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The News Observer

"Local news means the world to us."

The Vienna News and The Unadilla Observer

The Legal Organ of Dooly County; serving Byromville, Dooling, Lilly, Pinehurst, Unadilla and Vienna.

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THURSDAY, JANUARY 29, 2026

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Board Informed of Potential Legislation to Eliminate Homestead Property Tax

By Tim Franzén
News Observer Reporter

The Association County Commissioners of Georgia held a webinar last week on, "The ever changing landscape of property and Local Option Sales Tax reforms."

Mr. Steve Sanders said, "There is some potential of some legislation being introduced in this year's general assembly, to eliminate the property tax on homestead property. How would cities, counties, school boards replace that revenue? One of the ideas is to allow an additional 1% sales tax dedicated to make up for the loss of property taxes on homestead property. That would work in counties with a lot of retail businesses that generate a sales tax. There are going to be quite a few counties around that don't have a lot of retail businesses that generate a lot of sales tax."

State Representative Patty Stinson met with the board of commissioners and board of elections last Friday. County Administrator Steve Sanders reported, "It appears she has already had some proposed legislation drafted that would only apply to Dooly County that affects the qualifications to serve on the board of elections. I think that usually, the local government agency has to make a request."

County Attorney Bert Gregory explained, "This original legislation came about whenever her predecessor

put it in at our request. We wanted to have a board of elections that would be representative of the people and it wouldn't be in the power of an elected official, the probate judge. Now the state has followed suit with that in the last year or so, but we were 10-years ahead of the curve and getting it away from being political. There's politics involved, but it always begins with how it affects the local."

A request was made by a landowner requesting that the county abandon Groves Landing Road located off of River Road. Officials agreed to meet with members of the planning commission Monday, Feb. 9 at 5:30 p.m. to discuss zoning setbacks for chicken houses in the county.

Currently, the zoning ordinance has a zoning setback of 1,600 feet. The planning commission had made a recommendation to change the setback back to 1,000 feet, but it has not been adopted. Commissioners learned that Ms. Rebecca Tydings has resigned from the board of health and her current term expires March 31. No action was taken.

The board agreed to advertise a notice of the proposed abandonment, send a notice to all of the landowners and hold a public hearing. If the board determines that section of road no longer serves a substantial public purpose, commissioners can vote to abandon the road. Ms.



Photo By Tim Franzén
Ms. Lyndsey Walters addressed the board last Thursday. She is a resident of Ben Hill County and is running for District Attorney in the Cordele Judicial Circuit.

Lyndsey Walters spoke to the board. She is a resident of Ben Hill County and is running for District Attorney in the Cordele Judicial Circuit. The Georgia Department

PROPERTY TAX CONTINUED PG 4A

John Penney, A Georgia Voice Carried by Grace

By Jackson McKee for
Christian Voice Magazine

For more than four decades, John Penney has lived at the crossroads of Country music, Gospel truth, and heartfelt storytelling. His journey - from Southern Georgia stages to national Country charts, and ultimately to the front lines of Christian Country ministry - is a testament to a man shaped by faith, family, and a calling that

refused to let him go.

John Penney grew up in the musical soil of Southern Georgia, surrounded by the sounds of Country greats, Gospel harmonies, and the Rock 'n' Roll that shaped a generation.

Those influences formed the foundation of his artistry, but even early on, Penney developed a style unmistakably his own. His first major chapter unfolded with the Sunshine Ex-

press Band, a six-piece Country/Rock group that toured concert halls, fairs, festivals, and nightclubs across the Southeast. The road sharpened his voice, his stage presence, and his understanding of what moves an audience.

Penney's career shifted dramatically when he connected with legendary Nashville producer Joe Gibson, a partnership that helped him flourish as a solo Country artist. His songs began receiving national attention, opening doors to share the stage with icons such as Merle Haggard, John Anderson, Ronnie McDowell, T. Graham Brown, Freddy Fender, Moe Bandy, and Helen Cornelius. During his time with NSD/Soundwaves Records, Penney's songwriting and vocal talent earned him significant recognition.



Photo Contributed
John Penney

He was twice named one of Georgia's Top Ten acts by the Atlanta Songwriters Association, and his original material won the Middle Georgia Talent Search for both 'Best Original Music' and 'Best Song.'

