast Fading: A History of Central State Hospital' and 'Seeking Asylum' Exhibits
Saturday Feb 15
10 a.m.
700 Broad St. in Milledgeville
Fast Fading, a History of Central State Hospital, and Seeking Asylum are open every Saturday from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. and by appointment. Come learn about the history of what was once the world's largest asylum for the mentally ill.

S.T.E.M. Saturday
Saturday, Feb 15
11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Twiggs Co. Library
This is a monthly program for school children grades K-12 to explore the world of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math with fun activities.

Cochran-Bleckley Chamber of Commerce Bingo Night
Monday, Feb 17
6:30 p.m.
Peacock Street at the Extension Office
Enjoy an exciting evening of games, prizes, and community fun that is perfect for all ages!

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.

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

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).

Have an event you'd like to see in our calendar? Email details to news@timesjournalpost.com

Wilco property tax bills finally right around the corner

Christian McKearney
Times Journal Post

Following a series of starts, stops, petitions and legal challenges, property tax bills in Wilkinson County are now in the process of being finalized.

Tax Commissioner Amanda Panther currently is collecting all the necessary signatures from the different local government entities and finalizing the paperwork for the Georgia Department of Revenue. If all goes accordingly, according to Panther, the first property tax bills should be mailed out by Feb. 24.

"February 24 is the date that we're looking at," she said. "But, depending on the turnaround time, it could be a few days earlier."

The most recent delay came after the School Board opted not to adopt its "recommended rollback rate." This meant three public meetings, required by state law.

In Wilkinson County, property tax bills most commonly are mailed out in October, and property owners then have 60 days to pay their bills without penalties and interest, which is usually around Christmas.

The lag time has created a predicament for at least one government entity. The City of Gordon recently had less than $50,000 in its general fund, and the City Council was forced to scramble to make payroll.

Twiggs school district opts out of homestead exemption following public disapproval

Mary Helene Hall
Times Journal Post

After three public hearings over several weeks, the Twiggs County Board of Education voted unanimously to opt out of the controversial homestead tax exemption Tuesday night.

House Bill 581, passed by state legislators last year, created a statewide "floating homestead exemption" and an additional sales tax to offset losses on property tax from the exemption.

Although several local government entities have declared their intent to opt out of the bill, including the cities of Jeffersonville and Cochran, public discontent has been particularly strong in response to the Twiggs school district's decision to opt out. The law allows opting out until March 1.

The board officially declared their intention to opt out Jan. 2.

Nearly every person who spoke at these public hearings urged the board not to opt out.

"The people in Twiggs County voted for this exemption," said Twiggs Tax Commissioner Buddy Nesmith at the first public hearing last month. "Now, there's a lot of things (that would benefit the school district) in the exemption that (Assistant Superintendent James Austin) read out, but that's not what they saw. What they saw was that this is a homestead exemption, they wanted it, they voted for it."

The Twiggs board vote took place after chairman Thomas Carstarphen thanked attendees for getting involved with their local community and urged them to keep the energy up, not just with the school district, but with other aspects of their local government.

"I really enjoy seeing all of you come out to voice your concerns. It is my hope that one day, this room will be standing-room only. I'd like to see us as citizens — all of us — do a better job of upholding all of our elected officials accountable," he said.

With the board's decision, the opt-out will be locked in for the next 50 years.

"My number one priority is the students of this county," District 4 board member Chesney Butler said prior to voting. "This is a 50-year bill. We have an opportunity to go 50 years forward or 50 years backward. The people (who may be impacted by the bill) that we're voting on today may not have even been born yet."

The law passed in November with over 60% of the vote across the state, limiting the yearly increase in homestead property tax assessments to the rate of inflation of the previous year. Local governing bodies, however, were given a one-time chance to opt out of the exemption, meaning the new legislation may not apply to many people across the state. In this case, nothing would change for residents of these areas.

Property taxes are calculated by multiplying the millage rate — one mill equals 0.1% — with the assessed value of property, or 40% of the fair market value. Property values are regularly adjusted via appraisals.

The floating homestead exemption limits increases on a property's assessed value to the rate of inflation. The state already has a standard $2,000 exemption that can be used to deduct from a home's fair market value and some municipalities have their own exemptions.

The Macon Melody's Casey Choung contributed to this report.

Obituary

Sara Faulk "Sister" Miley

AUBURN, AL - A graveside service will be held for Mrs. Sara Marguerite Faulk Miley (Sister) on February 12, 2025 at 2:00 EST in the Lee Cemetery in Jeffersonville, Georgia.

Sara, a loving daughter, wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother passed away peacefully on February 5, 2025 at East Alabama Medical Center in Opelika, Alabama. She was 92.

She enjoyed helping her friends and neighbors and volunteering at the Baptist Student Union at Auburn University and East Alabama Medical Center. Working in her yard and growing flowers was another hobby. She was a superb cook and liked to share her recipes with family and friends. She was an accomplished seamstress and also was very good at crocheting. More than that, she was a very dedicated Christian and attended Auburn First Baptist Church where she was an active member until her later years.

Sara was born on February 25, 1932 in Jeffersonville, Georgia to Charles Reynolds Faulk, Jr. and Marguerite Dupree Newby Faulk. She was preceded in death by her parents, her husband Dr. Clarence C. Miley and three siblings, Lawrence Newby Faulk, Carolyn F. Schwartz and Rose F. Denny.

She is survived by her three sons, Michael Miley (Glenda), Charles Miley, and Ben Miley; 3 grandchildren, Michelle Tomlinson (Joey), Meredith Lee (Jed) and Michael Christian Miley; 3 great-grandchildren, Macayla Tomlinson, Evie Tomlinson and Johnathan Lee.

Visit www.reecefuneralhomeinc.com to express tributes.

Reece Funeral Home in Jeffersonville, GA is handling the arrangements.

April Goetz Barrentine

GRAY – April Goetz Barrentine, 60, of Cyler Rd., passed away Friday February 7, 2025 in Macon.

Services will be held Thursday, February 13, 2025 at 11:00AM at Cornerstone Chapel in Forsyth, GA.

April was born in Kathleen, GA the daughter of the late Doris Allen Goetz. She was preceded in death by her mother and her brother Joseph Lamar Goetz. She was a former millwright with Boeing Aerospace Company. April enjoyed cake decorating, arts & crafts, collecting dragonflies and carousels. She was a NASCAR fan and enjoyed shooting pool.

Survivors include her husband, Greg Hamrick, Her father Kenneth Goetz. Her children, Darryl (Mandy) Goetz, Brandi (Waylon) Craven, Angel (Bryan Black) Lenning, and. Brothers, Randall (Shelby) Goetz, Kenneth Lloyd (Lynn) Goetz. Grandchildren, Logan Craven, Dillion Goetz, Gavin Craven, Devin Goetz, Brendan Craven, Damien Barrett, Gabriel Sapp, Madisun Goetz, and Destin Sapp

Visit reecefuneralhomeinc.com to express tributes.

