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The Leader Tribune

Peach County's Newspaper

Vol. 138, Issue No. 14 • 1 Section • 12 Pages

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 08, 2026

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State Rep. Patty Stinson wins residency challenge to her candidacy

By Zoe Hammond
News Editor

PEACH COUNTY, Ga. — Patty Marie Stinson has been reaffirmed as State Representative for District 150. A state judge ruled in her favor in a residency challenge to her candidacy on Wednesday, March 31, according to court documents.

Last week, Michael Mixon, a Unadilla businessman, wrote a letter to Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, alleging that Stinson did not legally reside at the address she used to qualify for re-election in House District 150.

Stinson serves as a Georgia State representative for District 150. However, Mixon argued that Stinson isn't qualified to represent the district, as the address listed is a commercial property. He further alleged that Stinson did not reside within the district boundaries.

"The reason why I believe Rep. Stinson is not qualified to see and hold public office for which she is offering is that her voter registration address and listed residency of 133 Railroad St. Butler, Ga. 31006 is a commercial property for business use and not for residential living. She domiciles in a property outside of House District 150," Mixon wrote.

However, after a hearing on Monday, March 30, Administrative Law Judge Kimberly Schorer disagreed with Mixon's claim after a review of documentation from Stinson, including her license, utility bills, tax records,



Photo Contributed
State Rep. Patty Marie Stinson

and similar documents, which show that she lives in a "tiny house" next to her family's funeral home on 133 Railroad Street.

In a press release from Stinson's office, she responded to the challenge and qualifications of candidacy from Mixon.

"The core issue raised in the challenge was that I listed 133 Railroad Street, Butler as my address when I qualified for re-election, an address I have used consistently for several years. Mr. Mixon argued that 133 Railroad Street is the address of a funeral home and therefore not a "traditional" place for someone to live," Stinson said. "My response is simple: traditional or not, it is not a crime to live on the property of a funeral home if one chooses to do so. I have never stated that I reside inside the funeral home itself."

Stinson further explained that after the passing of her husband, she tore down their original home and had a small trailer

converted into her permanent residence.

"In 2021, after the passing of my husband, Darryl K. Bentley, I demolished the brick house on the property and renovated the small trailer, converting it into my tiny home," Stinson stated.

Stinson stated that she maintains a place in Atlanta for the General Assembly. Previously, Stinson had used hotels during her stay in Atlanta, but after her cancer diagnosis, she established a stable place for the 40-day sessions.

"Like many South Georgia legislators, I maintain a place in Atlanta to stay while the General Assembly is in session. For years, I checked in and out of hotels during the 40-day session. After my cancer diagnosis, that constant moving became too difficult, so I secured a stable place to stay while working at the Capitol," Stinson stated. "Even outside the 40-day session, legislative work continues year-round through committee meetings and other responsibilities. Now that the Judge has ruled that I may remain on the ballot, my focus is exactly where it has always been, working on behalf of all the people of Georgia House District 150."

House District 150 includes Taylor, Dooly, and Macon counties and parts of Peach County. Stinson, a Democrat, is seeking an eighth term and is expected to face Republican Cary Lee Moore, a Sumter County insurance agent, this fall.

Peach County Sheriff's Office reports bomb threat at Lane Southern Orchards



Photo Contributed

Lane Southern Orchards in Fort Valley, GA

By Zoe Hammond
News Editor

FORT VALLEY, Ga. — The Peach County Sheriff's Office has confirmed that "operations are back to normal" after a bomb threat was reported at Lane Southern Orchards on Monday, March 30.

According to a press release from the PCSO, the call came in around 10:44 a.m., and multiple agencies, including the Peach County Sheriff's Office, Fort Valley Police Department, Peach County Fire Department, and Peach County EMS, were immediately dispatched to the scene. The Bibb County Sheriff's Office Explosive Unit and Monroe County Sheriff's Office Explosives K-9 unit also assisted in securing the scene.

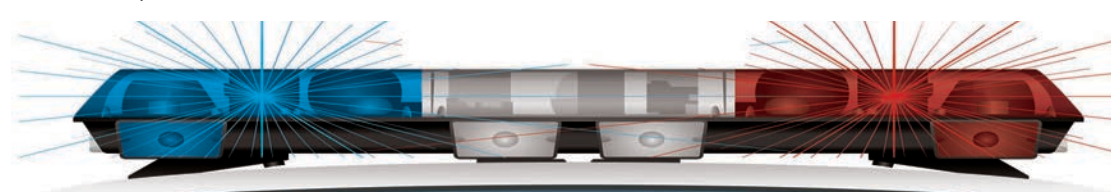
Peach County Sheriff Buck Shannon stated in the press release, which was posted on Tuesday, March 31, that "operations are back to normal" at Lane Southern Orchards.

Wendy Barton, Marketing/PR Director at Lane Southern Orchards, says that Lane's received

an anonymous call Monday morning, stating that an explosive device had been placed somewhere inside the building. Management took this threat seriously and immediately evacuated the building and notified the Peach County Sheriff's Office. After a thorough search of the building, authorities found no evidence of an explosive device and deemed the call was a hoax and that it was safe for the staff at Lane's to return to work.

"We would like to offer our thanks to the Peach County Sheriff's Office, the Peach County Fire Department/EMS, the Macon-Bibb County Sheriff's Office and all other first responders that came to assist us with this unusual and stressful situation. Their prompt and professional response was very much appreciated," Barton stated.

The Leader Tribune is working to learn more about the bomb threat. Further updates will be provided as more details become available.



FVPD investigating drive-by shooting on Pine Street

By Zoe Hammond
News Editor

FORT VALLEY, Ga. — The Fort Valley Police Department is investigating a drive-by shooting that occurred around 2 p.m. on Tuesday, March 31, according to interim Police Chief David Wilson.

The drive-by shooting took place within the 800

block of Pine Street. The suspects involved were described as two young men in a dark-colored Sedan.

The FVPD reported that there were no injuries. This case remains under active investigation. Anyone with information related to this incident is encouraged to contact the Fort Valley Police Department at (478) 825-3383.

FVPD investigating apartment building shooting at Indian Oaks Apartments

By Zoe Hammond
News Editor

FORT VALLEY, Ga. — The Fort Valley Police Department is investigating an overnight shooting that damaged an apartment building on Sunday, March 29.

According to the FVPD, shots were fired at around 2:11 a.m. Sunday morning at the Indian

Oaks apartment complex which resulted in one building being struck by gunfire.

Authorities stated that there were no reported injuries.

This case remains under active investigation. Anyone with information related to this incident is encouraged to contact the Fort Valley Police Department at (478) 825-3383.

Peach County man dead after ATV crash, according to coroner

By Zoe Hammond
News Editor

PEACH COUNTY, Ga. — A Peach County man is dead after a four-wheeler crash in Fort Valley, according to Peach County Coroner Kerry Rooks.

Rooks said the crash happened on Saturday, March 28. Bradley Williams, 36, was taken to Atrium Health Navicent Hospital in Macon and died on Tuesday, March 31, at around 2:30 a.m.

According to an incident report from the Peach County Sheriff's Office, a deputy spotted a moped and two 4-wheeled ATVs merging onto Spruce

Street. Spruce Street is a city street, and four-wheelers are not permitted on city streets.

The deputy noted that Williams was not wearing a helmet and the ATV he was riding did not have a license plate, the report states. When Williams passed the moped in a no-passing zone, the deputy initiated a traffic stop.

According to the report, Williams turned around to look over his left shoulder at the patrol vehicle and began steering the ATV left. When he attempted to correct his direction, he over corrected, shifting the ATV's center of gravity and

causing the vehicle to veer toward a power pole. Williams then drove into a curb, was ejected from his seat, and struck the pole.

The deputy notified Peach County E911 of the crash and requested Peach County EMS and Fort Valley FD to be en route to the scene. They also requested the GA State Patrol to be en route to complete a crash report.

This is a developing story. The Leader Tribune will provide updates as new information becomes available.



\$1 Million Georgia Lottery Scratcher Purchased in Fort Valley

By Georgia Lottery Press Release

ATLANTA (April 2, 2026) – A Georgia Lottery player won the \$1 million top prize playing the 2nd Edition Billionaire Club scratch-off game. The lucky ticket was purchased at Knoxville Tobacco Mart, 906 Knoxville Street in Fort Valley. The player claimed their winnings on April 1 and selected the lump sum cash option of \$535,398.06.

Last week, Georgia Lottery players claimed \$48,427,289 in prizes from scratch-off tickets alone.

In addition, a Brunswick resident won \$72,000 playing the 50X the Luck Linked Wins Diggi Game on the Georgia Lottery mobile app on April 1.

As with all Georgia Lottery games, proceeds from scratchers and Diggi Games benefit education in the state of Georgia. Media kit and game logos are available at the Georgia Lottery Press Center.

About Diggi Games
Diggi Games are available ex-



clusively the Georgia Lottery website and mobile app—offering players the chance to win anytime, anywhere in Georgia. As with all other Georgia Lottery games, proceeds from Diggi Games benefit education in the state of Georgia.

About Georgia Lottery Corporation

Since its first year, the Georgia Lottery Corp. has returned more than \$30.6 billion to the state of Georgia for education. All Georgia Lottery profits go to pay for specific educational programs, including Georgia's

HOPE Scholarship Program and Georgia's Pre-K Program. More than 2.3 million students have received HOPE, and more than 2.2 million 4-year-olds have attended the statewide, voluntary prekindergarten program.

For more information on the Georgia Lottery Corp., please visit: www.galottery.com

Play Responsibly – Be an Informed Player – It's All About Fun! Learn more here.

Must be 18 or older to try or buy.

Georgia Republicans push through last-minute income and property tax cuts

By Ty Tagami
Bureau Chief

Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — Georgia House and Senate Republicans with competing agendas managed to push through income and property tax cuts as the curtain closed on the 2026 Georgia legislation session after midnight Friday.

The Senate did not get its elimination of income taxes. The House did not get its elimination of property taxes.

But both taxes would become smaller if Gov. Brian Kemp signs the two bills into law.

Owing to the late hour, Senate Republicans had to repurpose a hemp farming bill to send a property tax cut to the House.

The measure would basically shift money from consumers' right pocket to their left: the

property taxes on their homes would be reduced by the income from a new penny sales tax.

The state House had had a similar idea, but it ran afoul of the state Constitution. A two-thirds vote was required for adoption, and Democrats opposed it, denying passage of House Bill 1116 in early March.

So the Senate came up with a legal workaround, devising 159 taxing districts superimposed over the boundaries of Georgia's 159 counties.

Sen. Blake Tillery, R-Vidalia, presented Senate Bill 33, formerly the hemp bill and now containing a mutation of HB 1116, on the Senate floor less than half an hour before midnight Thursday.

It passed despite firm opposition from Democrats, the minority party.

In the House, as the clock ticked toward 1 a.m., Rep. Shaw Blackmon, R-Bonaire, who'd been leading the charge on the House's primary agenda of property tax reduction, acknowledged that the cut would pass by hitchhiking on a Senate bill.

He recounted a line from a favorite Marvel movie, involving the character Dr. Strange: "it's not about you," Blackmon said. "And we're going to do what's best for the taxpayer."

House Republicans sent the bill to Kemp, overriding opposition from Democrats, also in the minority in that chamber.

Later, House Speaker Jon Burns, R-Newington, expressed mixed emotions about the outcome.

LAST-MINUTE
CONTINUED PG 11A

Sen. Ossoff, Rep. Kiggans Uncover Foster Children Locked Up Due to Lack of Foster Care Placements

By the office of Jon Ossoff, U.S. Senator for Georgia

Washington, D.C. — U.S. Senator Jon Ossoff's bipartisan investigation has found children are being locked up due to a lack of foster care placements.

Today, Sen. Ossoff and Congresswoman Jen Kiggans (R-VA-02) released the second report from their bipartisan investigation into the incarceration of children with special needs in juvenile detention facilities around the country, uncovering that children are being

incarcerated due to lack of foster care placements.

In Spring 2024, Sen. Ossoff and Rep. Kiggans surveyed facilities about what circumstances lead to the prolonged detention of children with mental health conditions and children who have not been charged with offenses.

Survey responses, combined with public reports, indicate that in at least seven states total, children were incarcerated due to lack of foster care placements.