His work repeatedly caught

the attention of the Indie Bulletin Songwriting Competition, where he reached the Top 10 on two separate occasions. Billboard also honored him with multiple awards during this

PENNY CONTINUED PG 4A

Make Winter Weather Preparations



Contributed

GFWC Georgia Vienna Woman's Club reminds you that with the possibility of more severe weather ahead, make preparations to be safe. Know the telephone numbers you need to have for emergencies including Medical Supply Co. (order extra oxygen tanks in case of power

outage.)

Also have the numbers for a wrecker-towing service, electrician, plumber, tree removal services, medical doctor and veterinarian nearby. Keep a current list of medications taped to your refrigerator door and always check on your disabled, elderly family members and neighbors.

City of Unadilla Water Main Leak

Contributed

A portion of Third Street between West Railroad Street and Pine Street in Unadilla, Ga. experienced a water main leak last Tuesday. Some homes and businesses in the area were affected

with little to no water pressure.

The Public Works Department worked diligently and repaired the leak. Officials with the City of Unadilla apologized for any inconvenience that might have occurred.

Dooly County Family Connection Holds Annual Planning Meeting

By Tim Franzén
News Observer Reporter

Area members of Dooly County Family Connection met last Wednesday to receive a data review update from Amanda O'Neal-Neisent, family connection coordinator who explained, "This is the current plan that we are in right now. This will not be fully implemented until June. Then we will roll into the plan that we are planning for (as of Wednesday, June 21) in July of this year. Our main focus is partner engagement. This plan will not be completed until June, but this is what we'll be using as our base line for our FY-27 plan."

Michael Johnson, regional director with Ga. Family Connection was also present along with representatives from that partnership as well as the local President of the Dooly County Family Connection Rhonda Lamb. The purpose of this meeting was to initiate the process of implementing the Fiscal

Year 2026 Annual Plan.

The collaborative, "Will continue to place a large focus on economic family self-sufficiency through our many programs and services. We will place an emphasis on serving our under-resourced families in Dooly County through 'The Reason', The Kinship Corner and the Birthday closet. We plan to actively assist with job readiness and college planning through the college and career academy and through the GED program.

We are also continuing to strengthen our strategy with early literacy and school success strategies for children 0-8-years-old through partnership programs and activities including Reading with Santa, The Not-So-Scary Reading event and Seuss on the Loose. We will also use our strong partnerships to focus on school truancy with our 'Reading and Attendance Are The Keys to Success' incentive. We also plan to host several literacy events

such as 'Cuddle Up and Read and Literacy Movie Events that will give us the chance to engage with parents about ways they can improve or help with literacy at home.

We will also continue to distribute books at our local health department and provide newborn literacy packets at our pregnancy care center with handouts from the BASICS and Get Georgia Reading in both English and Spanish.

We are recipients of the federal Literacy Matters grant through Congressman Sanford Bishop that is providing funding and resources to enhance and expand our early childhood literacy activities. These funds will be used to promote literacy in Dooly County and to improve upon the programs and services that we already have in place. Little Libraries have been placed throughout some of the cities in Dooly County and we

DCFC CONTINUED PG 2A

GFB Seeks Entries For 2026 Middle School and High School Art Contests

By Ga. Farm Bureau

Georgia Farm Bureau (GFB) is now accepting entries for the 2026 Georgia Farm Bureau Middle School Bookmark and High School Art contests. Students who submit their artwork have the chance to win some great cash prizes.

The GFB Middle School Bookmark Contest is open to all public, private and home-schooled sixth, seventh and eighth-grade students statewide.

The 10 GFB district winners of the bookmark contest will receive \$100 each and compete for the state prize of \$150. County Farm Bureaus may also offer prizes to their local winners.

The GFB High School Art Contest is open to all public, private and home-schooled students in ninth through 12th grades.

The 10 GFB district art contest

winners will receive a cash prize of \$100. The 10 GFB district art contest winners will compete for the state prize of \$250 cash. County Farm Bureaus may also offer prizes to their local winners. Students may enter either contest in the county in which they live or attend school but not both counties.

To enter either contest, students or teachers should contact their county Farm Bureau for an official entry form and complete contest rules and to learn the county's February deadline for entering the contests. County Farm Bureaus must submit their entries to the Georgia Farm Bureau for the state contest by March 6.

Middle school students will be given a blank bookmark and asked to draw a picture that depicts some aspect of Georgia agriculture. Students may use

crayons, markers or colored pencils to create their bookmark that illustrates agriculture.