Reece Funeral Home in Jeffersonville has charge of arrangements.

Attorney
Brian Arnold

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Health Factors

Many things influence how well and how long any given person lives. Health factors represent things that can be improved to live longer and healthier lives. They are indicators of the future health of communities.

	Twiggs County	Bleckley County	Wilkinson County	Georgia	United States
Health Behaviors					
Adult Smoking	20%	20%	23%	16%	15%
Adult Obesity	37%	37%	41%	34%	34%
Food Environment Index (Higher is better)	8.6	6.1	6.9	6.4	7.7
Physical Inactivity	29%	28%	33%	23%	23%
Access to Exercise Opportunities	9%	75%	-	74%	84%
Excessive Drinking	14%	15%	13%	17%	18%
Alcohol-Impaired Driving Deaths	20%	33%	36%	20%	26%
Sexually Transmitted Infections	407.3	706	724.7	629.1	495.5
Teen Births	25	17	36	20	17
Clinical Care					
Uninsured	18%	14%	18%	15%	10%
Primary Care Physicians	7,860:1	4,300:1	2,940:1	1,520:1	1,330:1
Dentists	-	6,130:1	8,680:1	1,860:1	1,360:1
Mental Health Providers	7,680:1	6,130:1	2,170:1	560:1	320:1
Preventable Hospital Stays	2931	2616	3711	3,076	2681
Mammography Screening	44%	46%	47%	41%	43%
Flu Vaccinations	31%	28%	36%	43%	46%
Social & Economic Factors					
High School Completion	79%	88%	89%	89%	89%
Some College	51%	68%	54%	65%	68%
Unemployment	4.60%	4.30%	3.30%	3%	3.70%
Children in Poverty	33%	26%	26%	17%	16%
Income Inequality	7.7	5.3	5.7	4.8	4.9
Children in Single-Parent Households	31%	44%	43%	31%	25%
Social Associations	10.2	12.7	11.3	8.9	9.1
Injury Deaths	104	73	103	73	80
Physical Environment					
Air Pollution - Particulate Matter	9.7	9.5	9.8	9.4	7.4
Drinking Water Violations	No	No	No	-	-
Severe Housing Problems	13%	13%	16%	15%	17%
Driving Alone to Work	84%	84%	86%	74%	72%
Long Commute - Driving Alone	44%	43%	42%	42%	36%

Blank values reflect unreliable or missing data. For more information about what each factor means and how its measured, click the source link below or visit countyhealthrankings.org/health-data/

Table: Mary Helene Hall | Times Journal Post • Source: County Health Rankings & Roadmaps • Created with Datawrapper

Health, from 1:

much worse than the Georgia and U.S. figures. The U.S. average is one physician per 1,300 people.

"One contributor to the lower health rankings for counties compared to the state overall is the lack of local healthcare providers," said Michael Hokanson, a spokesperson for the Georgia Department of Public Health in the North Central district. "(Twiggs) has a minimal health infrastructure with no hospital or emergency room to serve residents, and during emergencies patients must be transported to neighboring counties."

Following nationwide trends among rural communities, all three counties have a severe lack of practicing dentists. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) the percentage of adults who have visited the dentist at least once in the past year is higher among those in urban areas (66.7%) than in rural areas (57.6%).

The data appears to indicate Twiggs County has no dentists at all. Bleckley County has one dentist per 6,130 people, and Wilkinson has one per 8,680. The figure in Georgia is one per 1,860 and one per 1,360 in the United States.

Twiggs and Wilkinson counties have a notably higher number of injury-related deaths than Bleckley, Georgia and the U.S. The deaths included in this measurement include homicides, suicides, motor vehicle crashes, poisonings and other similar circumstances. In Wilkinson, there are 103 injury deaths per 100,000 people, and there are 104 in Twiggs. Bleckley meets the Georgia average at 73, lower than the U.S. average of 80.

Also of note is income inequality in Twiggs County. The ratio of household income at the 80th percentile (lower incomes) to income at the 20th percentile (higher incomes) is 7.7, a much higher figure than Wilkinson (5.7), Bleckley (5.3), Georgia (4.8) and the U.S. (4.9).

Many of these poor factors and outcomes for Twiggs, Bleckley and Wilkinson are due to being rural areas. Across the United States, folks in rural areas generally fare worse than people living in suburban or urban areas.

One contributor to the lower health rankings for counties compared to the state overall is the lack of local healthcare providers. This is issues is especially apparent in rural counties. We can see in Twiggs county that, according to the County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, for the entire population of 7,860, there is a single primary care physician. The county has a minimal health infrastructure with no hospital or emergency room to serve residents, and during emergencies patients must be transported to neighboring counties.

Areas where the counties exceed expectations

There are, however, bright sides to this data for the local counties.

Twiggs has a high food environment index, meaning that people who live in the county have quality access to food. Bleckley and Wilkinson are around the Georgia average.

In all three counties, a higher-than-average number of female Medicare enrollees ages 65-74 received an annual mammography screening.

Bleckley and Wilkinson counties' high school completion rates match up with both the state and country at around 89%.

All three counties have more social associations — civic, political, religious, sports and professional organizations — than the average county.

What can communities do to improve outcomes?

The researchers involved in the County Health Rankings and Roadmaps study have a section of their website, countyhealthrankings.org, devoted to methods to improve community outcomes that are scientifically backed.

For the areas where Twiggs, Bleckley and Wilkinson struggle, some of these action items include building social support for physical activity, comprehensive risk-reduction sex education, healthy school lunch initiatives, alcohol taxes, and financial incentives for health professionals to move to underserved areas.

One of the recommended actions — providing medical care at schools — is already taking place in the Twiggs County Schools Wellness Center. The school is providing low-cost medical care to the community. Students from the Central Georgia Tech's dental hygiene program come to the clinic to perform cleanings periodically, and patients with more serious dental problems can receive a referral.

"What I learned when I became superintendent was we had no full-time medical, no full-time dental or full-time mental health services in our community, and this was at the time of Covid, so we had many of our students who were suffering with asthma-related symptoms, grief, mental health issues related to grief and stress," Twiggs schools Superintendent Mack H. Bullard told the Times Journal Post in September.

The Georgia DPH North Central district uses data and surveys to address public health gaps in local communities. Twiggs and Wilkinson counties fall under the North Central district, while Bleckley is under the South Central district's jurisdiction.

A survey conducted among people in the North Central district for 2022 showed that the community's largest concerns include access to care, chronic disease and health inequities.

Health Outcomes

Health outcomes indicate how long people live on average within a community and how much physical and mental health people experience in a community while they are alive.