In survey responses, four fa-

cilities in four states reported incarcerating children who had not been charged with any crime due to a lack of foster care placements. These facilities reported that children were detained without charges after being "removed from their homes for abuse or neglect," because "no foster care placements were available."

"It is unacceptable that children are being locked up instead of being placed in a home with

FOSTER CARE
CONTINUED PG 3A



PUBLIC NOTICE

City of Fort Valley – Planning & Zoning Committee Board Openings

The City of Fort Valley is currently seeking dedicated and community-minded individuals to serve on the Planning and Zoning Board.

This board plays a vital role in shaping the future growth and development of our city by reviewing zoning requests, land use proposals, and planning matters that impact our community.

If you are interested in serving, please submit a strong letter of interest outlining:

- Your background and qualifications
- Relevant experience in planning, development, construction, real estate, or community service
- Your vision and commitment to the responsible growth of Fort Valley
- Must be a resident of the City of Fort Valley

Letters should clearly express your desire to serve and your understanding of the responsibilities of board membership.

Please submit your letter of interest to Mrs. Diane Brown, City Clerk, at the Fort Valley City Hall-204 West Church Street or email to dbrown@fortvalleyga.org

We encourage residents who are passionate about the future of our community to apply.

Closing Date: 5:00 P.M., April 14, 2026 .

HOME DESERVES A HEADLINE.

Your neighbors deserve to know what's happening at the school board, the commission chambers, the places that shape daily life in Middle and South Georgia.

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— Georgia Trust for — LOCAL NEWS



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Police Beat

★★★★★★★★★★

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

Byron Arrests/Citations

Bell, Dejuantez Larenz, 31, Macon, GA: Terroristic Threats And Acts

Blount, Kelsey Jayne, 33, Fort Valley, GA: Failure To Appear

Brooks, Randy Lashaun, 42, Miami, FL: Speeding In Excess Of Maximum Limits, Driving Without A Valid License

Buchanan, Kimberly Elaine, 46, Forsyth, GA: Probation Violation (When Probation Terms Are Altered) - Misdemeanor

Clark, Olicia Lakeisha, 30, Macon, GA: Driving With Suspended License, No Insurance

Dassau, Kessler Quiney, 49, Byron, GA: DUI - Alcohol Less Safe

Farmer, Devan Antonio, 33, Tallahassee, FL: Possession Of Marijuana, Less Than 1 Oz, Possession Of Drug Related Object, Driving With Suspended License, Speeding In Excess Of Maximum Limits

Lewis, Jeremy Lantrel, 41, Fort Valley, GA: Tag: Removes Or Affix To Conceal/ Misrepresenting Id Of Vehicle, Window Tint Violation, DUI - Alcohol 0.08 GRAMS Or More 21 YOA Or Over, Knowingly Driving With Suspended/Canceled Registration, No Insurance, Driving With Suspended License

Mobley, Xavier Gerred, 30, Sanford, FL: Probation Violation

Nash, Corey Donwan, 27, Byron, GA: Probation Violation (When Probation Terms Are Altered) - Misdemeanor

Puello, Kayden Amir, 21, Warner Robins, GA: Theft By Shoplifting

Ross, Alesha Lynn, 55, Byron, GA: Apprehension Of A Wanted Person

Stinson, Hilderard Brooke, 42, Cochran, GA: Probation Violation

Thomas, John Wade, 53, Warner Robins, GA: Driving With Suspended License

Fort Valley Arrests/Citations

Garcia, Aguila Hugo Antonio, 40, Fort Valley, GA: Removing Or Affixing License Plate With Intent To Conceal Or Misrepresent, Driving Under Influence Drugs/Alcohol, Failure To Maintain Lane, Expired Or No Drivers License

Ramirez, Joseph Manuel, 45, Warner Robins, GA: Disorderly Conduct

Peach County Sheriff's Office

Arrests/Citations

Alvarado-Sanchez, Gustavo, 34, Byron, GA: Contempt Of Superior Court

Fredrick, Jamarcus Rashun, 24, Fort Valley, GA: Armed Robbery

Gaddy, Kadarius, 32, Roberta, GA: Obstructing Or Hindering Law Enforcement Officers, Obstructing Or Hindering Law Enforcement Officers, Criminal Trespass

Greene, Wayne, 45, Gray, GA: Probation Violation (When Probation Terms Are Altered) - Misdemeanor

Jenkins, Monica Lisa, 58, Byron, GA: Improper Stopping, Driving Under The Influence/Alcohol, Failure To Obey Stop Sign, Failure To Maintain Lane

Lumpkins, Kelvin Bernardo, 37, Musella, GA: Damage Property

Lupica, Paul Joseph, 65, Fort Valley, GA: Unlawful Conduct During 911 Call

Perez, Jesus Ozuna, 22, Macon, GA: Burglary 2nd Degree, Criminal Damage To Property - 2nd Degree, Entering Automobile Or Other Motor Vehicle With Intent To Commit Theft Or Felony, Loitering And Prowling, Loitering And Prowling

Peters, Larry Wayne, 39, Wesley Chapel, GA: Possession Of A Schedule II Controlled Substance, Marijuana-Possess Less Than 1 Oz., Speeding In Excess Of Maximum Limits (State Speed And Zone Limits), Window Tint Violation

Roberts, Isaiah Tyrese, 35, Perry, GA: Failure To Appear - Felony

Troup, Keandre Rashawn, 27, Fort Valley, GA: Driving Under The Influence/Drugs, Marijuana-Possess Less Than 1 Oz., Window Tint Violation, Failure To Yield Right Of Way To Emergency Veh

Truman, Howard Wayne, 63, Byron, GA: Driving While License Suspended, Fleeing Or Attempting To Elude Police Officer, Obstructing Or Hindering Law Enforcement Officers, Obstructing Or Hindering Law Enforcement Officers, Failure To Maintain Insurance, Operation Of Unregistered Vehicle Or Vehicle Without Current License Plate, Revalidation Decal, Or County Decal, Low Speed Vehicle On Highway

Walker, Christopher Eugene, 37, Atlanta, GA: Trafficking In Cocaine, Illegal Drugs, Marijuana, Or Methamphetamine, Crossing State/County Guard Lines With Weapons, Intoxicants, Drugs Without Consent, Possession Of Marijuana, Knowingly Driving Motor Vehicle On Suspended, Canceled, Or Revoked Registration, Driving Under The Influence/Drugs, Failure To Maintain Lane, Seat Belt Violation

Wisekal, Brian Jayson, 24, Perry, GA: Failure To Maintain Lane, Failure To Exercise Due Care, Driving Under Influence Drugs/Alcohol

Georgia State Patrol Arrests

Howell, Rodney Almarcus, 54, Fort Valley, GA: Failure To Maintain Lane, Following Too Closely, Improper/Erratic Lane Change, Obscured Or Missing License Plate, Driving Under Influence Drugs/Alcohol

Peach County Community CALENDAR

email: news@theleadertribune.com



**NOTICE
PUBLIC MEETINGS
CITY OF FORT VALLEY
MAYOR AND COUNCIL**
LOCATION: CITY HALL
204 W. CHURCH ST
FORT VALLEY, GA 31030

**WORK SESSION MEETING
Tuesday, April 14, 2026
Time: 06:00 P.M.**
Meeting ID: 815 4052 2653
Passcode: 673635

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING
Thursday, April 16, 2026
Time: 06:30 P.M.**
Join Zoom Meeting
Meeting ID: 846 3683 8391
Passcode: 979322

**May 2
Battle of Byron
Festival**
Saturday, May 2, 2026.
from 10:00AM to 6:00PM in downtown Byron, Georgia. Come join us at The Battle of Byron Festival for games, food and fun!

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

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

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

**2026-2027 FORT VALLEY
HEAD START
RECRUITMENT**
700 Spruce St, Ft. Valley, GA 31030. (478)825-8584.
Ages 3 -5. Required Documentation: Proof of birth, Social Security Card, Immunization 3231, Medicaid/Insurance card, Proof of income, Well child check, Dental exam, GA public health 3300 (if applicable), www.mgcaa.org

**American Legion
Meetings**
Veterans, consider joining the American Legion Frederick Withoft Post 76 in Peach County, GA. We are an organization of Veterans supporting Veterans and the local community.
Regular Post Meetings are held on the Third Thursday of Every Month, Social Hour with American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, and Guests at 1700 (5:00pm) followed by the Meeting Start at 1800 (6:00pm) at 1212 Peach Parkway, Fort Valley, GA 31030.
We can be reached at our Facebook Page (*American Legion Post 76 - Peach County GA*) or via e-mail (*legionpost76pcga@gmail.com*). All Veterans and Spouses are encouraged to participate.

ATTENTION: Veterans
Veterans who would like to get together for brotherhood,

please meet for dinner at Mi Ranchito at 311-A Vineville St, Fort Valley, GA on 12 August 2023 at 6:30 p.m./1830. Please RSVP to Ernest Cooling by emailing ecooling79@gmail.com. If further information is needed, please call me at (478) 955-8850.

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

**Peach County Board of
Commissioners
Work Sessions**
The Peach County Board of Commissioners holds **Work Sessions* on the first Tuesday of each month** at 5pm in Commission Chambers located at 213 Persons Street in Fort Valley.
Regular Meetings* are held on the second Tuesday of each month at 6:00pm in Commission Chambers located at 213 Persons Street in Fort Valley.
The Board also conducts Public Hearings to consider zoning requests at 6:30pm during regularly scheduled monthly meetings.
*Scheduling may differ due to holidays and unforeseen circumstances. Prior notice will be given. Visit our website for more information: <https://www.peachcounty.net/board-of-commissioners.cfm>

**Fort Valley Utility
Commission**
500 Anthoine St, Fort Valley. The Commission doors are open to customers from 8:00am - 5:00pm.
Public Work Session Meeting first Monday of every month at 4 p.m.
Regular Meeting every second Monday of each month at 6 p.m.

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

**Peach Public Libraries
Board Of Trustees
REGULAR MEETING
THOMAS PUBLIC LIBRARY,
FORT VALLEY, GA**
Peach Public Libraries Board of Trustees meets the second Thursday of February, April, June, August, October, and December at 5:15pm in the Meeting Room at Thomas Public Library, Fort Valley, unless otherwise specified.

**Peach County
Historical Society
Meeting**
Meets **4th Tuesday** each month at **6:00pm**. If anyone has

school annuals of the past the Historical Society would like to have them. Donations welcome. Contact: Lrgiles77@gmail.com

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

**Peach County Retired
Educators Association**
The Peach County Retired Educators Association will meet on the first Monday of each month at 2pm. The meeting will be held at Trinity Baptist Church 507 State Unversity Drive. For further info. please contact Dr. Quintin Green (478)951-1911.

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

**Compassionate
Friends Middle GA
Chapter**
We are a national nonprofit organization dedicated to helping bereaved parents by providing highly personal comfort, hope and support to every family experiencing the death of a child, a brother, sister or a grandchild and helping others to better assist the grieving family. We need not walk alone.
Byron meeting: 4th Thursday of every month. 7-9pm. Byron Baptist Church 100 W White Rd, Byron, Ga 21008.
Macon meeting location for TCF: Rock Springs Church, 6601 Zebulon Rd, Macon, GA. Please contact Chapter Leaders for more information: Karla Chidester - 478-954-4592, or Teresa Tompkins - 478-319-3526, or visit www.compassionatefriends.org.

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

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

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

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

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FOSTER CARE CONTINUED FROM 2A

caregivers that can provide a stable environment. The findings of our bipartisan investigation should concern us all, and I will continue working in the Senate to expose the mistreatment of children,” Sen. Ossoff said.
Congresswoman Kiggans said, “Children who have experienced trauma, abuse, and neglect deserve stable environments to receive care and treatment. This second report shows flaws in our existing system. I remain committed to strengthening protections for these vulnerable children.”
Last month, Sen. Ossoff and Rep. Kiggans released the first report from their bipartisan investigation into the incarceration of children with special needs in juvenile detention facil-

ities around the country, which uncovered that kids with special needs were locked up and incarcerated instead of getting the mental health care they need in their communities.
Among the bipartisan report's findings:
• In at least seven states total, children are incarcerated due to lack of foster care placements.
• Four facilities across four states reported incarcerating children who have not been charged with any offense and were “removed from their homes for abuse or neglect” because “no foster care placements were available.”
• A juvenile detention facility in the Midwest reported on a case involving a severely autistic child who was reportedly held in a juvenile detention center

because his mother was incarcerated. The facility reported that this child was eventually released into the custody of the state agency administering foster care, but this child reportedly had to sleep at the agency offices because no placements were available after he was transferred from the detention center.
These findings are reflected in Sen. Ossoff's 2023-2024 investigation into the abuse and neglect of children in Georgia's foster care system, where juvenile court judges testified before the U.S. Senate that the state foster care agency in Georgia proposed that the judges consider prolonging detention of foster youth, including children with special needs, due to inadequate foster care placements.