High schoolers entering the art contest should draw a scene depicting Georgia agriculture. The finished artwork must be on 8.5x11-inch white paper. It can be created entirely in black/white or color in a variety of media including graphite, charcoal, pastel, chalk, colored pencil, pen-and-ink, ballpoint pen, and mixed media appropriate for printing. Art must be hand-drawn. Digital Art is not accepted.

Artwork entered in both contests will be judged on 1) how well the artwork represents modern agriculture found in the artist's county or Georgia and 2) artistic merit.

Entries are limited to one per person in both contests. Multiple entries will be disqualified.

Previous state winners are not eligible for either contest. All artwork submitted in both contests must be original and become the property of Georgia Farm Bureau (GFB) once submitted. GFB may use artwork from both contests on various products distributed or sold by the organization to promote agriculture.

Between the crops Georgia farmers grow and the jobs agriculture creates to harvest, process and transport these crops, agriculture contributed \$100.4 billion to Georgia's economy in 2024, according to the UGA College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. For more information about the contests contact your county Farm Bureau office.

Students and teachers may visit <https://gfb.ag/video> to view a video about Georgia ag-



riculture, <https://www.gfb.org/connect/farm-markets> to find a farm near you or <https://gfb.ag/25caesagimpactreport> to ac-

cess info about Georgia agriculture. For more information about the contests contact your county Farm Bureau office.

Motorist Assist Leads to Arrest

By CCSO

Last Wednesday, January 21, at approximately 3:45 p.m., a deputy from the Crisp County Sheriff's Office initiated what she believed to be a motorist assist with a vehicle sitting stationary with emergency flashers activated on Old Albany Road, near McKinney Road. During this encounter, the driver fled the scene, leading to a pursuit.

The driver, Mykera Jones, was initially found asleep inside the vehicle. During the interaction, the deputy detected the odor of marijuana and discovered that Jones did not have a valid driver's license and had multiple outstanding warrants. When the deputy asked her to step out of the vehicle, Jones fled southbound on Old Albany Road toward Highway 300 at a high rate of speed.

The pursuit continued into Worth County, where assistance from the Warwick Police Department led to Jones being located and taken into custody at a local gas station. A search of the vehicle resulted in the dis-



covery of suspected narcotics, a large amount of U.S. currency, multiple debit cards belonging to different individuals, numerous cell phones, blank checks, a laptop, and a firearm with ammunition.

Mykera Jones, a 26-year-old female from Dawson, Ga. was transported to the Crisp County Jail and is charged with the following: fleeing-attempting to

elude an officer, three counts financial transaction card theft, possession of a schedule I controlled substance, prescription drugs must be in their original container, obstructing or hindering law enforcement officers, DUI, seatbelt violation, speeding in excess of maximum limits, reckless driving and driving while license suspended.