	Twiggs County	Bleckley County	Wilkinson County	Georgia	United States
Length of Life					
Premature Death	14,200	10,900	14,700	8,900	8,000
Quality of Life					
Poor or Fair Health	20%	20%	23%	18%	14%
Poor Physical Health Days	4	4	5	4	3
Poor Mental Health Days	5	6	6	5	5
Low Birthweight	11%	10%	13%	10%	8%

Premature Death: Years of potential life lost before age 75 per 100,000 population. Poor or Fair Health: Percentage of adults reporting fair or poor health. Poor Physical Health Days: Average number of physically unhealthy days reported in past 30 days. Poor Mental Health Days: Average number of mentally unhealthy days reported in past 30 days. Low Birthweight: Percentage of live births with low birthweight (less than 2,500 grams).

Table: Mary Helene Hall | Times Journal Post • Source: County Health Rankings & Roadmaps • Created with Datawrapper

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NEW SOUTHERN DAD

It's all in your head: A plastics problem

Kyle Dominy

Modern science has done it again. We can now estimate how much plastic is in our brains. Scientists can't tell you how it got there or prescribe any method to get rid of it, just tell you that it's there, and that it's most likely bad for you.

What an age to be alive.

Of all the things to happen over the past five years, I'd never expect finding plastic on the human brain to make the list. I'm sure there are several people who would accuse me of having a plastic brain, but never plastic on the brain.

A recently released study from the University of New Mexico found that the average brain contained about 7 grams of microplastics. That's enough to make a standard disposable plastic fork. Talk about recycling. Some brains had more, others less. Dementia patients had the most.

Microplastics have long been the worry of medical scientists and health nuts. These nanoparticles are the left-behind bits of decomposing plastic goods, and are apparently everywhere, from the depths of the oceans to the meaty bits inside our bodies. How they find their way to our vital organs is still a mystery, but researchers suggest it is by eating, drinking and breathing.

So, by the essentials of daily living. Even if you somehow led a plastic-free life, it's in the air and the water. You can't run and you can't hide from the plastic apocalypse. I suppose that garbage island is still floating around somewhere in the Pacific making matters worse, distributing more and more micro bits into the environment.

I try not to worry about such things, but as a parent it's difficult not to. I don't want my children to grow up in a world where a fork's worth of plastic in the brain is a common thing, but that cat is out of the bag. I guess in a few years I'll have two forks' worth and won't remember what's going on anyway.

Even Consumer Reports, the customer advocate group, suggests ditching most things plastic to combat the spread of these microscopic fearsome flecks. Not to be a conspiracy theorist, but it sounds like a ploy by big dish soap to force us to wash more dishes. Life's too short for dishpan hands. Back off, Palmolive. Toss your plastic, and you'd soon find you own very little.

But you don't have to look far to find something to worry about, and I'll take our plastic age to, say, any time during the medieval period, or the 1970s. Disco? I don't think so.

Things are faring well in my portion of this seemingly chaotic world. I'll try not to let my plastic-infused head organ dwell on things out of my control. Worry only robs you of time that could be better spent and further clogs up the brain. So, scientists, quit telling me how much plastic is floating around my skull and get back to me when you know how to get it out.

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

James Oglethorpe: The father Of Georgia, pioneer abolitionist

Michael L. Thurmond

This week Georgia will celebrate the 292nd anniversary of its founding by General James Oglethorpe on February 12, 1733. The Georgia colony was envisioned as a unique economic development and social welfare experiment. Administered by twenty-one original trustees, the Georgia plan offered England's "worthy poor" an opportunity to achieve financial security by exporting goods produced on small farms.

Most significantly, Oglethorpe and his fellow trustees were convinced that widespread economic vitality could not be achieved through the exploitation of enslaved Black laborers. Later in life, Georgia's founding father would help breathe life into the international crusade that broke the chains of British and American slavery.

Due primarily to Oglethorpe's strident advocacy, Georgia was the only British American colony to prohibit chattel slavery prior to the American Revolutionary War. General Oglethorpe would assert that he and his fellow trustees prohibited the enslavement of Black people because it was "against the Gospel, as well as the fundamental law of England."

The genesis of Oglethorpe's antislavery advocacy can be traced to an extraordinary letter written by a young African Muslim named Ayuba Suleiman Diallo. In February 1730, Mandinka warriors took Diallo as a prisoner of war and sold him to British slave traders. He survived the harrowing "Middle Passage" and was enslaved on a Maryland colony tobacco plantation. Following a failed escape attempt, Diallo's enslaver allowed the educated young man to write a letter to his father, detailing his dire circumstances.

Written in Arabic, the letter passed through the hands of several white men during its improbable 4,000-mile journey to London and it was placed in Oglethorpe's possession. After having Diallo's letter translated, Oglethorpe entered into an agreement to purchase the enslaved young man and pay for his passage to England.

Prior to the founding of Georgia, Oglethorpe was a member of the British Parliament, chairman of a Christian society that sought to evangelize enslaved Blacks and deputy governor of the Royal African Company, a British slave trading enterprise. According to a nineteenth century Georgia historian, Diallo's "history" had a profound effect on Oglethorpe's "ideas" regarding slavery. On December 21, 1732, Diallo's distant benefactor abruptly severed official ties with the slaving corporation.

During the spring of 1733, while Oglethorpe was in North America, Diallo arrived in London, assumed a new name "Job Ben Solomon," and became a "roaring lion" of British society. The budding British celebrity was emancipated by British patrons, introduced to King George II and Queen Caroline and on August 8, 1734, returned to what is modern day Senegal.

While Diallo was celebrating his miraculous rescue from bondage, proslavery Georgia colonists known as "Malcontents" were arguing that deteriorating economic conditions in the colony were due to the prohibition against slavery. Oglethorpe and the malcontents engaged in a divisive, unvarnished debate over the legalization of slavery in Georgia.

Georgia's principal founder became the target of a relentless smear campaign that included claims of mismanagement and hypocrisy because of his alleged investment in a South Carolina plantation that utilized enslaved Blacks.

In January 1739, anticipating the sentiments of nineteenth century abolitionists, Oglethorpe argued that legalizing slavery would "occasion the misery of thousands in Africa…and bring into perpetual slavery the poor people who now live free there."

Finally, on July 22, 1743, Georgia's most strident defender of the slavery prohibition was forced to exit his beloved colony. He sailed toward a future clouded by a pending court-martial and the possibility of financial ruin. The military charges ranged from larceny to treason. Reacting to complaints from pro-slavery colonists, British officials also refused to reimburse Oglethorpe for substantial expenses he had incurred on behalf of the colony.

Although Oglethorpe was acquitted on all accounts and fully reimbursed, he never returned to Georgia. Less than a decade later, on January 1, 1751, Georgia's slavery prohibition was repealed.

Despite the abandonment of the colony's anti-slavery principles, Oglethorpe maintained a fatherly interest in Georgia. For the remainder of this life, the old general continued to rail against the evils of slavery. He died on June 30, 1785.

Although many of the societal ills that served as the catalyst for the founding of Georgia remain unresolved: unemployment, racial intolerance, over-crowded prisons and economic dislocation. The passage of nearly three centuries has not dimmed the brilliance of General James Oglethorpe's original vision for Georgia.