Does God Grade On the Curve?



By Billy Powell
Parables to Ponder
LT Columnist

My high school teachers at Perry—Ms. Florence Harrison, Ms. Carpenter, Ms. Caroline Smith, Ms. Coleman, Mr. Earl Marshall-- didn't grade on the curve, but my college teachers did so on rare occasions, particularly when a high percentage of the class failed to make a passing mark. When the teacher announced that the distribution of grades would conform to the statistical bell-shaped curve, the class breathed a sign of relief because a majority of those with low scores would make a passing grade. For example, by grading on the curve, a student who answered only 60-percent of the questions correctly --

normally a D grade—would be elevated to a “C” grade or possibly a “B minus”. Those scoring 80 to 89—a B grade-- might wind up with an “A”. Of course those scoring very low, say in the 20s to 40s, still received failing grades. In effect, when normal distribution patterns are applied to class test scores skewed to the low end, poorly performing students are unduly rewarded.

Does God grade on a curve, and if He did, how would He? Well, let's estimate that each person averages one-decision every hour to do either the right thing or the wrong thing. That estimate produces 24-decisions a day. Of course the right thing could be a smile and not a frown or the wrong thing could be failing to help someone in need. We are talking about sins of commission as well as omission. To make a passing score of 70-percent or a “C” grade based on 24 daily decisions, a total of 17 decisions must result in actions that produce righteous behavior in keeping with God's moral laws. By grading on the curve, a majority of those making less than 70-percent of their decisions righteously might

wind up with passing grades.

Although this grading system might sound good and compensate for our sinful nature, God's word does not allow this option. James 2:10 stipulates “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.” Romans 3:22 confirms that “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” Consequently, the scriptural ground rules disallow any tolerance of sin. Therefore, we are all “F” students in God's eyes and no one, regardless of how saintly, can hope to please God. No wonder the Apostle Paul exclaimed, “What a wretched man am I. Who will deliver me from this body of sin and death?” Then Paul supplied the answer, “Thanks be to God, Jesus Christ our Lord will.” God's wrath does not await those who walk with Christ Jesus in faith for He has already paid the penalty for our sins. Therefore, when we stand before the final judgment, God will not view us as the sinful creatures we really are, but will see us clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

HAMMOND

CONTINUED FROM 4A

and ages. Anyone can experience or perpetrate sexual violence.”

Most sexual assaults are committed by someone the victim knows. Studies show that approximately 80%-90% of women reporting sexual assaults knew their assailant, whether they be a friend, current or former partner, co-worker, neighbor, or family member.

Sexual violence can occur in person or online. It can happen anywhere and at any time. The majority of assaults occur in places ordinarily thought to be safe, such as homes, cars, and offices. Some examples of online sexual violence include posting or sharing sexual pictures of someone without their consent or non-consensual sexting.

It should be made clear that I am someone who abhors any form of victim-blaming. Victim-blaming is defined as when the victim of a crime or any wrongful act is held entirely or partially at fault for the harm that befell them. Phrases such as “What did they expect, walking home alone at night?” or “They probably shouldn't have drunk so much.” or “But what were they wearing?” These are all examples of victim-blaming.

Victim blaming often revolves around actions that a victim could have taken (or not taken) to avoid experiencing abuse. However, in reality, violence and abuse will happen regardless of the victim's choices.

Whether intentional or unintentional, victim blaming can cause serious harm to survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence, leaving them feeling responsible for their abuser's actions, therefore increasing feelings of shame and guilt. Blaming victims for their own abuse is never acceptable; abusers are solely to blame. No one deserves to be abused.

Sexual assault is never the victim's fault. Sexual assault is a violent attack on an individual, not a spontaneous crime of sexual passion. For a victim, it is a humiliating and degrading act. No one “asks” for or deserves this type of attack.

The Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services (CONNSACS) and Southern Connecticut State University wrote an article, “Rape Culture, Victim Blaming, And The Facts,” where they discuss some facts about sexual assault. They write that “Sexual assault is motivated by hostility, power, and control. Sexual assaults are not motivated by sexual desire. Unlike animals, humans are capable of controlling how they choose to act on or express sexual urges.”

One argument I see often, especially when someone famous or noteworthy is accused of assaulting someone, is that the person is making the claim for publicity. It happened when Bill Cosby was accused by over 60 women of sexually assaulting them. I want you to take a moment, without looking up the information, can you name any of the 60+ women who accused him?

The article by Southern Connecticut State University states that reported sexual assaults are true, with very few exceptions. According to the Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, only 2% of reported rapes are false. This is the same rate of false reporting as other major crime reports.

The CDC collected data that shows how rampant the issue of sexual violence is. I have provided the information below.

Sexual violence is common. Here are the numbers. Over half of women and almost 1 in 3 men have experienced sexual violence involving physical contact during their lifetimes. One in 4 women and about 1 in 26 men have experienced completed or attempted rape. About 1 in 9 men were made to penetrate someone during their lifetime. Additionally, 1 in 3 women and about 1 in 9 men experienced sexual harassment in a public place.

Sexual violence starts early. More than 4 in 5 female rape survivors reported that they were first raped before age 25, and almost half were first raped as a minor. Nearly 8 in 10 male rape survivors reported that

they were made to penetrate someone before age 25, and about 4 in 10 were first made to penetrate as a minor.

Sexual violence disproportionately affects some groups. Women and racial and ethnic minority groups experience a higher burden of sexual violence.

I hope that these numbers have helped put into perspective just how prevalent sexual violence is and can help in some way. Below I have a list of resources for getting help regarding rape, sexual assault, and domestic violence. If you or a loved one needs help, please reach out and get the assistance you need.

Rape Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN); 1-800-656-4673 or <https://rainn.org>

RAINN Campus Violence; <https://rainn.org/articles/staying-safe-campus>

National Sexual Violence Resource Center; <https://www.nsvrc.org>

National Center for Victims of Crime, Victim Connect Resource Center; 1-855-484-2846 or <https://victimconnect.org>

National Center for Victims of Crime: <http://www.victimsof-crime.org>

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233, 1-800-787-3224, or <https://www.thehotline.org>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255 or <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

National Human Trafficking Hotline: 1-888-373-7888 or <https://humantraffickinghotline.org>

National Indigenous Women's Resource Center: 1-855-649-7299 or www.niwrcc.org

National Child Abuse Hotline/Child Help: 1-800-422-4453 or <https://www.childhelp.org/contact>.

Child Welfare League of America: 202-638-2952 or www.cwla.org.

National Teen Dating Abuse Hotline: 1-866-331-9474 or www.loveisrespect.org.

Break the Cycle: (202) 824-0707 or www.breakthecycle.org.



CHURCH & LOCAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

email: news@theleadertribune.com

USHER'S TEMPLE CME & THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA EXTENSION PRESENT THE EXPANDED FOOD & NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM (EFNEP)

Each Wednesday at 11:30am in April. **Virtually on Wednesdays in May at 11:30am thru May 20, 2026.**

The program helps Georgia families eat better for less! EFNEP offers practical nutrition and physical activity information, food safety education, food resource management strategies, and recipe demonstrations within community settings.

Come to enjoy a free lunch and learn new recipes. Location: Usher's Temple CME, 411 Railroad Street, Fort Valley, GA 31030, 478-825-5106

USHER'S TEMPLE CME CHURCH

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

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

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

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

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

BAHA'I COMMUNITY OF PEACH COUNTY

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

COME PRAISE THE LORD OVER ZOOM

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

CHRISTIAN FAITH BAPTIST CHURCH

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

FORT VALLEY METHODIST CHURCH

301 W. Church Street (478)825-2762

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

FT VALLEY PRESBYTERIAN

CHURCH (behind Courthouse)

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

FRIENDSHIP MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

2560 Willow Lake Road, Fort Valley, GA 31030.

GRACE HOUSE COMMUNITY FOODBANK

Open Tuesdays and Thursdays. 9:00am - 12:00pm. Located behind Fort Valley Court House, 203 Central Ave., Fort Valley. Phone: 478-825-2562 (TFN)

GREATER FAITH BABIES MINISTRIES

1000 Tulip Drive, Fort Valley. Sunday School at 8:30am

Morning Worship at 10:00am **Wednesday:** Free Fellowship Meal at 6pm

60 Minutes Bible Study from 7:00pm -8:00pm Come and fellowship with us!

HOSTING ANGLICAN INQUIRERS' CLASS

Led by Father Matt Harlow Learn the basics of the Christian Faith while enjoying a meal and fellowship.

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

THE LIGHTHOUSE CHURCH OF FORT VALLEY

Looking for a church? Pastor Tony Wood invites you to come visit us. Bring the kids for Children's Church!

Sunday School at 9:30. Sunday Worship at 10:30.

SAINT ANDREW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

SAINT ANDREW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH located at 309 Central Avenue, Fort Valley, GA 31030. The Rev. Harriette Simmons Ballard.

Services every Sunday at 9:00am with Coffee Hour following in Robinson Hall.

ST. JULIANA'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

804 Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. Phone:(478) 825-7127

Sat., 7:00pm Spanish Mass Sun., 9:00am English Mass; 11:00 am Spanish Mass

Weekday Mass: Tues., - Thurs. 6:30pm

Confessions: Thurs., 6:00pm; Sat. 6:30pm; Sun. 10:30am

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

ST. LUKE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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

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

Please donate to our Little Free Pantry on Charlesvoix St. behind

BAHA'I FAITH

“A kindly tongue is the lodestone of the hearts of men.”

Baha'u'llah

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

the church (or take food if you are in need). For more info, go to our Facebook page or contact Anna Holloway 478-397-4678 and leave a text message.

SAINT PETER AME CHURCH 502 State University Drive, Fort Valley GA 31030

Join us for a rewarding Worship Experience at **“The Rock” each Sunday at 10:00AM**. Our pastor is **Rev. Anthony Dixon**. You may also join us **via YouTube and Facebook**. Weekly **Bible Study every Wednesday at 7:00p.m.** Bianca Ballard (478)825-8452.

SHILOH BAPTIST CHURCH OF FORT VALLEY

1101 East Church St, Fort Valley, GA 31030

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

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

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

TRINITY BAPTIST CHURCH

505 State University Drive, Fort Valley, Georgia 31030

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

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

For additional information, call 478-825-7349.

GIRDNER HORTON WILLIAMS FAMILY REUNION 2026

Attention: Ellis, Hill, Preston, Roger, Howard, Rump, Baldwin, Mitchell, Miller, Latimore, Taylor, Vinson, Hunt, Brown, Howell, Sanders, Girdner, Tucker, Horton, Walker & Williams.

The family reunion will be June 19-21, 2026. We want family members to contact us immediately for your itinerary information, payment and T-shirt orders. Please contact Albert “Skip” Girdner 347-984-6644, Lucinda Williams 478-777-0037, Johnny Girdner 804-539-1863.

WINGFIELD

CONTINUED FROM 4A

price point that fits their budget.

There are also national headwinds making it tougher for hard-working Georgians to purchase a home.

Changes to federal lending standards following the Great Recession have made it much more difficult for buyers with short credit histories to get mortgages, even if their earn-

ings would otherwise justify a loan. That's true even in places where local regulation hasn't gone overboard.

We can lessen regulations on homebuilding by streamlining the permitting process, eliminating unnecessary design mandates and allowing for a greater variety of housing types. We need to allow the market to work.

When we artificially restrain supply through red tape, we create a “musical chairs” economy where the person with the most money always wins. We can keep blaming the people winning the game, or we can finally decide to add more chairs. For the sake of Georgia's future, it's time we chose the latter.

Subscribe Today!