Local Club Announces First Meet and Greet Event for 2026

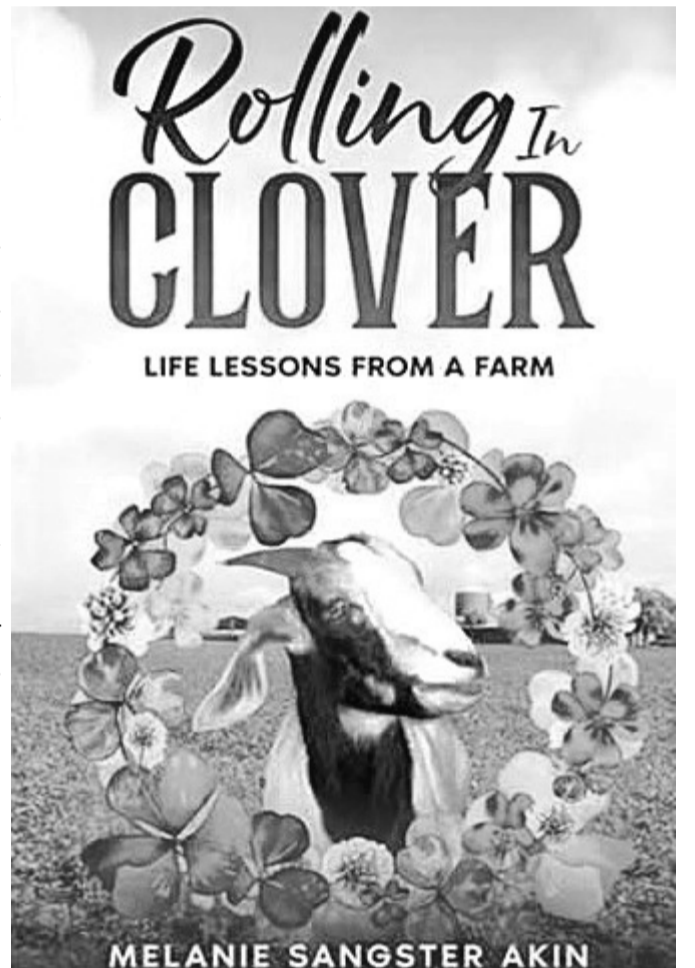
Contributed

Members of the Vienna Woman's Club invite the community to the first event in the Meet and Greet Author series scheduled for Monday, February 23rd at 4:00 p.m. at the Dooly County Library.

Featured author is Melanie Sangster Akin who grew up in Dooly County. Melanie may be remembered for her weekly column entitled "Mellie's Musings," which was published for several years. Melanie loves farming, especially the animals who live there.

From roosters and chickens to goats and cats, Melanie believes each has its own place on a farm. Her newest book, entitled "Rolling in Clover," features Miss Creeley, Hoppy, Ruby Tuesday and Clover. The antics of these characters will make you smile, laugh out loud or cry.

Other published titles include "Gran's Table," which is a collection of recipes and family memories, and "Country Moments," which include poems from the farm. Don't miss this opportunity to hear excerpts read and purchase a copy of one of her books.



Fighting Fire, Protecting Forests and Serving Georgia



By GFC

A slightly new look. A clear mission. The same commitment to Georgia. Last week, the Georgia Forestry Commission is proudly introduced our new


tagline: Fighting Fire. Protecting Forests. Serving Georgia. This isn't just a slogan, it reflects who we are and what we do every day.


From responding to wildfires and emergencies to managing


forest health and supporting communities statewide, our people serve as first responders when it matters most. For more information, visit: <https://www.facebook.com/GeorgiaForestryCommission>.


Cold Weather is expected through the Weekend

Protect People, Pets, Pipes, & Plants from cold weather


People


Pets


Pipes


Plants

By NWS

The National Weather Service has provided some tips for keeping your home and loved ones safe. Protect people, pets, pipes and plants from cold weather. Minimize time outdoors, prepare for power outages, check on elderly and other vulnerable people to make sure they're okay.

Keep your pets warm, dry and indoors as much as possible. Ensure their food and water

doesn't freeze. Limit outside time and keep them bundled up. Insulate pipes if possible. Open up sink cabinets to expose pipes to heated air. Disconnect hoses and turn off water to sprinklers.

Everyone is at risk from the dangers of extreme cold, but newborns, the elderly, people with chronic illness, outdoor workers and the unhoused are more vulnerable.

Cold weather can also affect crops. In late spring or early fall, cold air outbreaks can dam-

age or kill produce for farmers, as well as residential plants and flowers. A freeze occurs when the temperature drops below 32°F. Freezes and their effects are significant during the growing season.

Frost develops on clear, calm nights and can occur when the air temperature is in the mid-30s. Each plant species has a different tolerance to cold temperatures. For more information, visit weather.gov.

Georgia GOP senators target Raffensperger over voter registration lists

By Mark Niese
Staff Writer

Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — Several Georgia Republican senators introduced a resolution Tuesday demanding that Republican Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger comply with the Trump administration's pursuit of the state's unredacted voter registration list.

Raffensperger objected to the effort, saying state law prevents sharing voters' private information such as full Social Security numbers, dates of birth and driver's license numbers.

The U.S. Department of Justice has requested voter lists from all 50 states in recent months, saying it wants to ensure accurate registration information. The DOJ sued Georgia for the statewide voter list last month.

The Senate resolution comes from allies of Republican Lt. Gov. Burt Jones, who is running

for governor against Raffensperger. The resolution is largely symbolic and doesn't carry the force of a law.

It accuses Raffensperger of "willful and persistent obstruction" after his office provided a public version of Georgia's voter list to the U.S. Department of Justice.

"All I'm asking from our duly elected secretary of state is to participate in any legally established investigation, like any other citizen would be required to do," said state Sen. Randy Robertson, a Republican from Cataula and the sponsor of Senate Resolution 563. "The Department of Justice is the highest-ranking law enforcement agency in the United States, and they absolutely have the right to investigate when they choose."

Raffensperger's office said it has already complied with the DOJ's request "to the fullest extent of state law," citing con-

cerns that private voter information could be shared by the DOJ with outside parties.

"Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger swore an oath to uphold the law and act in the best interests of hardworking Georgians. He will not break the law, compromise private information, or risk identity theft for millions of voters," said a statement from the secretary of state's office.

Besides Georgia, the Department of Justice has also sued several Democrat-run states that have refused to comply with the DOJ's request for voter records. Republican-controlled states such as Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee have agreed to provide full voter registration lists.

The DOJ's lawsuit against Georgia is scheduled for a hearing in federal court in Macon later this month.

DCFC

CONTINUED FROM 1A

will assist in stocking and maintaining the books and materials available inside the boxes."

Among the goals of family connection locally are to continue with the simply sheltered cohort with Crisp County Family Connection to combat the issues faced by the homeless population in both counties and surrounding areas. Officials are also eager to implement the publication of the All Hands on Dooly Magazine to share data and resources with partners and community including selling

advertising to serve as a fundraising opportunity. The family connection will be in partnership with Fort Valley State University to offer Youth Mental Health First Aid Training for teachers, law enforcement and community members.

Amanda also discussed how Dooly County stacks up in relation to the statewide poverty rate in 2023 and she stated, "It was a 31.6 and the Ga. Rate was 18.8, so we're above the Georgia average and ranked 115th in the state. It's not like Dooly County is a unique thing,

that we're way below the poverty line. There are other counties that are in the same 'boat' we're in that match up to us demographically. At the end of the meeting, Michael Johnson praised members of the collaborative for their commitment on behalf of families in Dooly County and the surrounding communities.

For more information, contact Amanda O'Neal-Neisent-Dooly County Family Connection Coordinator at 229-947-2788 or at: doolycountyfamilyconnection@gmail.com.

Ocmulgee River Conservation District POSTER CONTEST

CONTEST RULES

- ANY MEDIUM CAN BE USED (PAINT, CRAYONS, COLORED PENCILS, STICKERS, ETC.).
- POSTERS CAN ONLY BE CREATED BY ONE INDIVIDUAL, NOT A GROUP OF INDIVIDUALS.
- THE 2026 STEWARDSHIP THEME "SOIL. WHERE IT ALL BEGINS." MUST BE INCLUDED ON THE FRONT SIDE OF EACH POSTER SUBMISSION TO BE ELIGIBLE.
- HOW TO SUBMIT: SEND A PICTURE OF THE POSTER VIA EMAIL.
- PLEASE SUBMIT STUDENT NAME, GRADE, TEACHER CONTACT, AND SCHOOL INFO WITH EACH POSTER SUBMISSION.
- IF YOU HAVE A WHOLE CLASS DOING THE CONTEST, PLEASE UPLOAD PICTURES INTO A GOOGLE DRIVE FOLDER AND SHARE IT.
- POSTERS CAN BE ANY SIZE FROM A 8.5X11 SHEET OF PAPER TO FULL SIZE POSTER.

CASH PRIZES WILL BE GIVEN FOR WINNING POSTER.

Soil.
Where it all Begins

ELIGIBILITY
PUBLIC, PRIVATE, AND HOME-SCHOOLED STUDENTS IN KINDERGARTEN THROUGH 5TH GRADE IN THE FOLLOWING COUNTIES: BIBB, CRAWFORD, DOOLY, HOUSTON, MACON, PEACH, PULASKI, TAYLOR, AND WILCOX

EMAIL SUBMISSIONS TO LEANNE.CHAFIN@GACD.US
BY MARCH 2, 2026

Ocmulgee River Conservation District Now Accepting Entries For Poster Contest

By GACD
Perry, GA January 21, 2026—The Ocmulgee River Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), a local agency dedicated to the conservation and stewardship of the area's natural resources, is now accepting entries for their Poster Contest for students located within the District's service area. The service area includes Bibb, Crawford, Dooly, Houston, Macon, Peach, Pulaski, Taylor, and Wilcox counties. Education is a critical element of the conservation effort at the local, state and national levels. Educating young people about the benefits of conservation helps to ensure the next generation will be wise

stewards of America's natural resources. The annual Poster Contest provides public, private and home-schooled students in Kindergarten through 5th grades the chance to have their art selected to advance on to the state contest. Each year, the poster's topic reflects the National Association of Conservation District's annual Stewardship theme and highlights the work of Conservation Districts to protect and enhance natural resources. This year's theme "Soil. Where it all Begins." celebrates the incredible power of soil to support life in all its forms. The deadline to enter the contest is March 2, 2026. There will be cash prizes given to winners. The District

winner will also advance on to the State contest. The Ocmulgee River Soil and Water Conservation District is a unit of state government that directs natural resource management programs in Bibb, Crawford, Dooly, Houston, Macon, Peach, Pulaski, Taylor, and Wilcox counties. The Conservation District works with farmers, landowners, and with other units of government to educate and actively promote programs and practices that support the conservation, and use and development of soil, water, and related resources. More information can be found at www.gacd.us/ocmulgeeriver.