Michael L. Thurmond is the author of "James Oglethorpe, Father of Georgia: A Founder's Journey from Slave Trader to Abolitionist."

Stacey Abrams' political aspirations bookended by bad timing

This column comes to the Times Journal Post from the Georgia Recorder.

Jay Bookman

Back in 2018, Stacey Abrams was one of the hottest political figures in the country, and in some liberal circles was even approaching folk-hero status.

Her talent, then and now, was obvious. She is brighter than hell, she understands policy, she shines in small groups and in front of crowds, she can raise money and she can organize. In 2018, she lost the Georgia governor's race to Brian Kemp, but the surprisingly narrow margin of her defeat in a state that was still considered deep-red helped to burnish her reputation and raise expectations.

Republicans feared her; Democrats loved her. Both parties saw her as a rising politician who was likely to make a mark on the national scene. And when Joe Biden, Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff all carried Georgia in 2020, Abrams got and deserved some of the credit for the voter-registration and turnout operation that she had built.

Five years later, though, that shine has pretty much gone. Republicans no longer see Abrams as a threat to be feared, a lot of Democrats have grown disenchanted with her tendency to over-promise and under-deliver, and her future in electoral politics seems tenuous. The magic she once inspired has vanished, and she's at least partly to blame.

After losing to Kemp, Abrams had refused to officially concede what had been a hard-fought race. Her refusal was in no way comparable to Donald Trump's later, violent attempt to overturn a presidential election, but it tarnished her standing and made her seem small. She then spent much of the next four years becoming a national media figure, and as she traveled and built her national visibility she seemed to lose touch with Georgia.

In 2022, she sought and got a rematch with Kemp, to whom she had lost by about 55,000 votes. This time she raised and spent $54 million, twice as much as she had raised four years earlier. This time, she lost by almost 300,000, finishing with fewer votes than three of her fellow Democrats who also ran on the statewide ballot that year.

And now there are other problems.

Last week, two non-profit organizations closely tied to Abrams finally agreed to settle a 16-count ethics complaint, admitting that they had broken multiple state campaign finance laws and had illegally spent more than $3 million aiding Abrams' 2018 campaign. As part of their admission of guilt, the groups agreed to pay a record fine of $300,000.

Abrams and her allies had fought those charges for years, claiming that the investigation was groundless and motivated by politics. The claim had credibility, because Kemp does have a history of using the levers of government to discredit his political opponents. Indeed, Kemp had done exactly that in the 2018 campaign. Then serving as secretary of state, he had falsely accused Democrats of trying to break into state election computers in an effort to cover up the incompetence of his own office.

In this case, however, it was Abrams and her allies who had broken the law on behalf of her campaign. Major ethics violations and law-breaking no longer carry much weight on the national level, where things have gotten ridiculous and scary. However, they still do at the state level.

A third consecutive run for governor in 2026, when Kemp is term-limited out of office, was already going to be difficult for Abrams, assuming she even wants to try. A candidate who was refreshing and full of promise a decade earlier doesn't look so shiny after two major losses, some hard feelings among party insiders and ongoing ethics concerns.

In addition, the Democratic Party now has a bench full of strong candidates looking for their own chance at the brass ring, and they're unlikely to stand aside yet again and allow Abrams to take the nomination. So much of politics is timing, and in Abrams' case she was a little too early, and then a little too late.

Jay Bookman covered Georgia and national politics for nearly 30 years for the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, earning numerous national, regional and state journalism awards.

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Legals

Bleckley Co. Legals

C25-008
NOTICE TO CREDITORS AND DEBTORS
STATE OF GEORGIA
COUNTY OF BLECKLEY

In Re: Estate Of: Bonnijean Daniels Bollinger, deceased; Estate No.: 2024P90
All creditors of the Estate of Bonnijean Daniels Bollinger, deceased, late of Bleckley County, Georgia, are hereby notified to render their demands to the undersigned according to law, and all persons indebted to said estate are required to make immediate payment of me.

NAME: ALISA BOLLINGER,
Executrix of the Estate of
Bonnijean Daniels Bollinger, Deceased
ADDRESS: 320 Bishop Circle,
St. Mary's, Georgia 31558

ATTORNEY:
Sarah Riedel
Banks and Riedel, P.C.
970 Walnut St.
Macon, Georgia 31201
Phone No.: (478) 254-3230
Facsimile: (478) 254-3883
banksnriedel@gmail.com
January 23, 30, February 6, 13, 2025

C25-010
IN THE PROBATE COURT OF BLECKLEY COUNTY
STATE OF GEORGIA
IN RE: ESTATE OF SUE ELLEN BUSH, DECEASED
ESTATE NO. 2025P1
PETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION
NOTICE
TO: whom it may concern:
LAURA SUZANNE WRIGHT has petitioned to be appointed administrator of the estate of SUE ELLEN BUSH deceased, of said county. (The petitioner has also applied for waiver of bond, waiver of statements, waiver of reports, 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.
Jonathan R. Fordham
Judge of the Probate Court
112 Second Street
Cochran, GA 31014
478-934-3200 Ext. 4
January 30, February 6, 13, 20, 2025

C25-014
State of Georgia
County of Bleckley
Notice to Debtors and Creditors
All creditors of the Estate of Earl R. Arnold, late of Bleckley County, Georgia, deceased, are hereby notified to render their demands to the undersigned, according to law, and all persons indebted to said Estate are required to make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This 30th day of January, 2025.
Keith Arnold, Executor
c/o Prior Law Firm
1671 Meriweather Drive, Suite 103
Watkinsville, Georgia 30677
February 6, 13, 20, 27, 2025

C25-013
IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF BLECKLEY COUNTY
STATE OF GEORGIA
In Re: Cody Prather
Civil Action File No. 2025V-0017SFW
NOTICE OF PETITION TO CHANGE NAME
GEORGIA, Bleckley County
Notice is hereby given that Cody Prather, the undersigned, filed his petition to the Superior Court of Bleckley County, Georgia on the 20th day of January, 2025, praying for a change in the name of petitioner from Cody Prather to Cody Raley. Notice is hereby given pursuant to law to any interested or affected party to appear in said Court to file objections to such name change. Objections must be filed with said Court within 30 days of the filing of said petition.
This 20th day of January, 2025.
/s/ Cody Prather
February 6, 13, 20, 27, 2025

C25-012
This is an attempt to collect a debt and any information obtained will be used for that purpose.