478-825-2432

After the penny’s demise, Georgia may round prices to the nearest 5 cents

By Mark Niesse
Staff Writer

Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — Now that the government isn’t making pennies anymore, Georgia lawmakers are planning to round cash transactions to the nearest nickel.

The penny proposal makes sense, said Sen. Chuck Hufstetler, R-Rome.

“It’s pretty simple,” Hufstetler said. “You round up or down to the nearest 5 or 10. It all evens out.”

The Georgia Senate voted 50-0 to approve the legislation Wednesday, sending it to the House for a potential final vote.

If the bill passes, Georgia

businesses would be required to round down transactions that end in a 1, 2, 6, or 7. Prices that end in a 3, 4, 8, or 9 would be rounded up. And items with costs that end exactly in a 0 or 5 would stay the same.

The proposal applies to in-person purchases made with cash. Transactions with credit cards wouldn’t need to be rounded.

The debate prompted senators to crack a few jokes.

“Is a penny earned a penny saved still valid?” asked Sen. Carden Summers, R-Cordele.

“Is it not true that this legislation isn’t worth a dime?” asked Sen. Max Burns, R-Sylvania.

The Trump administration decided last year to stop pro-

ducing new pennies, which are worth less than they cost to make.

With pennies gradually disappearing from circulation, Georgia is one of several states across the country considering legislation to round transactions, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Customers would still be able to pay with exact change if they wish, according to House Bill 1112.

The House previously passed a different version of the bill that rounded transactions differently. Now the House needs to decide whether to agree to the Senate’s proposal or seek further revisions.

CALLING ALL GEORGIA FARM DOGS

Georgia Farm Bureau accepting entries for farm dog contest

By GFB

MACON, Ga. – Farm dogs play a special role on the farm. They may herd livestock or guard livestock and property. They also provide companionship and joy to their families.

That’s why Georgia Farm Bureau (GFB) is looking to recognize a furry farm hero through its 2026 Georgia Farm Dog Contest. GFB is accepting entries for the contest until 10:59 p.m. on May 1 or until 200 entries are received, whichever comes first.

The contest is open to GFB members ages 18 and over. For complete contest rules and the criteria entered dogs will be judged by, visit <https://gfb.ag/26farmdogcontest>. Judging for the contest will take place in May.

The winning dog and its human will be recognized in October at the 2026 Sunbelt Ag Expo. The grand prize winner will receive a \$500 gift card. Georgia farm dogs have some pretty amazing stories to tell and GFB wants to tell them.

GFB is known for its love of



Photo courtesy of GFB
Georgia Farm Bureau’s mascot, Lucky, encourages farm families to enter their furry friends in the 2026 Georgia Farm Dog Contest.

dogs as Lucky, an Australian Shepherd, has served as the organization’s mascot since 2021.

The 2025 winner of GFB’s second Georgia Farm Dog Contest was Rooster, an Australian Shepherd from Eatonton, Ga. Rooster works beef and dairy cattle for his owner, Shawn Ruff. You can read more about Rooster at <https://gfb.ag/roostergfb-farmdog>.

Georgia Farm Bureau is a grassroots organization dedicated to supporting the future of Georgia’s family farms and our access to locally grown food and fiber. Membership is open to everyone.

Georgia passes bill to round cash purchases to the nearest nickel

By Mark Niesse
Staff Writer

Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — You could soon leave pennies at home when you go shopping in Georgia.

The Georgia House gave final approval to a bill Thursday that rounds in-person cash transactions to the nearest nickel.

The change is a response to the Trump administration’s decision last year to stop making new pennies, which will lead to their gradual disappearance from circulation.

The legislation calls for Georgia businesses to round down transactions that end in a 1, 2, 6, or 7. Prices that end in a 3, 4, 8, or 9 would be rounded up. And items with costs that end exactly in a 0 or 5 would stay the same.

The rounding requirement applies to in-person purchases made with cash. Transactions with credit cards wouldn’t need to be rounded.

The House voted 163-4 to approve House Bill 1112 on Thursday, sending it to Gov. Brian Kemp for his approval or veto.

Failure of Georgia elections bill could lead to quick switch to hand-marked ballots

By Mark Niesse
Staff Writer

Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — Georgia lawmakers set up the possibility of a swift conversion to hand-marked paper ballots this year when they failed to pass a bill early Friday morning that would have gradually replaced the state’s touchscreen voting system.

The Senate’s refusal to vote on the bipartisan elections bill leaves Georgia with computer-generated ballots that will soon be illegal, just months before the midterm elections.

The legislation, Senate Bill 214, would have delayed a state law passed two years ago that set a July 1, 2026, deadline to stop using the kind of ballots produced by Georgia’s touchscreen voting machines, which print computer QR codes on ballots to count votes.

Opponents of the current voting system say humans can’t read QR codes — which contain voters’ choices — to verify that their ballots are accurate.

Without a new law, the July 1 deadline to eliminate QR codes remains in effect.

Instead of those QR-coded ballots, voters would need to use Georgia’s backup voting system: pre-printed ballots with ovals that voters fill in with a pen. Existing ballot scanning machines can read hand-marked ballots.

County election directors have warned that an election-year transition to a new voting method, without a plan or funding, could lead to voter confusion and disruptions in polling places.

It’s unclear how they will handle the hurdles of pre-printing millions of ballots, training election workers, and educating voters if QR codes are banned two months from now.

“I think we’ve got a problem,” said Sen. Kim Jackson, D-Stone Mountain. “By not acting, we’ve actually chosen chaos.”

The House voted 132-39 hours earlier SB 214, which would have moved the deadline to eliminate QR codes to 2028.

But Lt. Gov. Burt Jones, who presides over the Senate, let the House’s competing solution die without a vote as the legislative session ended early Friday morning. The Senate passed a bill last week to require hand-marked paper ballots in this year’s elections, but the House didn’t consider it.

Senate Majority Leader Jason Anavitate, R-Dallas, said he didn’t know what would happen next.

House Speaker Jon Burns, R-Newington, said needed to talk with Gov. Brian Kemp about what, if anything, lawmakers should do next.

Burns said the House bill was a “reasonable plan” to update Georgia’s voting technology gradually rather than immediately during a high-stakes election year.

“You can’t change horses in the middle of the stream,” Burns said. “Part of what we want to do is what’s tried and true, working with our locals with a good plan that we knew could work.”

Kemp could call a special session to bring legislators back to the Capitol to resolve the issue.

“There’s still some options.

We’ve got to look. We’ve got to investigate. I’m hopeful we’ll get there,” said Sen. Max Burns, R-Sylvania. “Give us 24 to 48 hours to get a nap, and then we can talk about it.”

Under the bill approved by the House, Georgia would have bought a new election system that would count ballots without using QR codes before the 2028 presidential election year, recording votes directly from bubbled-in ovals or the text printed on ballots.

House Governmental Affairs Chair Victor Anderson, R-Cornelia, said county election officials need time to buy and test a new voting system before it’s rolled out to Georgia’s 8 million registered voters.

Georgia’s election equipment, purchased from Dominion Voting Systems for over \$100 million in 2019, came under fire from Republicans after President Donald Trump lost the 2020 election. Election security experts have also criticized it, saying the technology is vulnerable to tampering.

County election directors from across Georgia supported the bill that passed the House, SB 214, over the Senate’s proposals that would have forced a rapid switch to hand-marked paper ballots before the November midterm elections.

They said such a quick transition would disrupt elections because there wouldn’t have been much time for training, testing, and implementation.

Without a new law, election directors will have to begin preparing for that possibility.

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

The Peach County Board of Commissioners will be accepting Sealed Bids for the Sullivan Road Improvements in Peach County, GA.

Closing date for Sealed Bids responding to Request for Bid (RFB) No. 26-004 shall be May 1, 2026 at 11:30 a.m. Bids will be opened in public without discussion on May 1, 2026 at 11:45 a.m. at the Peach County Board of Commissioner’s Office, 213 Persons Street, Fort Valley, GA 31030. Bid amounts will not be released until the Board of Commissioners has awarded the project to the winning contractor.

Work includes the import, placement, and compaction of ±5,375 C.Y. (in place) structural fill for the road, realigning, and paving ±3,380 L.F. of Sullivan Road. Work will begin at the apron from Electric Avenue and extend for approximately .39 miles north. The existing dirt road portion of Sullivan Road, south of Russell Parkway, will consist of .25 miles of road construction. Additionally, drainage improvements, utility relocations, erosion / sediment control, and final stabilization are part of the work at each site.

A Pre-bid meeting will be held April 15, 2026 at 9:00 a.m. at the Sullivan Road project site. Attendance at the pre-bid meeting is required.

The complete RFB package will be available by contacting Morgan Hoffmann at (478) 476-0700, morgan@tpointeng.com

All bids must be accompanied by a Bid Bond in an amount not less than five percent (5%) of the Base Bid. Performance Bond and Payment Bond, each in the amount of one hundred percent (100%) of the contract amount, will be required of the successful bidder. Bond must be written by an acceptable Surety Company licensed to do business in the State of Georgia and listed with the Department of the Treasury.

See Instructions to Bidders for additional bidding requirements.

Peach County reserves the right to reject all bids, to waive informalities, to re-advertise and/or to award any bid that is in the best interest of Peach County.

Mail or deliver Sealed Bids to:
Jillian Bowen, Administrator
Peach County Board of Commissioners
ATTN: RFB # 26-004
213 Persons Street
Fort Valley, GA 31030

SECTION 00100 ADVERTISEMENT FOR PRICING

- Sealed Pricing:** Sealed bids for construction of the project entitled **Elberta Street Sewer Main Improvements** will be received until **Friday, April 24, 2026 at 2:00 P.M. – Location Fort Valley Utility Commission (500 Anthoine Street, Fort Valley, GA 31030)**. No bid may be withdrawn after the closing time for the receipt of estimates for a period of sixty (60) days.
- Work To Be Done:** The Work to be completed for the **Elberta Street Sewer Improvements** is described briefly as follows:

This project consists of the removal and replacement of approximately 341 linear feet of 8-inch sanitary sewer pipe utilizing the open-cut method, along with the installation of two (2) new precast manholes.

The work shall also include, but is not limited to, mobilization and demobilization, post-construction cleaning, post-construction CCTV inspection, installation and reconnection of service lines and cleanouts, implementation of bypass pumping operations, pavement patching and restoration, and traffic control measures.

- Plans, Specifications and Contract Documents:** Complete digital specifications and contract documents are available at www.QuestCDN.com. You may view the digital documents for free by entering the Quest project number 10134043 on the website’s project search page. The fee to download the digital documents is \$200 (non-refundable) payable through the website. A bidder’s proposal will not be considered by the Owner unless the Bidder is on record with Quest/ESG Engineering, Inc. as having purchased and received complete Bidding Documents. Please contact QuestCDN customer support at 952-233-1632 or info@questcdn.com for assistance in membership registration, downloading and working with digital project information. Copies of Bidding Documents may be obtained from ESG Engineering – contact Renee Keith at z-rkeith@inframark.com to procure Bidding Documents and to be added to the Bidder’s List (required to bid on project). Digital documents will be provided upon non-reimbursable payment of \$200.00.
- Contractor License:** Any Contractor submitting a bid must be licensed by the State of Georgia. See Instructions to Bidder for additional bidding requirements.
- Bonds:** Bids shall be accompanied by a bid bond or certified cashier’s check in an amount not less than 5% of the base bid. All bonds shall be by a surety company license in Georgia with an “A” minimum rating of performance and a financial strength of at least five (5) times the contract price as listed in the most current publication of “Best’s Key Raing Guide Property Liability”. Performance and Payment Bonds, each in an amount equal to 100% of the contract price shall be required of the successful bidder if contract is awarded. Each Bond shall be accompanied by a “Power of Attorney” authorizing the attorney-in-fact to bind the surety and certified to include the date of the bond.
- Funding:** This project is funded by the Fort Valley Utility Commission.
- All permits required for the construction of this project are expected to be obtained before the estimate due date.
- Acquisition of property for easements, right of way, etc. are expected to be obtained before the award date.
- Reservation of Rights:** Owner reserves the right to reject any or all Bids, including without limitation, the rights to reject any or all nonconforming, nonresponsive, unbalanced or conditional Bids and to reject the Bid of any Bidder if Owner believes that it would not be in the best interest of the Project to make an award to that Bidder, whether because the Bid is not responsive or the Bidder is unqualified or of doubtful financial ability or fails to meet any other pertinent standard or criteria established by the Owner.