Georgia Senate Republicans pitch gradual elimination of state income tax

workers who are struggling the most with the cost of living. He said two-thirds of Georgia workers would see their income tax eliminated at first.

"Let's give breaks to families who are feeling the crunch the most first," he said.

Affordability has become a top issue for Republicans in Georgia and nationally, leading to concerns about a voter backlash this year.

Jones is running for governor and Tillery, who also chairs the Senate's budget-writing Appropriations Committee, is running to succeed him as the leader of the Senate. Also in contention for lieutenant governor are two other members of the study committee: Sen. Steve Gooch, R-Dahlonega, the former Senate majority leader; and Sen. Greg Dolezal, R-Cumming, who is vice chairman of the Appropriations Committee.

John F. Kennedy, a Macon Republican who was Senate President Pro Tempore during the last legislative session, also served on the committee until he resigned last month to focus on his lieutenant governor primary campaign against those other three committee members.

The recommendations said the income tax would be eliminated without raising sales taxes or implementing a state property tax — and that no cuts to ser-

vices would result. The recommendations passed along party lines, with the three Democrats on the committee opposed.

Sen. Nan Orrock, D-Atlanta, noted that the quarter of highest earners would benefit the most from full abolishment of the income tax in 2032, keeping more than \$11 billion in their wallets.

Abolishing the income tax for all earners would also eliminate a revenue stream equal to more than 40% of the current \$37.7 billion budget. The Democrats were dubious that this would not strain government services.

Orrock pointed to a dearth of health clinics in some counties. "We have we have a lot of funding needs," she said.

Tillery said the elimination of the tax on earnings up to \$50,000 and \$100,000 could be achieved with some simple steps.

He said the first \$3 billion could be covered with a mix of surplus revenue — state income exceeded expenses by nearly \$2 billion in the fiscal year that ended in July — and new financing. With interest rates high, the state has been paying cash for capital projects rather than borrowing money through bonds. By borrowing the money instead, it would have another \$1 billion to put toward income tax reductions, he said.

The state could fund the rest of the cut when it reaches \$6 billion in fiscal year 2028 by slicing 10% off the \$30 billion spent on tax credits and tax exemptions, he said.

To become law, the Senate would need cooperation from the House of Representatives.

Speaker Jon Burns, a Republican from Newington, said Wednesday that his chamber wanted to collaborate with the Senate on reducing the income tax rate, like it did last year when the General Assembly dropped it a fifth of a percentage point, from 5.39%. But he sounded a note of caution about altogether eliminating the revenue stream.

State government must be able to pay for services such as health care, public safety and education, he said. "We have to have the details, and it has to work."

Dooly County Community CALENDAR

email: thenewsobservereditor@gmail.com

Sun	Mon
5	6
12	13
19	20
26	27

By Ty Tagami
Bureau Chief

Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — With affordability a top concern heading into the elections this year, Georgia's Senate Republicans are proposing billions of dollars in cuts to the state income tax.

A study committee assigned by Lt. Gov. Burt Jones, a Republican and advocate for abolishing the 5.19% tax, approved recommendations on Wednesday that would eliminate it for lower-income earners starting in January, eventually abolishing it altogether.

The committee voted to recommend eliminating the tax on the first \$50,000 in annual income for individuals and the first \$100,000 for couples.

The cut would take effect Jan. 1. That is midway through the next fiscal year, when it would divert \$3 billion from the state budget. It would deduct \$6 billion in the following full fiscal year.

The committee also called for increasing the cuts to higher income levels in the future, with abolishment of the \$16 billion revenue stream by 2032.

Sen. Blake Tillery, R-Vidalia, who led the committee, said the initial cuts need to help teachers, police officers and other

2nd Pastor's Appreciation -Feb 15

Shiloh Baptist Church of Elko, Georgia

Celebrates Pastor Roosevelt McWilliams 2nd Pastor's Appreciation
Sunday, February 15, 2026, at 1:30 PM

Guest Speaker will be Rev. Derrell McIntosh of Green Grove Baptist Church. Everyone is invited to attend.