NOTICE OF SALE UNDER POWER
GEORGIA, BLECKLEY COUNTY
Under and by virtue of Power of Sale contained in Deed to Secure Debt from **Frank Blackshear, as Trustee of the Blackshear Living Trust, UA,** to Irish Real Estate Guy, LLC, dated February 6, 2024, filed for record February 6, 2024, recorded at Deed Book 477, Page 282, Bleckley County, Georgia Records, in the original principal amount of $50,500.00. Said Security Deed being given to secure the obligations of Grantor to Lender as set forth in a Promissory Note ("Note") of even date as amended, modified, or revised from time to time 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 at **BLECKLEY** County, Georgia, within the legal hours of sale on the first Tuesday in March 2025, the following described property:

The Land referred to herein below is situated in the County of Bleckley, State of Georgia, and is described as follows:

That tract of land with dwelling house located thereon which has the address of 239 Ash Street, Cochran, Georgia 31014 (Tax ID A16 128), in the City of Cochran in Land Lot 142 of the 21st Land District of Bleckley County, Georgia, as shown by plat of survey made by John W. Dye, Registered land Surveyor, dated February 8, 1977, recorded in Plat Book 4, Page 395, in the Office of the Clerk of Bleckley County Superior Court at Cochran, Georgia, particularly described as follows: BEGIN AT A POINT marked by a stake on the northwest right of way line of Ash Street at its intersection with the southwest line of a fifteen foot alley or
lane and from said point of beginning run north 43 degrees 40 minutes west 210 feet along the southwest line of said alley to a corner point; thence run south 45 degrees west 105 feet to a corner point marked by a stake; thence run south 43 degrees 40 minutes east 210 feet along the northeast line of lands now or formerly of Patricia A. Brown and Randy Levan Brown to a corner point marked by a stake on the northwest right of way line of Ash Street;
and thence run north 45 degrees east 105 feet along the northwest right of way line of Ash Street to the point of beginning. The foregoing described tract of land is the same as that tract of land conveyed from FRANKL. BLACKSHEAR AS TRUSTEE OF 348 WEST 122nd STREET TRUST to FRANK BLACKSHEAR, AS TRUSTEE OF THE BLACKSHEAR LIVING TRUST, U/A dated July 22, 2021 by Warranty Deed dated December 29, 2023, recorded in Deed Book 476, Pages 534-535, Bleckley County Records.

Said legal description is controlling however, the property is commonly known as 239 Ash Street, Cochran, Georgia 31014.
PARCEL # A16 128

The indebtedness secured by said Security Deed has been and is hereby declared due because of default under the terms of said Security Deed and Note, including, but not limited to, the nonpayment of the indebtedness as and when due. 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 and other payments provided for under the terms of the Security Deed and Note.
Said property will be sold subject to the following items which may affect the title to said property: all zoning ordinances; matters which would be disclosed by an accurate survey or by inspection of the property; any outstanding taxes, including but not limited to, ad valorem taxes, which constitute liens upon said property; special assessments; and all outstanding bills for public utilities which constitute liens upon said property; To the best of the knowledge and belief of the undersigned, the party in possession of the property of **Frank Blackshear, as Trustee of the Blackshear Living Trust, UA**, and /or tenant(s). The sale will be conducted subject (1) to confirmation that the sale is not prohibited under the United States Bankruptcy Code and (2) to final confirmation and audit of the status of the loan with the holder of the Security Deed. **Irish Real Estate Guy, LLC** and its counsel are acting as debt collectors. Any information obtained will be used for that purpose.
Irish Real Estate Guy, LLC as Attorney-in-Fact for Frank Blackshear, as Trustee of the Blackshear Living Trust, UA

Contact: Jason Godwin
Godwin Law Group
3985 Steve Reynolds Blvd, Bldg D
Norcross, GA 30093
Phone: 470-427-2683
Email: jgodwin@godwinlawgroup.com
February 6, 13, 20, 27, 2025

C25-011
PROBATE COURT OF BLECKLEY COUNTY
STATE OF GEORGIA
In Re: ESTATE OF
MARY MAGDALENE CHEEK POWELL, Deceased
Estate No. 2025P2
PETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION
NOTICE
TO: All interested persons: Billy W. Powell has petitioned to be appointed administrator of the Estate of **Mary Magdalene Cheek Powell,** deceased, of said County. The Petitioner have also applied for waiver of bond, and/or grant of certain powers contained in O.C.G.A. Section 53-12-264. All interested parties are hereby notified to show cause why said petition should not be granted. All objections to the Petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections, and must be filed with the Court on or before February 26, 2025. All pleadings/objections must be signed before a notary public or before a probate court clerk, and filing fees must be tendered with your pleadings/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.
/s/ Jonathan R. Fordham, Probate Judge

Joseph I. Marchant, LLC
Attorney at Law
Post Office Box 4218
Eastman, GA 31023
478/374-1505
January 30, February 6, 13, 20, 2025

C25-016
NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS
RE: ESTATE OF ROLAN LARRY SUMNER, DECEASED
All creditors of the Estate of Rolan Larry Sumner, deceased, late of Bleckley County, Georgia, are hereby notified to render their demands to the undersigned according to law, and all persons indebted to said Estate are required to make immediate payment to Administrator.
This 6th day of February, 2025.
David Rolan Sumner, Administrator
203 Berkley Road
PO Box 605
Cochran, GA 31014
February 13, 20, 27, March 7, 2025

C25-015

ONLINE
AUCTION

171.5± ACRES
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✓ 14 Ac of 2012 Planted Slash
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Call Sale Manager Greg Williamson in Vidalia @ 912-293-3429

ON-LINE BIDDING
OPENS: Tue, February 18th @ 9:00 A.M.
CLOSES: Thurs, February 20th @ 2:00 P.M.
See Website for Complete Terms of the Auction

HUDSON & MARSHALL AUCTION MARKETING
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HudsonMarshall.com
GAL 274

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF BLECKLEY COUNTY
STATE OF GEORGIA
IN RE: ESTATE OF RICHARD OLIVER BOYD, JR., DECEASED
ESTATE NO. 2024P91
PETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION
NOTICE
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:
Colt Richard Boyd has petitioned to be appointed Administrator of the Estate of RICHARD OLIVER BOYD, JR., deceased, of Bleckley County. (The petitioner has also applied for waiver of bond, waiver of reports, and/or grant of certain powers contained in O.C.G.A. Section 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 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.
Jonathan R. Fordham
Judge of the Probate Court
Bleckley County Probate Court
112 North Second Street
Cochran, GA 31014
478-934-3200 Ext. 4
February 6, 13, 20, 27, 2025

Twiggs Co. Legals

T25-005
NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS
IN RE: ESTATE OF SHEROL RENEA BLACKSHEAR
All creditors of the estate of Sherol Renea Blackshear late of Twiggs County, deceased, are hereby notified to render their demands to the undersigned according to law, and all persons indebted to law, and all persons indebted to said estate are required to make immediate payment. This 29th day of January, 2025.
Shalyssia Meonta Blackshear, Administrator
406 Cherry St, Danville, GA 31017
Sammy D. Hall Jr., Attorney for Petitioner
PO Box 1057 Macon, GA 31202-1057
February 6, 13, 20, 27, 2025