Fort Valley Utility Commission
Represented By: Clay Walker
General Manager

Legals

Legal Advertising Information

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

For information on ordering billing, please contact The Leader Tribune at (782)-825-2432. Notice is published after

Legal Advertisements

E-Mail: legals@gtnl.org

E-Mail Attachments: Word Text Format

Legal Fax: 478-825-4130

AD DEADLINES: Friday's at 12:00 Noon

Information concerning legals call: 478-825-2432

12:00 Noon on Friday will be billed for insertion in that edition.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Publication Affidavit fee is \$10.

LT26-032

LEGAL NOTICE

A public hearing, with public comment heard, will be held by the Peach County Planning Commission on a preliminary plat request for +/-1.54 acres known as tax parcel number 050A 011 located at 135 Summer Breeze Drive, Fort Valley, Georgia. The request is to subdivide a 30-acrement from the main parcel 1 (050A 011) for assessed R-AG (Residential Agricultural District). The hearing will be in the Public Meeting Room of the Board of Commissioner's Office located at 213 Persons Street in Fort Valley on April 16, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. The minor plat application for this parcel is on file and available for review. All interested parties are encouraged to attend.

April 1, 8, 2026

LT26-028

NOTICE OF SALE UNDER POWER

STATE OF GEORGIA

PEACH COUNTY

WHEREAS, Diane E. Coles, as borrower(s), executed a SECURITY DEED TO Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as grantee, as nominee for Taylor, Bean & Whitaker Mortgage Corp., Lender which was dated 6/25/2008, and recorded on 6/29/2009, in Book 425, Page 882, securing the payment of a Note in the amount of \$58,811.00 in Peach County, Georgia Registered of Deeds

NOW, THEREFORE, notice is hereby given that the entire indebtedness has been defaulted due and payable as provided in said Security Deed by the Holder, and by virtue of the power of sale and authority vested in it, will on 6/2/2026 sell at public outcry to the highest bidder for cash During the legal hours of sale before the door of the courthouse of Peach County, Georgia of Peach, the following described property is situated in Peach County, Georgia, to wit: ALL THAT TRACT OR PARCEL OF LAND LYING AND BEING IN LAND LOT 141, 9TH LAND DISTRICT OF PEACH COUNTY, GEORGIA, BEING KNOWN AND DESIGNATED AS LOT 10, GREEN VALLEY ESTATES SUBDIVISION, CONTAINING 1.012 ACRES, MORE OR LESS, ACCORDING TO A PLAT OF SURVEY PREPARED BY THOMAS W FUTRAL, III., DATED MARCH 9, 1999, RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 21, PAGE 248, CLERK'S OFFICE, PEACH SUPERIOR COURT. SAID PLAT AND THE RECORD THEREOF ARE INCORPORATED HEREIN FOR ALL PURPOSES.

TOGETHER WITH THE 1998 SOUTHERN HOMES AK SERIES MOBILE HOME, SERIAL NO. DS04AL21873A AND DS-D4AL21873B WHICH IS PERMANENTLY ATTACHED TO THE PROPERTY. Tax Parcel ID: 030 019 Being real property commonly known as 151 BUCKEY ROAD FORT VALLEY, GA 31030

The debt remaining in default, this sale will be made for the purpose of paying the debt and all expenses of this sale including attorney's fees (notice of intent to foreclose attorney's fees have been given). Said sale will be made subject to the following items which may affect the title to said property. All relevant notices, easements and rights-of-way appearing of record, if any; all zoning ordinances; matters which would be disclosed by an accurate survey or by an inspection of the property; all outstanding or unpaid bills and assessments for street improvements, curbing, garbage, water, sewage and public utilities which may be liens upon said property and any outstanding taxes assessed on the property and any liens prior to the security deed being foreclosed hereby. To the best knowledge and belief of the undersigned, the above-described property is in the possession of the borrower and all other persons with the owner's consent and acquiescence of the borrower. Except to the extent that the Holder may bind and obligate Mortgageors to warrant title to the Property under the terms of the Security Deed, conveyance of the Property shall be made without any representations or warranties whatsoever, express or implied. All sales are "as is," where is. The entire purchase price is due and payable at the option of the auction in the form of certified funds. Insufficient funds will not be accepted. Amounts received in excess of the winning bid will be refunded to the successful purchaser. This property is being sold with express reservation that the sale is subject to confirmation by lender or Substitute Trustee.

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

Carrington Mortgage Services, LLC, 500 N. State College Blvd., Suites 1030, 1300 & 1400 Orange, CA 92868, Telephone No.: 800-561-4567

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

PLEASE

be advised that the trustee may require entity or trust bidders at this trustee's sale to provide information, documentation and/or certification of the vesting instructions and the data required to be reported pursuant to FinCEN regulations effective for transfers of residential real property to a residential transferee on or after March 1, 2026. The required information must be provided to the trustee before a deed under power will be issued for a residential transfer. The Buyer may be required to pay charges associated with the gathering and reporting of information to FinCEN. Additional information regarding these regulations and the required transferee information and certifications can be found at:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/08/29/2024-19198/anti-money-laundering-regulations-for-residential-real-estate-transfers> and https://www.fincen.gov/irre-faqs#D_5

Carrington Mortgage Services, LLC as Attorney in Fact for Diane E. Coles Attorney Contact: Tromberg, Miller, Morris & Partners PLLC 3000 Langford Road, Building 100 Peach Tree Corners GA 30071 Phone: 404-793-1447 Fax: 404-738-1558 TS # 26-39538 THIS COMMUNICATION IS FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT. ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.

April 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, May 6, 13, 20, 27, 2026

LT26-031

LEGAL NOTICE

A public hearing, with public comment heard, will be held by the Peach County Planning Commission on a zoning map amendment request for +/- 1.1 acres known as tax parcel number 012D 070 located at 2075 State University Drive, Fort Valley, Georgia. The request is to rezone the property to R-3 (High Density Residential) District for the purpose of remodeling the single-family home to a multi-family home for the tenants elderly, disabled, students etc. The property is currently zoned R-1 (Low Density Residential) District. The hearing will be in the Public Meeting Room of the Board of Commissioner's Office located at 213 Persons Street in Fort Valley on April 16, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. Recommendation from the Planning Commission will be presented to the Board of Commissioners on May 12, 2026 at 6:30 pm during the regularly scheduled monthly meeting.

The requesting application for this parcel is on file and available for review. All interested parties are encouraged to attend.

April 1, 8, 2026

LT26-037

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF PEACH COUNTY

STATE OF GEORGIA

In re the Name Change of: Lance Rian Brady, Petitioner

Civil Action Case Number 26-V-0148

NOTICE OF PETITION TO CHANGE NAME OF ADULT

Lance Rian Brady file a petition in the Peach County Superior Court on April 2, 2026 to change the name from Lane Rian Brady to Lance Rian Absher. Any interested party has the right to appear in this case and file objections within 30 days after the Petition was filed.

Lance Brady Petition Pro se 306 Amy Cirt e Fort Valley, GA 31030

April 8, 15, 2026

LT26-038

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF PEACH COUNTY

STATE OF GEORGIA

In re the Name Change of: Anita Joyce Miller, Petitioner

Civil Action Case Number 26-V-151

NOTICE OF PETITION TO CHANGE NAME OF ADULT

Anita Joyce Miller filed a petition in the Peach County Superior Court on April 2, 2026 to change the name from Anita Joyce Miller to Khitdijah Amina Muhammad. Any interested party has the right to appear in this case and file objections within 30 days after the Petition was filed.

Anita d Miller Petition Pro se 3132 Care Drive Fort Valley, GA 31030

April 8, 15, 2026

LT26-034

NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE SALE UNDER POWER OF SALE NOTICE OF SALE UNDER POWER CONTAINED IN SECURITY DEED STATE OF GEORGIA, COUNTY OF PEACH Pursuant to a power of sale contained in a certain security deed executed by Kae Cauthen, hereinafter referred to as Grantor, to The United States of America acting through the Rural Housing Service or successor agency, United States Department of Agriculture, its successors and assigns, dated June 27, 2008, and recorded on July 2, 2008 in Deed Book 407, beginning at page 662, of the deed records of the Clerk of the Superior Court of Peach County, Georgia, and by virtue of a default under the terms of said security deed, and the related note, the undersigned attorney-in-fact for the aforesaid Grantor (whom attorney-in-fact is the present holder of said security deed and note secured thereby) will sell at public outcry before the door of the courthouse in Peach County, Georgia, or at such place as has or may be lawfully designated as an alternative location, within the legal hours of sale, for a sale, to the highest bidder on the first Tuesday in May, 2026, all property described in said security deed including but not limited to the following described property: All that tract or parcel of land situated, lying and being in Land Lots 174 and 175 of the Ninth (9th) Land District of Peach County, Georgia, being known and designated as Lot 39, of a Subdivision known as HERITAGE POINTE, Phase 1, according to a plat of survey a copy of which is of record in Plat Book 26, Pages 22-23, Clerk's Office, Peach Superior Court. Said plat and the recorded copy thereof are incorporated herein by reference thereto for all purposes. Said property may more commonly be known as 101 Jaime Court, Fort Valley, GA 31030 Said property will be sold on an "as-is" basis without any representation, warranty or recourse against the above-named or the undersigned. The sale will be subject to the following items which may affect the title: any outstanding ad valorem taxes (including taxes which are a lien but not yet due and payable); any matters which might be disclosed by an accurate survey and inspection of the property; any assessments, liens, encumbrances, zoning ordinances, restrictions, and all other matters of record superior to the said Security Deed. The sale will be conducted subject (1) to confirmation that the sale is not prohibited under the U.S. Bankruptcy Code and (2) to final confirmation and audit of the status of the loan with the holder of the Security Deed. Dawson Management is the entity with full authority to negotiate, amend and modify the terms of the Note and Security Deed, and it may be contacted at Address: 3775 Venture Drive, Duluth, GA 30096 Phone: 770-962-4981 To the best of the undersigned's knowledge and belief, the party in possession of the property is believed to be Kae Cauthen, or tenant(s). United States of America, acting through the Rural Housing Service, its successors and assigns United States Department of Agriculture, as Transferor, Assignee, and Secured Creditor As attorney-in-fact for the aforesaid Grantor Please note that if any borrower or obligor has received a discharge in a bankruptcy case filed under Title 11 of the United States Code, no personal liability will arise from this foreclosure action against the individual. This foreclosure action is being pursued solely against the real property to enforce the lien created by the Security Instrument. Respectfully, Marinosci Law Group, P.C. 16415 Addison Road, Suite 725 Addison, TX 75001 (401) 234-9200 (401) 398-2594 THIS LAW FIRM MAY BE HELD TO BE ACTING AS A DEBT COLLECTOR, UNDER FEDERAL LAW. IF SO, ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE A-4870726

April 8, 15, 22, 29, 2026

LT26-025

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF PEACH COUNTY

STATE OF GEORGIA

In re the Name Change of the Child(ren) Jackson Joshua Johnson, Minor child(ren)

Civil Action File No. 26CV251-3

NOTICE OF PETITION TO CHANGE NAME

I, Rebekah Johnson, filed this petition to the Superior Court of Peach County, Georgia on the 19 day of March 2026, to change the name(s) of the minor child(ren) as follows

Current Name of Child: Khaos Kelly d hns n Proposed New Name: Jackson Joshua d hns n Any interested or affected party has the right to appear in this case and file objections within thirty days as set forth in O.C.G.A. § 19-12-1(f)(2) and (3). This 19 day of March, 2026. Rebekah d hns n Petition pro se 384 Whispering Circle By on, GA 31008 478-714-0683

March 25, April 1, 8, 15, 2026

LT26-033

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF PEACH COUNTY

STATE OF GEORGIA

In re: ESTATE OF KAJONJ ELIZABETH WILLIAMS, MINOR

ESTATE NO. 2026-MGDN-724

NOTICE

TO: ANY AND ALL INTERESTED PARTIES

You are hereby notified that KEIAH ZARAI WILLIAMS AND KYMBERLI ZYANNA-JERMAE WILLIAMS has filed a Petition seeking to be appointed temporary guardian(s) of the above-named Minor. All objections to the Petition to the appointment of a temporary guardian or the appointment of the Petitioner(s) as temporary guardian(s), must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections, and be filed with this Court no later than fourteen (14) days after this notice is mailed, or ten (10) days after this notice is personally received upon you, or ten (10) days after the publication of this notice if you are served by publication. All objections must be written on before a notary public or Georgia 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.