Library

1200 East Union St., Vienna
Mon. - Thurs. 9AM-6PM
Fri. 9:30A.M. - 4PM.

Closed Saturday.

Thursdays - COLOR & CHAT.

Color books and colored pencils will be provided or you can bring your own. For more information contact Jill Kloberdanz, library manager library at 229-268-4687.

The Elizabeth Harris Library

Unadilla Location:
Tues-Thurs 8:30AM-6PM
Friday 9AM-4PM

Byromville Location:
Saturday 9AM-12PM Noon
Tues-Thurs 2:30PM-5:30PM

"An Hour of Encouragement"

Pastor Dean and the New Poplar Spring Baptist Church would like for you to join us every Wednesday night @7pm for "An Hour of Encouragement" on our Conference Call line. Please dial (253) 993-3761. (TNS)

Bethlehem Baptist Church

Worship With Us Each & Every Sunday. Worship starts at 11:00am. Bible Study on each Sunday at 5:00pm. Jerry Jamal Sanders, Sr., Pastor. (TNS)

Christ Chapel Bingo Night in Byromville

Enjoy Bingo Game night on the second Thursday of every month starting at 6:00 p.m. in the Byromville Municipal Complex. This is for individuals 55 and older. Free entry-fellowship-games and prizes.

Town of Dooling Meeting

The Town of Dooling-Town Meeting will now be held on the 3rd Tuesday of each month starting at 6:00p.m. (Except for the months of July & Dec. when no meeting will be held.) If you plan to bring an issue to the board, please contact the Mayor in writing a week before the town meeting to be placed on the agenda.

Dooly County

THE FIRST FRIDAY IN FEBRUARY IS NATIONAL WEAR RED DAY®

Cardiovascular disease is the No. 1 killer of women.

Every heart tells a story. Help us change the ending for women everywhere.

Wear RED for yourself or someone you love.

Friday, Feb. 6, 2026

Local Club Supports Nat'l Wear Red Day

Contributed

Vienna Woman's Club supports this important cause and reminds everyone to take care of your heart.

CHURCH DIRECTORY

Your Guide To Local Houses of Worship

Athens Hill Baptist Church
Vienna, GA 229-268-4883

AOH Church of God
Vienna, GA 229-268-1903

Bakersfield Baptist Church
Vienna, GA

Bay Point CME
Byromville, GA

Bethel Baptist Church
Vienna, GA 229-268-2848

Bethlehem Baptist Church
Byromville, GA 229-433-2102

Big Poplar Baptist Church
Unadilla, GA

Brown Chapel Baptist Church
Unadilla, GA 478-627-9466

Byromville Baptist Church
Byromville, GA 229-433-2505

Byromville Methodist Church
Byromville, GA 229-321-9292

Camp Creek Baptist Church
Unadilla, GA 478-627-3929

Vienna Church of Christ
Vienna, GA 229-268-1994

Vienna Church of God
Vienna, GA 229-268-1404

County Line Baptist Church
Unadilla, GA

Destiny Worship Center International Ministries
Vienna, GA (478) 273-8112

Dooling Baptist Church
Byromville, GA

Double Branch Freewill Baptist Church
Unadilla, GA

Drayton Baptist Church
Vienna, GA 229-268-8456

Drayton Wesleyan Church
Vienna, GA, 229-321-9292

Ebenezer Baptist Church
Vienna, GA 229-268-2964

Evangelistic Tabernacle Church

NAPA Brooks Auto Parts
229-268-2700
313 W. Union St., Vienna
Open Through Lunch
Eddie Conner, Manager

Akin Insurance Agency, Inc.
Proudly Serving Dooly County for more than 10 years!
Corner of Union & 3rd
229-268-4751 • Vienna

THE CITIZENS AGENCY
"Dependable Insurance"
121 N. 3rd Street
P.O. Box 486
Vienna, GA 31092
229-268-2800

Church
Vienna, GA
Mt. Olive Baptist Church
Byromville, GA
Mt. Moriah Baptist Church
Unadilla, GA
Mt. Vernon Baptist Church
Vienna, GA
Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church
Vienna, GA
New Bethel Baptist Church
Unadilla, GA 478-627-3775
Mt. Zion CME
Vienna, GA 229-268-6013
Northside Missionary Baptist Church
Vienna, GA
New Bethel CME
Pinehurst, GA
Pinehurst Baptist Church
Pinehurst, GA
Pinehurst Methodist Church
Pinehurst, GA
Pleasant Hill Freewill Baptist Church
Vienna, GA 229-268-8746