T25-006
STATE OF GEORGIA
COUNTY OF TWIGGS
NOTICE OF SALE UNDER POWER

Under and by virtue of the power of sale granted by **THOMAS WEBBER** and **SHELTON DAVISSON**, as grantors, to **BATTLE LUMBER CO., INC.,** as grantee, in that certain Deed to Secure Debt dated December 19, 2022, and recorded in the Office of the Clerk of the Superior Court of Twiggs County, Georgia, on December 21, 2022, in Deed Book 11A, Page(s) 677, et seq. (the "Deed to Sure Debt"), **BATTLE LUMBER CO., INC**. will offer for sale at public outcry before the Courthouse Door, in Twiggs County, Georgia, within the legal hours of sale on **March 4, 2025**, for CASH to the highest bidder, the purchaser paying the transfer tax, all costs of preparing and recording a deed of conveyance, ad valorem taxes and all other assessments or liens against the property, if any, the following-described property, to-wit:
SEE "EXHIBIT A" ATTACHED HERETO
The above-referenced Deed to Secure Debt was given to secure an indebtedness evidenced by the following: Promissory Note from THOMAS WEBBER and SHELTON DAVISSON ("Borrower") in the original principal amount of $278,158.50 payable to the order of BATTLE LUMBER CO., INC. dated December 19, 2022 (the "Promissory Note"), all with interest thereon, and also any renewals, extensions, or modifications of any such indebtedness in whole or in part and all future advances that were made by BATTLE LUMBER CO., INC.
The indebtedness secured by said Deed to Secure Debt has been and is again declared due and payable in full because of, among other events of default, the failure of Borrower to make payments when due in the manner provided in the Promissory Note and the fact that the Promissory Note has matured. The indebtedness remaining in default, the sale will be made for the purpose of applying the proceeds thereof to the payment of the indebtedness secured by the said Deed to Secure Debt, accrued interest thereon, expenses of the sale, attorneys' fees (notice of intention to collect attorneys' fees having been given) and all other sums secured by the Deed to Secure Debt, and the remainder, if any, shall be applied as provided by said Deed to Secure Debt and by law.
To the best of the undersigned's knowledge and belief, the property described on "Exhibit A" is in the possession of THOMAS WEBBER and SHELTON DAVISSON, or a tenant or tenants. Said property will be sold as the property of THOMAS WEBBER and SHELTON DAVISSON and subject to any outstanding ad valorem taxes (including taxes which are a lien, but are not yet due and payable), any matters which might be disclosed by an accurate survey and inspection of the property, any assessments, zoning ordinances, covenants, all liens, encumbrances, easements, restrictions or other matters of record that may have priority over said Deed to Secure Debt, if any. 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 Deed to Secure Debt.
In compliance with Official Code of Georgia Section 44-124-162.2, Grantee hereby states that the entity and individual with full authority to negotiate, amend, and modify all terms of the Deed to Secure Debt with the debtor are BATTLE LUMBER CO., INC., Attn: Craig Miller, P.O. Box 1147, Wadley, GA 30477; Telephone: (478) 252-5210. However, this statement does not imply that BATTLE LUMBER CO., INC. will in fact agree to negotiate, amend and modify the terms of the Deed to Secure Debt. Charles W. Wills, WILLS LAW FIRM, LLC, PO BOX 1620, THOMSON, GA 30824, Tel: 706-595-8100.

"EXHIBIT A"

All that tract or parcel of land situate, lying and being in Land Lot 1, 2 and 3 of the 25th Land District of Twiggs County, Georgia, being known and distinguished as Tract No. 2, containing 204.41 acres, more or less, according to that particular plat of survey prepared by Byron L. Farmer, Georgia Registered Land Surveyor, dated May 20, 2013 and recorded in Plat Book 10, Page 962, Clerk's Office, Twiggs Superior Court, which said plat is by this reference thereto incorporated herein for the purpose of a more particular and accurate description of said Tract No. 2 hereby conveyed.

While vacant, said property is known by Tax/Map Parcel No. T081 002 according to the Twiggs County Tax Commissioners Office.

The property hereinabove described and conveyed is the same and identical property conveyed to Battle Lumber Co., Inc. by Allen Family Holdings, LLLP by Limited Warranty Deed dated September 11, 2013 and recorded in Deed Book 9-J, Page 771, Clerk's Office, Twiggs Superior Court.

THE ABOVE DESCRIBED PROPERTY IS CONVEYED SUBJECT TO, Application and Questionnaire for Current Use Assessment of Bona Fide Agricultural Property beginning January 1, 2017 and ending December 31, 2026 and being recorded in Deed Book 10-A, Page 519, Clerk's Office, Twiggs Superior Court.

Said tract of land is conveyed subject to that easement in favor of Georgia Power Corporation dated January 4, 1967, which is recorded in Deed Book S, page 495, Clerk's Office, Twiggs County Superior Court, and that particular underground easement in favor of the Municipal Gas Authority of Georgia dated June 8, 1995, which is recorded in Deed Book 4X, page 166, Clerk's Office, Twiggs Superior Court.

This conveyance is made subject to all zoning ordinances, conditions, easements, restrictions and covenants of record.

Reference is hereby made to the above described plat and deed for the purpose of a more particular and accurate description of the property hereby conveyed.
February 6, 13, 20, 27, 2025

Wilkinson Co. Legals

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 ADMINISTRATION
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

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 ADMINISTRATION
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 JESS, 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.

LOCAL MATTERS
Georgia
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STATEWIDE CLASSIFIEDS FOR THE WEEK 2/9/25

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ELECTRICAL SERVICES: Reliable & experienced. Competitive rates. From simple household problems to installing a brand new electrical system, we can take care of it all! Call now and have the zip code of the service location when you call! 1-877-551-4766

NEED NEW FLOORING? Call today schedule a FREE in-home estimate on Carpeting & Flooring. Call Today! 1-877-771-6882

Eliminate gutter cleaning forever! LeafFilter, the most advanced debris-blocking gutter protection. Schedule a FREE LeafFilter estimate today. 20% off Entire Purchase. Plus 10% Senior & Military Discounts. Call 1-877-735-0477.

Prepare for power outages with Briggs & Stratton PowerProtect(TM) standby generators - the most powerful home standby generators available. Industry-leading comprehensive warranty - 7 years ($849 value.) Proudly made in the U.S.A. Call Briggs & Stratton 1-855-883-2938.