NOTE: If a natural guardian files a timely objection to the creation of the temporary guardianship, the Petition will be dismissed. If a natural guardian files an objection to the appointment of the Petitioner(s) as guardian(s), or if a parent who is not a natural guardian files an objection to the Petition, a bearing on the matter shall be scheduled at a later date. If no objection is filed, the Petition may be granted without a hearing.

KIM WILSON Judge of the Probate Court By KATRINA CORBIN Clerk of the Probate Court 205 WEST CHURCH ST FORT VALLEY GA 31030 478-825-2313

March 18, 25, April 1, 8, 2026

IN RE:

ESTATE NO. 2026-MGDN-724

NOTICE

TO: ANY AND ALL INTERESTED PARTIES

You are hereby notified that KEIAH ZARAI WILLIAMS AND KYMBERLI ZYANNA-JERMAE WILLIAMS has filed a Petition seeking to be appointed temporary guardian(s) of the above-named Minor. All objections to the Petition to the appointment of a temporary guardian or the appointment of the Petitioner(s) as temporary guardian(s), must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections, and be filed with this Court no later than fourteen (14) days after this notice is mailed, or ten (10) days after this notice is personally received upon you, or ten (10) days after the publication of this notice if you are served by publication. All objections must be written on before a notary public or Georgia 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.

NOTE: If a natural guardian files a timely objection to the creation of the temporary guardianship, the Petition will be dismissed. If a natural guardian files an objection to the appointment of the Petitioner(s) as guardian(s), or if a parent who is not a natural guardian files an objection to the Petition, a bearing on the matter shall be scheduled at a later date. If no objection is filed, the Petition may be granted without a hearing.

KIM WILSON Judge of the Probate Court By KATRINA CORBIN Clerk of the Probate Court 205 WEST CHURCH ST FORT VALLEY GA 31030 478-825-2313

April 8, 15, 22, 29, 2026

LT26-020

NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS

All creditors of the Estate of Mary Lee Meadows deceased late of Peach County, are hereby notified to render in their demands to the undersigned according to law, and all persons indebted to said estate are required to make immediate payment. Danny Dav d Meadows Executor c/o Beys Wilcox Attorney At Law P.O. Box 303 By on, GA 31008

March 18, 25, April 1, 8, 2026

LT26-017

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF PEACH COUNTY

STATE OF GEORGIA

IN RE: ESTATE OF DIANE E. COLES, DECEASED

ESTATE NO. 2024-ADM-7027

NOTICE

The petition of persons named herein for leave to sell property in the above-referenced estate having been duly filed,

TO:

ANY AND ALL INTERESTED PARTIES

This is to notify you to file an objection, if there is any, to the above-referenced petition, in this Court on or before APRIL 8 2026

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

Kim Wilcox Judge of the Probate Court By Katrina Corbin Clerk of the Probate Court 205 WEST CHURCH ST FORT VALLEY GA 31030 478-825-2313

March 18, 25, April 1, 8, 2026

LT26-007

NOTICE OF SALE UNDER POWER

STATE OF GEORGIA

PEACH COUNTY

WHEREAS, Demon L. Laurie, as borrower(s), executed a SECURITY DEED TO Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as grantee, as nominee for Carrington Mortgage Services, LLC, Lender which was dated 10/24/2020, and recorded on 1/19/2021, in Book 639, Page 310, ordering the payment of a Note in the amount of \$148,000.00 in Peach County, Georgia Registered of Deeds

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

ALL THAT TRACT OR PARCEL OF LAND SITUATE, LYING AND BEING IN LAND LOT 45 OF THE 5TH LAND DISTRICT OF PEACH COUNTY, GEORGIA, AND BEING KNOWN AND DESIGNATED AS LOT 30, SECTION NO. 2, PHASE NO. 2, CUMBERLAND SHORES SUBDIVISION

AND HAVING SUCH SHAPES, METES, BOUNDS, COURSES AND DISTANCES AS ARE SHOWN ON A PLAT OF SURVEY PREPARED BY TERRY M. SCARBOROUGH, DATED JUNE 8, 2006 AND RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 25, PAGES 162-163 AND PLAT BOOK 25, PAGE 189, CLERK'S OFFICE, PEACH SUPERIOR COURT. SAID PLAT OF SURVEY AND THE RECORDED COPY THEREOF ARE HEREBY MADE A PART OF THIS DESCRIPTION BY REFERENCE THERETO FOR ALL PURPOSES, AS FURTHER IDENTIFIED BY THAT CERTAIN PLAT OF SURVEY PREPARED DEMON L. LAURIE AND FELICIA M. CLARK-REID BY DEMON W. STANZILIS, JR., SURVEYOR, AND INCORPORATED BY REFERENCED HEREIN.

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

The debt remaining in default, this sale will be made for the purpose of paying the debt and all expenses of this sale including attorney's fees (notice of intent to foreclose attorney's fees have been given). Said sale will be made subject to the following items which may affect the title to said property. All relevant notices, easements and rights-of-way appearing of record, if any; all zoning ordinances; matters which would be disclosed by an accurate survey or by an inspection of the property; all outstanding or unpaid bills and assessments for street improvements, curbing, garbage, water, sewage and public utilities which may be liens upon said property and any outstanding taxes assessed on the property and any liens prior to the security deed being foreclosed hereby. To the best knowledge and belief of the undersigned, the above-described property is in the possession of the borrower and all other persons with the owner's consent and acquiescence of the borrower. Except to the extent that the Holder may bind and obligate Mortgageors to warrant title to the Property under the terms of the Security Deed, conveyance of the Property shall be made without any representations or warranties whatsoever, express or implied. All sales are "as is," where is. The entire purchase price is due and payable at the option of the auction in the form of certified funds. Insufficient funds will not be accepted. Amounts received in excess of the winning bid will be refunded to the successful purchaser. This property is being sold with express reservation that the sale is subject to confirmation by lender or Substitute Trustee.

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

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

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

Carrington Mortgage Services, LLC as Attorney in Fact for Demon L. Laurie Attorney Contact: Tromberg, Miller, Morris & Partners PLLC 3000 Langford Road, Building 100 Peach Tree Corners GA 30071 Phone: 404-793-1447 Fax: 404-738-1558 TS # 26-39044 THIS COMMUNICATION IS FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT. ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.

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

LT26-035

LEGAL NOTICE

A public hearing, with public comment heard, will be held by the Peach County Planning and Zoning Board of Appeals on a variance request for tax parcel number 043A 005 located at 30 Bible Camp Road, Fort Valley, Georgia. The variance request is for a decrease in the minimum setback distance in the C-1 Neighborhood Service Commercial District. The property is +/- 5.57 acres

The hearing will be in the Public Meeting Room of the Board of Commissioner's Office located at 213 Persons Street in Fort Valley on April 23, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. The applications for these parcels are on file and available for review. All interested parties are encouraged to attend.

April 8, 2026

LT26-036

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF PEACH COUNTY

STATE OF GEORGIA

In re the Name Change of: Tammy Leigh Brady, Petitioner

Civil Action Case Number 26-V-0149

NOTICE OF PETITION TO CHANGE NAME OF ADULT

Tammy Leigh Brady file a petition in the Peach County Superior Court on April 2, 2026 to change the name from Tammy Leigh Brady to Tammy Leigh Absher. Any interested party has the right to appear in this case and file objections within 30 days after the Petition was filed.

Tammy Brady Petition Pro se 306 Amy Cirt e Fort Valley, GA 31030

April 8, 15, 2026

LT26-019

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF PEACH COUNTY

STATE OF GEORGIA

IN RE: ESTATE OF WILLIE J. COLBERT JR., DECEASED

ESTATE NO. 2026-ADM-7248</

Georgia lawmakers went after corporate landlords. They did not get far

By Ty Tagami
Bureau Chief

Capitol Beat News Service

In a rare bipartisan moment during this year's legislative session in Georgia, Democrats and Republicans agreed on how to do something about what they said was a core cause of Georgia's housing affordability problem.

The state Senate passed a bill that sought to punish institutional investors with more than 500 single-family rental homes.

Sen. Greg Dolezal, R-Cumming, accused investors of exacerbating the housing crisis by outbidding regular purchasers trying to buy a house, thus driving up prices and forcing many would-be homebuyers to rent instead.

"I have a grave fear that we are becoming a nation of renters and not homeowners," Dolezal said at a Senate committee hearing last month. The Senate went on to pass his legislation 49-3.

Senate Bill 463 would have enforced the ownership cap by allowing lawsuits against these companies and by withdrawing their tax credits and deductions.

But Dolezal's bill fell apart Thursday, when a committee of the state House deleted the language, replacing it with another measure.

The legislative session ends Thursday, so time is running out.

Something similar happened last year. Legislation that sought a 2,000-home cap for institutional owners failed to exit a House committee after the industry raised constitutional concerns, as happened with SB 463.

The lawmakers are pursuing a popular cause.

An Atlanta Regional Commission survey in 11 metro Atlanta counties last summer found housing affordability was the No. 1 concern. The 2025 Metro Atlanta Speaks Survey said 44% blamed developers and 35% blamed investors buying up homes to rent.

Last spring, U.S. Sen. John Ossoff announced an investigation into "large, out-of-state companies driving up home prices in Georgia."

A news conference at the Democrat's Atlanta office featured renters complaining about unsafe conditions. One reported dangerous debris embedded in his backyard. Another reported gas leaks that she said went unaddressed for weeks.

In a demonstration of bipartisan frustration, President Donald Trump, in January, penned an executive order titled "Stopping Wall Street from Competing with Main Street Homebuyers."

Two weeks later, Dolezal, who is running for the GOP nomination for lieutenant governor, introduced SB 463.

A 2024 report by Georgia State University and Rutgers University found that three companies collectively owned more than 19,000 rental homes in metro Atlanta. The report said corporate landlords were drawn to the area by cheap housing and lax tenant protections.

One of them, Amherst, told Capitol Beat that the industry provides housing to families that cannot qualify for a mortgage.

"We understand that we're easy scapegoats," said Dagny Gomez del Campo, an Amherst spokeswoman. But she pointed to data about the service her

company provides: Amherst spent over \$526 million renovating more than 8,300 homes during at least 14 years of operations in Georgia when it housed about 57,000 renters.

Renters' credit scores were typically in the 600s, below the 700s common among first-time homebuyers with a government-sponsored mortgage, according to Amherst.

Sharon Franklin, a renter through Amherst subsidiary MainStreet Renewal, described an idyllic home she and her two older sisters, both retired, are renting in Stockbridge.

It is a quiet street with wildlife roaming the property, she said, and the company has been responsive to repair requests.

At 61 and nearing retirement herself, Franklin said she had no interest in buying a house with a 30-year mortgage.

If lawmakers penalize companies like Amherst, she said, "who are we going to rent from?"

Industry fights back

Former Georgia Attorney General Sam Olen, now working for the National Home Rental Council, helped the industry attack SB 463 at a House committee hearing two weeks ago.

It was a repeat performance of his efforts against the legislation for a 2000-home cap last year.

He said Dolezal's bill had "numerous constitutional infirmities" and was "a gift to lawyers to sue."

The assumption of the bill — that renters would be homeowners if the investors did not already own the houses — was false, he said. The reality is that they cannot qualify for a mortgage and there is "an abject shortage" of housing, he added.

Others from the industry who spoke at the hearing contended that such a law would lead to less rehabilitation of dilapidated housing and fewer rental options.

"Good policy should be grounded in facts and data, not assumptions and misleading narratives," said Stephen Davis, a lobbyist for Progress Residential, a multistate rental home company. "SB 463 creates serious unintended consequences: mass evictions, higher rents, lower home values, and greater school turnover."

Jason Parker, president of rental home construction company Two Resi Build, pointed to a foundational problem. He said his company builds 100 to 150 houses a year.

"If we could build more homes, it would absolutely reduce the average house price," he said. "Our biggest challenge is the land cost."