Replace your roof with the best looking and longest lasting material - steel from Erie Metal Roofs! Three styles and multiple colors available. Guaranteed to last a lifetime! Limited Time Offer – up to 50% off installation + Additional 10% off install (for military, health workers & 1st responders.) Call Erie Metal Roofs: 1-866-939-2151

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BATH & SHOWER UPDATES in as little as ONE DAY! Affordable prices - No payments for 18 months! Lifetime warranty & professional installs. Senior & Military Discounts available. Call: 1-844-592-3921

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MISCELLANEOUS

Omaha Steaks Wines. 12 world class wines (and bonus gifts) for ONLY $79.99 (plus s/h.) Save $160! 12 new wine selections plus a FREE $25 Omaha Steaks E-reward card every three months. Cancel anytime. 100% guarantee! Call 1-888-572-1957 and mention code AGJF002 or visit www.GetOSWine.com/sip139

BANKRUPTCY RELIEF! Help stop Creditor Harassment, Collection Calls, Repossession and Legal Actions! Speak to a Professional Attorney and Get the Help You NEED! Call NOW 855-968-5222

BEHIND ON YOUR MORTGAGE PAYMENTS? Threatened with foreclosure? Denied a loan modification? Let us help! Call the Homeowner Relief Line to speak with a mortgage specialist. 844-797-7162

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WANTED

I BUY OLD CONCERT posters, movie posters, lobby cards, pre-1970 comic books, 1930's blues 78's, (213) 944-9601 or streetsof2024@gmail.com.

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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

W25-010

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 b
ecause 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 t
hat 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

Ga. GOP House candidate loses suit to redo closely contested November election

Stanley Dunlap
Times Journal Post

A judge ruled Monday against Republican state House candidate Tracy Wheeler's bid to overturn her narrow Nov. 5 election loss to incumbent Democratic Rep. Mack Jackson.

Tifton Judicial circuit Senior Superior Court Judge Gary McCorvey ruled Monday that Wheeler failed to prove that there were enough votes or other systemic irregularities in the east Georgia district race to warrant a new election following the Nov. 5 election. McCorvey ruled that there was evidence of 14 improper votes cast in the House District 128 race, however there was not enough proof of other ineligible votes being cast in the district.

In order to overturn this election, the court would have to "presume" that at least 34 of the 44 "outsiders" actually voted in the contest, McCorvey wrote.

"Such presumptions are not allowed, and mere speculation as to how many, if any, of these 'outsiders' actually voted in this race' cannot be used to place in doubt the result of this election," McCorvey wrote. "Succinctly stated, voters being provided with an opportunity to vote in the wrong district does not equate to proof by a preponderance of evidence that such voters actually tainted the election by voting in the election at issue."

Following the Nov. 5 election, Wheeler filed the lawsuit seeking to invalidate the election because of irregularities due to several dozen voters casting incorrect ballots in the incorrect district for a race that Jackson won by 48 votes.

The legislative seat represents portions of Baldwin and McDuffie counties and the entirety of Hancock, Warren, Glascock and Washington counties.

Wheeler said in a statement Monday that she was grateful for the nearly 14,000 voters who supported her during the election.

"Since Nov. 6th, we have been involved in litigation to better understand the results, as there appeared to have been mistakes in how the election was administered," she said in a statement. "I firmly believe that all of our local election workers and volunteers acted in good faith and always aim to produce fair and accurate results. With that said, errors can happen.

"Today we learned that the judge examining this case decided the election results of November 5th should stand," Wheeler said. " I appreciate the time he dedicated to his decision."

The closely contested election went in the favor of House Democrats, who were unable to flip a string of seats in the northern Atlanta suburbs that were seen as the most competitive this year, leaving the GOP firmly in control of the chamber. Several House incumbents found themselves fighting for another term after last year's court-ordered redistricting do-over left them in a precarious spot.

Georgia Republicans have a 100-80 majority in the House after Democrats flipped two seats during the election. Democrats were unable to flip any seats in the state Senate, leaving the GOP's 33-23 edge there intact.

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.

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.

VALENTINE'S DAY WORD SEARCH

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

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

WORDS

ADORE
AFFECTION
BELOVED
BOYFRIEND
CANDY
CHAMPAGNE
CHERUB
CHOCOLATE
CUPID
DATE
FLOWERS
GIFTS
GIRLFRIEND
HEARTS
HUG
KISS
LOVE
MOVIE
POEM
RED
ROMANCE
ROSES
SWEETHEART
VALENTINE

CRYPTO FUN

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

Solve the code to discover words related to Valentine's Day.
Each number corresponds to a letter.
(Hint: 3 = R)

A. **23 14 3 18 16**
Clue: Greetings

B. **3 9 16 20 16**
Clue: Popular flowers

C. **3 9 19 14 24 23 20**
Clue: Strong feeling of attraction

D. **17 20 10 3 4 14 3 5**
Clue: Second month

Answers: A. cards B. roses C. romance D. February

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell
something pertaining to Valentine's Day.

O L V E

Answer: Love

GUESS WHO?

I am singer born in England on February 13, 1974. I liked performing while I was in primary school. I went on to join a popular boy band in 1990 that had many hits. My friend Elton John helped me face by substance abuse problems, and I've turned my life around.

Answer: Robbie Williams

WINGS OF WOMEN GOD'S
Three quarters of battered women who are employed are harassed at work by their abuser either by phone or in person
272-8000 or 800-WINGS-03

It pays to advertise in your local paper!

WEEKLY RECIPE

Cherry Bakewell Ice Cream

Ingredients
200 grams pitted cherries (about 1 cup)
450 milliliters double (heavy) cream (about 2 cups)
397 grams condensed milk (14 oz)
1 tsp almond extract
1/2 tsp pink food coloring

Ingredients to serve with:
cherries
toasted flaked almonds

Instructions

1.) Add the pitted cherries to a blender and blitz until smooth. Pass through a sieve to remove any lumps and set aside.

2.) Pour the cream into a bowl and whip to soft peaks.

3.) Put the condensed milk, almond extract, pink food coloring (if using) and puréed cherries into a separate bowl and stir to combine, then pour the mixture into a container, like a large loaf tin.

4.) Freeze for at least 5 to 6 hours, or preferably overnight so it has time to get the correct texture. Remove from the freezer about 20 minutes before serving to allow it to soften slightly. Scoop into bowls and serve topped with fresh cherries and toasted flaked almonds.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: WILKINSON COUNTY SCHOOLS HB581 OPT OUT

Wilkinson County Schools would like to announce its intent to opt out of the homestead exemption offered by House Bill 581.

HB 581, passed by the Georgia General Assembly in 2024, introduces a floating statewide homestead exemption that limits tax increases in taxable home values to the prior year's inflation rate.

The law allows local governing authorities to opt out of the homestead exemption following three public hearings. Wilkinson County Schools will hold the first hearing on February 10, 2025, at 9:30 A.M. at the Wilkinson County Schools Auditorium, 11471 Ga. Hwy. 57, Irwinton, GA 31042. The two remaining hearings will be held February 10, 2025, at 5:30 P.M. and February 17, 2025, at 6:00 P.M. at the Wilkinson County Schools Auditorium, 11471 Ga. Hwy. 57, Irwinton, GA 31042.

Following the public hearings, the Wilkinson County Board of Education will vote on the resolution to opt out of HB 581 before the March 1, 2025 deadline, during a called meeting on February 18, 2025, at 10:00 A.M. in the Wilkinson County Board of Education Board Room, located at 197 W Main Street, Irwinton, GA 31042.

INTENT TO OPT OUT OF HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION

The Wilkinson County Board of Education intends to opt out of the statewide adjusted base year ad valorem homestead exemption for the Wilkinson County School District.

All concerned citizens are invited to the public hearing on this matter to be held at the Wilkinson County Schools Auditorium, 11471 Ga. Hwy. 57, Irwinton, GA 31042, on February 10, 2025, at 9:30 A.M.

Times and places of additional public hearings on this matter will be held at the Wilkinson County Schools Auditorium, 11471 Ga. Hwy. 57, Irwinton, GA 31042, on February 10, 2025, at 5:30 P.M., and February 17, 2025, at 6:00 P.M.

Basketball region tournaments begin, baseball season around the corner

Micah Johnston
For the TJP

Region tournament time for high school basketball has finally arrived, and a few area teams are vying for postseason spots.

For the area's A-Division II teams, Twiggs County and Wilkinson County, the mission is simple: place in the top four and you earn a playoff spot.

Things get a little more complicated for Bleckley County, as the A-Division classification has the GHSA's new power ratings system in place. Under the new format, the private schools are removed from the brackets in classes 3A, 2A and A-Division I and placed in their own bracket.

This means teams that finish outside the top four have a chance to earn an at-large playoff spot via power rankings, which are constructed using a team's record, opponents' record and opponents' strength of schedule.

The Region 2 tournament for A-Division I is already underway, with the Bleckley County boys and girls teams both earning a No. 5 seed. This means they avoided the opening round of games Monday night but had to play their first tournament games in Tuesday's quarterfinals.

That means both squads will need two wins — with the second win coming on the road — to reach the top four. Should the girls defeat Dublin and the boys win over Jefferson County, both will have to travel to their next opponents.

For the girls, that would be East Laurens, an extremely strong No. 4 seed that has been ranked in Top 10 polls by multiple outlets at times this season. The boys would have to take on traditional power Dodge County.

The good news is that both teams have solid footing in the power ratings, giving them a back-up plan should a top-four tournament finish elude them.

The boys team is ranked No. 23 in the Post Season Rankings (PSR), and that's without the private schools removed from the rankings — at least five private schools sit ahead of the Royals in the boys rankings as of Tuesday. Bleckley County should have a playoff spot then, and a decent shot at home game if they can string enough tournament wins together.

The girls are No. 22 in PSR despite their 13-9 record, an unsurprising spot given their difficult region featuring six different teams that have been ranked in different Top 10 polls for the classification this year. Five other Region 2 teams sit ahead of the Lady Royals in PSR. Seven private schools sit ahead of Bleckley County in the rankings, giving them a similar shot at a home game.

For Wilkinson and Twiggs County, the region tournament will be do-or-die.

Both Twiggs County teams are in the lower parts of the six-team brackets for Region 5-A Division II. The girls are the bottom seed and played No. 3 Glascock County in Tuesday's opening round after the paper went to print. The boys earned the No. 4, playing Georgia Military College Tuesday.

Wilkinson County's girls team was in the same boat, earning the No. 4 seed and playing Georgia Military College.

Should those three teams win Tuesday, the semifinal matches will be Thursday night.

The Wilkinson County boys team earned a bye when it secured the No. 1 seed during the regular season. It was not a sure thing at any point, as the Warriors went on multiple losing and winning streaks and split the season series with region rival Hancock Central.

The Wilkinson County boys will play the winner of the Twiggs County and Glascock County game Thursday night. Should the Warriors win, they will play the region championship game at home Friday at 8:30 p.m.

Baseball season around the corner

With basketball wrapping up, baseball season is almost upon us. After a stellar season last year in which they reached the Elite 8 and notched a 23-8 record, Bleckley County will be one of the teams to watch in a busy Region 2-A Division I.

Though they fell to Prince Avenue Christian in the playoffs, the Royals continued a positive trend within their program. Bleckley County has made the playoffs in every season since 2013 and improved even further in recent seasons, winning at least 20 games in each of the last six years.

The Royals got started very early, playing West Laurens and powerhouse program Jeff Davis already at the beginning of February. They will face Calvary Baptist Friday at 4 p.m.

Wilkinson and Twiggs County will have tougher paths to success, as both schools are coming off difficult seasons.

The Warriors went 4-19 last season, making the playoffs thanks to their region finish but running into a buzzsaw in the playoffs in the form of Lake Oconee Academy, an eventual Final Four team. The Cobras struggled to open the year and ended up forfeiting the majority of their schedule.

Wilkinson is scheduled to take on Southwest in Macon Friday, while Twiggs County will face Treutlen in a Thursday game and play GSCI this Friday.

Twiggs County Board of Commissioners
Job Posting: Laborer/CDL Truck Driver – Road Department

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

Job Summary:

The **Laborer/CDL Truck Driver** is responsible for operating commercial vehicles and performing manual labor to support the maintenance and repair of county roads and infrastructure. This position involves driving and operating **dump trucks, lowboy trailers, and other heavy vehicles**, as well as assisting with general road maintenance duties such as grading, debris removal, and drainage system repairs. 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.

- Operates **CDL-class vehicles**, including **dump trucks, lowboys, and other commercial trucks** to transport materials, equipment, and debris.
- Assists in **road construction, repair, and maintenance** by hauling gravel, asphalt, and other materials.
- Loads and unloads **construction materials, pipes, and road equipment**.
- Assists with the **installation and maintenance of culverts, ditches, and drainage systems**.
- Performs **manual labor**, including **shoveling, grading, and clearing debris from roadways**.
- Operates **hand tools, power tools, and light equipment**, such as chainsaws, compactors, and weed trimmers.
- Flags traffic and ensures proper **work zone safety measures**.
- Performs **routine maintenance and safety checks** on trucks and equipment to ensure they are in good working condition.
- Assists in **storm cleanup and emergency response efforts**, including removing downed trees and debris from roads.
- Maintains records of **trips, fuel usage, and work completed** as required.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities: late ad

The Laborer/CDL Truck Driver must be knowledgeable in the following areas:

- Safe operation of **dump trucks, lowboys, and other CDL-required vehicles**.
- Road maintenance techniques, including **pothole patching, grading, and drainage repairs**.
- Knowledge of **state and federal traffic laws related to commercial driving**.
- Ability to perform **heavy manual labor for extended periods in various weather conditions**.
- Basic mechanical skills to perform **routine maintenance and safety inspections** on vehicles.
- Strong attention to **work zone safety procedures** and traffic control methods.
- Ability to **follow instructions, work independently, and collaborate with a team**.

Minimum Qualifications:

- **Valid Class A or Class B Commercial Driver's License (CDL) issued by the State of Georgia**.
- At least **one (1) year of experience** operating commercial trucks and performing manual labor.
- Must be able to lift **up to 50 pounds** and perform strenuous physical labor.
- High school diploma or GED preferred but not required.

Necessary Special Requirements:

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

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.