Why houses got so expensive

Institutional investors bought up large swaths of housing stock when prices cratered during the Great Recession.

As of June 2022, they owned a quarter of Atlanta's single-family rental home market, according to a 2024 report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office.

The report said these investors may have contributed to rising rents and home prices. This may have helped "stabilize" neighborhoods, the report said, adding that it was unclear whether this affected homeownership opportunities.

The rate of institutional ownership of single-family homes in Atlanta is six times the national average, said Alex Horowitz,

project director of the housing policy initiative at The Pew Charitable Trusts.

But institutional investors own just 3% of all Atlanta single-family houses, he said. "Nothing that's 3% of the market is driving the market. ... And most research on single-family rentals suggests that they lower rents by adding new supply to the market overall."

Pew's research indicates that one main driver of housing unaffordability is the tightening of mortgage lending rules after the recession, when so many owners went into foreclosure. The standards increased while their credit ratings fell.

Another big driver is government development policy, and it is something state lawmakers could do something about, Horowitz said.

Pew released a report in mid-March that showed how Austin, Texas, reduced housing costs by implementing policies to encourage denser development, such as allowing large apartment buildings near jobs and transit and reducing minimum mandated lot sizes and parking space requirements.

Median rents fell from \$1,546 in December 2021 to \$1,296 by January 2026 even though Austin had added 18,000 residents.

The city added 120,000 housing units between 2015 and 2024, a 30% increase that was three times the national average, Pew reported.

Pew's findings in Austin echoed its findings about similar policies in four other cities: Minneapolis; Portland, Or.; New Rochelle, N.Y.; and Tysons, Va.

Horowitz said Texas enacted seven laws last year that should result in a lot of new housing, such as allowing apartments on commercially zoned land and homes on smaller lots, and expanding use of manufactured housing.

A path forward for Georgia

One Georgia bill would have taken the state in the direction of Texas.

Senate Bill 508 sought to offer financial incentives to encourage Georgia communities to reduce minimum lot sizes and parking requirements and to take other steps to increase density.

Sen. Elena Parent, D-Atlanta, the main sponsor, said it is difficult for local elected officials to make such changes because existing residents tend to push back. Not in my backyard, or "NIMBYism," is a powerful force, she said.

Lawmakers are more insulated from local pressure, she said, so if zoning is to change, the push can more easily come from the Legislature.

Her legislation probably never had a chance because all the other sponsors were Democrats, and the General Assembly is controlled by Republicans.

But Parent and every other Democrat present voted for Dolezal's corporate homeownership cap when it reached the Senate floor. It's a good bill, she said.

Next year, Republicans should reintroduce her bill and call it their own, said Parent, who is not running for re-election.

"I think it is something they should hop on and pass it themselves," she said. "It isn't really a partisan issue."



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



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

405 Boy Scout Rd
204 GA Hwy 49 N

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

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



For City of Byron Residents Only

A CITY WIDE CLEAN UP

In an effort to keep our local waterways clean.



FREE TIRE RECYCLING



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

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

April 20th through April 24th, 2026 8:00 am – 5:00 pm
April 18th and April 25th 8:00 am – 12:00 pm

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

AAA: Gas Prices Edge Up Across Georgia

By AAA

ATLANTA (April 6, 2026) Ongoing fighting in the Middle East is driving oil prices higher, which is pushing gas prices up. However, Georgia's gas tax suspension is helping slow how quickly prices are rising. The average price for regular gas is now \$3.71 per gallon, up from last week, and prices may continue to change in the coming weeks.

"Rising crude oil prices fueled by ongoing geopolitical tensions are continuing to push pump prices higher," said Montrae Waiters, spokeswoman for AAA – The Auto Club Group. "While these global factors are largely outside of drivers' control, Governor Kemp's suspension of the state gas tax is helping ease some of the pressure for Georgia drivers. Still, with elevated oil prices and strengthening seasonal demand, drivers should expect continued fluctuations at the pump."

Compared to recent benchmarks:

- 13 cents higher than last week
- 54 cents higher than last month
- 66 cents higher than this time last year

For those filling up a standard 15-gallon tank of regular gasoline, the cost now comes to approximately \$55.65.

National Gas Prices Push Higher Amid Market Pressure

The national average price for regular gasoline rose above \$4 this week, reaching \$4.11 per gallon. That's 13 cents higher than last week and 86 cents more than a month ago. Surging crude oil prices, now above \$100 per barrel, driven by the ongoing conflict in the Middle East and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz are putting upward pressure on gas prices, similar to conditions that kept prices elevated through much of 2022.

Electric:

The national average per kilowatt hour of electricity at a public EV charging station remained the same this past week at 41 cents. Drivers can plan ahead by checking prices along their route with AAA's TripTik Travel Planner.

Regional Prices:

The most expensive metro markets in Georgia are Atlanta (\$3.65), Athens (\$3.63), and Gainesville (\$3.62).

The least expensive metro markets in Georgia are Hinesville-Fort Stewart (\$3.45), Brunswick (\$3.44), and Albany (\$3.41).

Current and Past Price Averages (Regular Unleaded Gasoline)

AAA encourages drivers to use the money-saving gas tips listed below.

Money-Saving Tips for Drivers

Shop around for gas prices. Drivers can check area gas prices on the Fuel Price Finder.

Consider paying in cash instead of using a credit card. Some retailers charge extra per gallon for customers who use a credit card.

Enroll in fuel savings programs

Fuel-Saving Tips for Drivers

Maintain your vehicle to ensure the best fuel economy. Find a trusted automotive facility at AAA.com/Auto Repair.

Combine errands to minimize driving time.

Slow down. Fuel economy diminishes significantly at highway speeds above 50 mph. Drive conservatively and avoid aggressive driving. Aggressive acceleration and speeding can reduce fuel economy.

Traffic Safety Tip: AAA-The Auto Club Group "Move Over For Me" Campaign

Video: Move Over For Me PSA

"See a disabled vehicle? Slow down and move over," said Montrae Waiters, spokeswoman for AAA-The Auto Club Group. "It's the safest choice for everyone."

Gas Price Survey Methodology

AAA updates fuel price averages daily at www.GasPrices.AAA.com. Every day, up to 130,000 stations are surveyed based on credit card swipes and direct feeds in cooperation with the Oil Price Information Service (OPIS) and Wright Express for unmatched statistical reliability. All average retail prices in this report are for a gallon of regular, unleaded gasoline.

Current and Past Price Averages (Regular Unleaded Gasoline)

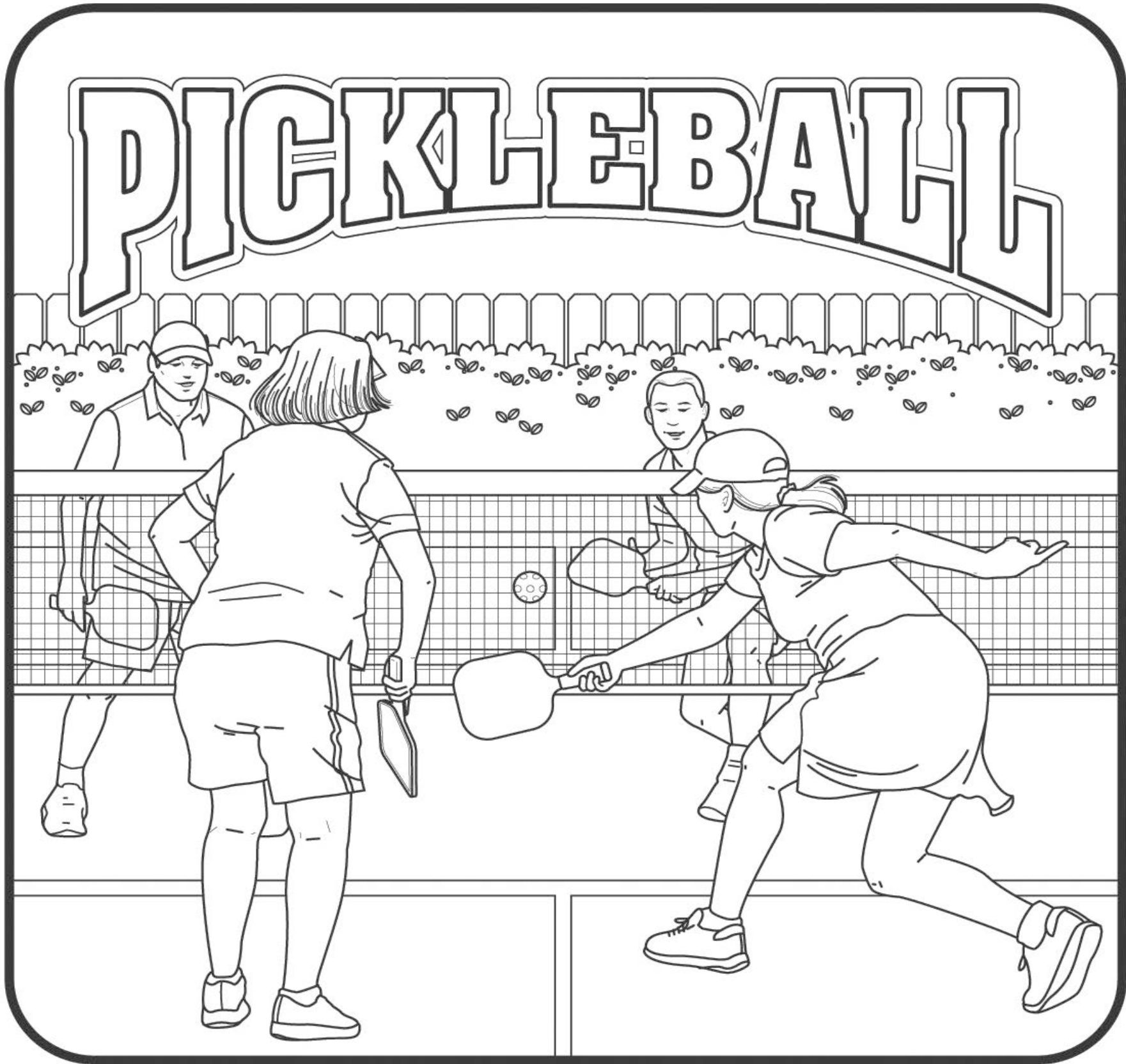
	Sunday	Saturday	Week Ago	Month Ago	One Year Ago	Record High
National	\$4.11	\$4.10	\$3.98	\$3.25	\$3.26	\$5.01 (6/14/2022)
Georgia	\$3.71	\$3.71	\$3.58	\$3.17	\$3.05	\$4.49 (6/15/2022)

[Click here](#) to view current gasoline price averages

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THIS DAY IN HISTORY



1606: The Virginia Company of London is established by royal charter.

1816: The Federal government of the United States approves the creation of the Second Bank of the U.S.

1912: RMS Titanic sets sail from the United Kingdom.

NEW WORD

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English: Ball
Spanish: Pelota
Italian: Palla
French: Balle
German: Ball

Did You Know?

Although pickleball seems like a recent phenomenon, it actually was created in 1965. The game initially was played using makeshift equipment.



Get the PICTURE?



Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

Answer: Pickleball and paddle

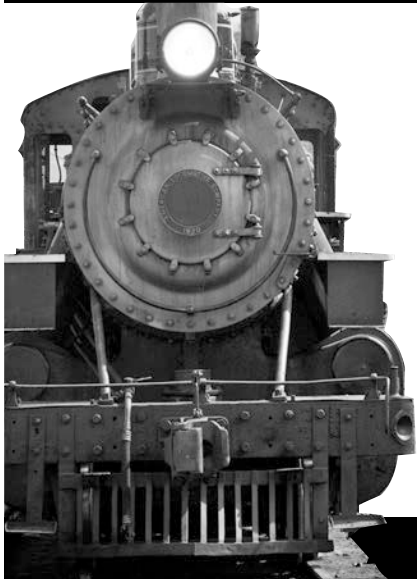
ROAD TRIPPING WORD SEARCH

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

WORDS

- ASPHALT
- ATLAS
- BILLBOARDS
- CARAVAN
- COOLER
- DETOUR
- HIGHWAY
- HORIZON
- INTERSTATE
- ITINERARY
- MILEAGE
- MOTEL
- NAVIGATION
- ODOMETER
- OVERLOOK
- PITSTOP
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Middle Georgia State Sweeps Doubleheader from Fort Valley State Softball

By Chris McKenzie
Sports Reporter

It was a tough day at the diamond for the Fort Valley State University Lady Wildcats, who dropped both games of a doubleheader to Middle Georgia State University in non-conference action.

In Game 1, Middle Georgia State set the tone early and never looked back, cruising to a 7-0 shutout victory. The visiting squad struck quickly with three

runs in the opening inning and added two more in the second to build a commanding 5-0 lead. Fort Valley State struggled to generate offense throughout the contest, managing just five hits and leaving runners stranded.

Middle Georgia State tacked on two additional runs in the sixth inning to seal the win, finishing with eight hits and taking advantage of a lone Fort Valley State miscue. Despite solid defensive efforts at times, the Lady Wildcats were unable to shift momentum or

find a breakthrough at the plate.

Game 2 provided much more excitement, as Fort Valley State came out with energy and purpose. The Lady Wildcats jumped ahead early, plating four runs in the first inning and adding another in the second to take a 5-1 lead. Their aggressive start had the home crowd energized and put Middle Georgia State on its heels.

However, the Knights steadily chipped away at the deficit. A two-run third inning and single runs in the

fourth and fifth brought Middle Georgia State back into contention. Fort Valley State added a run in the fourth to maintain a narrow edge, but the visitors continued to apply pressure late in the game.

The decisive blow came in the seventh inning, when Middle Georgia State scored two runs to take a 7-6 lead and complete the comeback. Fort Valley State was unable to respond in the bottom half, sealing the doubleheader sweep.

Offensively, the Lady Wildcats showed resilience in Game 2 with eight hits, but defensive miscues and timely hitting by Middle Georgia State proved to be the difference.

Fort Valley State will look to regroup as they prepare for upcoming conference play, aiming to bounce back and regain momentum as the season progresses.

LSGT Business of the Month Paddle Battle Returns to Byron for Festival Showdown

By Chris McKenzie
Sports Reporter

Competition and community spirit will collide later this month as the Battle of Byron Festival hosts the 2nd Annual Paddle Battle Round Robin Doubles Pickleball Tournament at North Peach Park.

Set against the backdrop of one of Byron's most anticipated spring events, the Paddle Battle is quickly becoming a highlight for both seasoned players and newcomers to the fast-growing sport of pickleball.

The tournament will feature two separate competition dates to accommodate varying skill levels. On Saturday, April 18, the courts will welcome advanced

beginners to low intermediate players, offering a chance for developing competitors to test their skills in a structured and competitive setting. The following weekend, on Saturday, April 26, the intensity ramps up as high intermediate to advanced players take center stage.

The format for both events will be round robin doubles, ensuring that teams get plenty of playing time and opportunities to compete against multiple opponents. Participants are required to register with a partner, emphasizing teamwork and strategy throughout the day.

With an entry fee of \$40 per team, the event offers an affordable opportunity for athletes to

be part of a growing local tradition. Organizers say the goal is not only to crown winners but also to build camaraderie and celebrate the rapid rise of pickleball across Middle Georgia.

As pickleball continues to surge in popularity nationwide, events like this one are helping to grow the game at the grassroots level while adding energy to community festivals.

For more information or to register, interested teams can call 478-955-9123.

With lively competition, festival excitement, and plenty of action on the courts, Byron's Paddle Battle is set to serve up another memorable weekend.



By PCHS

The Peach County High School Local School Governance Team presented Cleveland Tree Company, in Fort Valley, with Business of the Month for February. Cleveland Tree Company donated to the PCHS Special Olympics. They are

a wholesale only business. Mr. David Cleveland is also a graduate of Peach County High School. Pictured are Dustin Chancellor, LSGT Chairman and David Cleveland, owner of Cleveland Tree Company. Thank you, Cleveland Tree Company for your support of PCHS!

General Assembly passes budget that spends on early literacy and pensions

By Ty Tagami
Bureau Chief

Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — The youngest and oldest people in Georgia to whom the state owes a financial responsibility got something extra in the 2027 fiscal year budget that lawmakers sent to Gov. Brian Kemp Thursday night.

State retirees could get a bump in their pensions after the state House and Senate agreed to add at least \$65 million in state money to their pension fund.

And children in grades kindergarten through third grade could learn how to read with the help of literacy experts hired with \$70 million in state funds.

That is more money than the

House had initially budgeted as a downpayment on hiring more than 1,300 literacy coaches.

The compromise budget also puts the money into a recurring fund whereas the Senate had proposed a one-time grant.

Grants must be renewed annually, so the House wanted the money engraved in the school funding formula.

The compromise puts the money into the Quality Basic Education funding formula, so it will be there year after year.

"I think QBE is usually a more consistent formula for our schools," said Sen. Blake Tillery, R-Vidalia, chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee. That should give schools more confidence in hiring employees, an ongoing expense, he said.

"I think there's a lot more acceptance by the local school systems that it will be consistent whereas our non-QBE grants sometimes are one of the first to go in recessionary times," he said.

Rep. Matt Hatchett, R-Dublin, chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, called it "a conservative and fiscally sound budget." And he said it would help state pensioners who "put in years of hard work only to see inflation decimate" their income, with the first cost of living increase in recent history of over 2%.

The approvals by the House and Senate to House Bill 974 sends the \$38.5 billion budget to Kemp who has line-item veto authority.

Georgia lawmakers put 911 upgrades on this year's ballot

By Mark Niese
Staff Writer

Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — Georgia voters will decide this year on a constitutional amendment that would dedicate their 911 fees to a statewide fund for improving emergency services.

The Senate voted unanimously Tuesday to put the 911 referendum on the ballot in November. The House previously approved the proposal.

The 911 fund could pay for cellphone technology that would allow Georgians to con-

tact emergency services using voice, text, and data.

"Imagine you're a first responder being able to see videos of what you're rolling into, whether it be a terrible situation of an active shooter scene or a crime that just happened, or a firefighter rolling up on a hot fire situation," said Rep. Chuck Martin, R-Alpharetta. "It makes the first responders safer and gives them the ability to react to the situation and get to the people that need help."

If approved by voters, the 911 fee will remain the same as it is today, at \$1.50 per month.

But instead of a local fee, the money would be used exclusively for expansion, maintenance, and operation of 911 services across Georgia, according to House Resolution 1243.

Senate Minority Leader Harold Jones, D-Augusta, said the fee could help improve emergency response times.

"We hear many stories: They call 911, a person may not answer. It's not quite up to the quality level. This is what we're hoping to actually change," Jones said.



Photo by Ashlin Barker/Capitol Beat
Rep. Shaw Blackmon, R-Bonaire, presented an amended version of House Bill 1116 on crossover day on Friday, March 6, 2026, at the Georgia State Capitol Building. The bill at that point was a pared back version of the one that had sought to eliminate homeowner property taxes in Georgia. The Senate chose to send back its own proposal for property tax cuts in Senate Bill 33 on Thursday, and the House approved it early Friday, as the legislative session ticked to an end.

"The bill that came back to us was not strong enough," he said. "There were several different initiatives we had in our property tax bill that would have been more meaningful for our property taxpayers." But it was still a "robust" tax cut, he said, vowing to push further next year.

If Kemp signs House Bill 463 into law, Georgians will also pay less for income taxes.

The measure approved by lawmakers would drop the rate to 4.99% from the current 5.19%. It would continue falling over eight years to 3.99% if state revenues remain strong. Income tax deductions would rise, as well, over eight years, from the current \$12,000 for single filers, to \$18,000. The amounts would double for married couples. Dependent deductions also would

rise by \$1,000 over eight years from the current \$4,000.

And the state income tax on over-time pay and cash tips would be waived on the first \$1,750.

HB 463 would offset the cuts by eliminating a handful of tax breaks for items like electrical vehicle chargers and the manufacture of cigarettes for export.

Democrats complained that Georgia's top earners would get the most back, and Blackmon responded that they put the most in.

He called it "real, meaningful tax relief."

But Sen. Josh McLaurin, D-Sandy Springs, said the tax credits being eliminated to pay for the income tax cut would not come close to making up for the lost revenue.

"It's a completely fiscally irresponsible bill," he said, adding that the tax exemption for over-time pay and tips was "a handful of peanuts that we're throwing back" at Georgians.

Sen. Harold Jones, II, D-Augusta, the Senate minority leader, called the legislation, which passed the Senate around 10 p.m., a "cynical attempt at electoral politics," in a year when affordability had become a central talking point.

Tillery, who, like McLaurin, is a candidate for lieutenant governor, admitted the income tax cut was not as big as what Senate Republicans had wanted. They had previously pushed a measure to eliminate state income taxes altogether.

"But it moves the ball forward," he said.

Ban on child sexual abuse NDAs passes Georgia General Assembly

By Mark Niese
Staff Writer

Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — Victims of childhood sexual abuse can't be silenced by nondisclosure agreements in legal settlements, according to a bill that cleared the Georgia General Assembly on Thursday.

The Senate voted unanimously to approve the bill, which is called Trey's Law in memory of Trey Carlock, a former Atlanta-area resident who was sexually abused at a Mis-

souri camp along with other victims.

Carlock settled a lawsuit against the camp, but a nondisclosure agreement prevented him from talking about what happened to him.

"These NDAs silence survivors or sexual abuse in civil settlement agreements and force victims to choose between compensation and their voice," said Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick, R-Marietta. "The purpose of the law is so that survivors can speak openly about the abuse that they suffered."

The bill makes lawsuit settlements unenforceable if they require secrecy about childhood sexual abuse.

Gov. Brian Kemp said during his State of the State address that Trey's Law is a priority of First Lady Mary Kemp and the Georgians for Refuge, Action, Compassion, and Education Commission, which was created to combat human trafficking.

House Bill 1187 now advances to Kemp for his signature.

Trojans Heat Up Over Spring Break with Dominant Road Sweep

By Chris McKenzie
Sports Reporter

The Peach County Trojans made the most of their spring break, traveling on the road and returning home with two convincing victories over Veterans High School and Stockbridge High School.

Peach County opened the trip with a gritty 6-2 win over Veterans, using a late-game surge

to pull away. The Trojans were held in check offensively for much of the game, managing just one run through the first six innings. However, everything changed in the seventh inning when Peach County erupted for five runs to seize control.

Despite being outthit 8-3, the Trojans capitalized on defensive miscues by Veterans, who committed three errors. Peach

County's patience at the plate and timely execution proved to be the difference, while their pitching staff limited damage and kept the game within reach until the late breakthrough.

The momentum carried into their second matchup, where the Trojans delivered an offensive explosion in a 20-4 victory over Stockbridge. Peach County wasted no time setting the tone,

plating four runs in the first inning and continuing to apply pressure throughout the game.

The Trojans racked up 14 hits and showcased their depth with consistent production across the lineup. The biggest inning came in the fifth, when Peach County poured in 10 runs to

put the game out of reach. Aggressive baserunning and disciplined hitting overwhelmed Stockbridge, who struggled defensively with four errors.

Across the two games, Peach County demonstrated both resilience and firepower—finding ways to win a tight contest

before unleashing one of their most dominant offensive performances of the season.

With the sweep, the Trojans continue to build momentum as they head into the home stretch of their schedule, looking every bit like a team ready to compete at a high level down the stretch.



Peach County Trojans Baseball are Back to Back Region Champs.

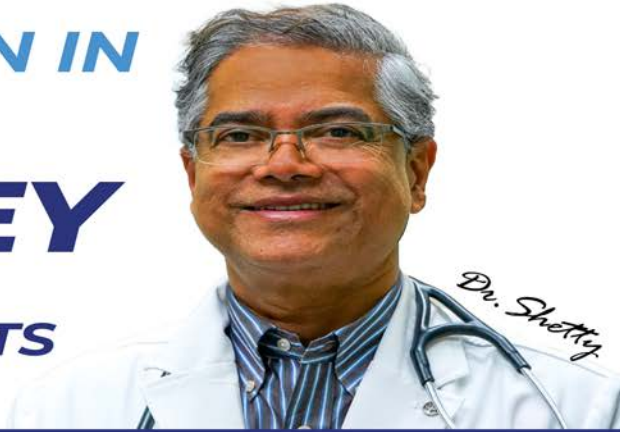
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