Pleasant Hill Baptist Church
Byromville, GA
Richwood Baptist Church
Vienna, GA
Pleasant Valley Baptist Church
Pinehurst, GA 229-645-3713
Reedy Branch Baptist Church
740 Church Avenue
Byromville, GA
Riverview Baptist Church
Vienna, GA
Shady Grove CME Church
Vienna, GA
Shiloh Methodist Church
Vienna, GA
Smyrna Baptist Church
Vienna, GA 229-268-6852
Snow Methodist Church
Unadilla, GA
St. John Baptist Church
Vienna, GA
Springhill Baptist Church
Vienna, GA
St. Luke CME
Lilly, GA
St. Mark's Baptist Church
Vienna, GA
Tippettville Baptist Church
Vienna, GA
Trails of Faith Deliverance Holiness Church
Vienna, GA 229-268-4377
Turkey Creek Baptist Church
Lilly, GA
Unadilla First Baptist Church
Unadilla, GA 478-627-3615
Unadilla United Methodist Church
Unadilla, GA 478-627-3330
Vienna Congregation
Vienna, GA
Vienna First Baptist Church
Vienna, GA 229-268-4386
Vienna Methodist Church
Vienna, GA 229-268-4207

IF YOU NEED TO ADVERTISE EMAIL
Phyllis Keaton
phyllis.keaton@yahoo.com
(229)938-6253



TIM LEWIS
Columnist

In The Garden With 2026 GARDENING DOS AND DON'TS

The New Year is well under way and I'm sure that all of us have resolved to be better gardeners in 2026. This week, as in past years, I would like to share some useful do's and don'ts of gardening that, hopefully, will help us in this effort.

Gardening Do's

- Do plan your garden layout to match sunlight, soil, and water needs.
- Do start small to avoid getting overwhelmed.
- Do, if possible, enrich your soil with compost and organic matter before planting.
- Do water plants deeply at the soil level, preferably in the morning, to encourage deep roots and prevent fungus disease issues.
- Do mulch to retain moisture, control weeds, and regulate soil temperature.
- Do space plants correctly, allowing room for mature growth and good air circulation.
- Do deadhead spent flowers to promote more blooms and keep the garden looking tidy.
- Do check often for pests, diseases, and weeds.
- Do choose plants suited to your climate (hardiness zone).

- Do fertilize the lawn in late summer to early fall. Grass has the ability to store carbohydrates over the winter, which it produces thanks to fertilizer; so when spring comes, your lawn will look lush and green.

- Do pay attention to the depth that seeds should be planted. Always read your seed packets for this information because planting seeds too deep or too shallow can cause the seed to fail to sprout or dry out the seed too quickly.

Gardening Don'ts

- Don't work soil when it's wet, as it compacts and destroys soil structure.
- Don't plant heat-loving vegetables or flowers too early in spring; wait for warm soil and warm nights.
- Don't overcrowd plants, which leads to competition for resources and increased pest/disease risk.
- Don't water plant leaves, which can cause fungal problems; water the roots instead.
- Don't over-fertilize. It can harm plants and the environment.
- Don't walk in your garden beds. This compacts the soil, inhibiting plant growth. If you must walk amongst

your plants, put down a board to walk on to distribute your weight evenly.

- Don't overwork the soil. It should not be the consistency of fine powder. Instead, it should have a wide range of particle sizes and a fairly coarse feel.

- Don't ignore signs of disease. If you see pests or disease, treat the plant with the recommended herbicide or insecticide or remove the plant so the problem doesn't spread.

- Don't throw away the fallen leaves from your trees. Chop them up and either put them in your compost pile or spread them on your garden and till them in the soil. They will improve your soil.

- Don't plant glossy privet, wisteria, or Bradford pears- anywhere.

- Don't overwater your houseplants. Wait until the soil in their pot feels dry to the touch. Then water until a small amount of excess water drains through the bottom of the pot.

- Don't plant shrubs and trees too close to your house. Give them plenty of room, keeping in mind their size at maturity.

I hope these do's and don'ts will help you in your gardening endeavors this year. More do's and don'ts to come.

Tim Lewis is a Georgia Green Industry Association Certified Plant Professional, gardening writer, and former Perry High School horticulture instructor. He can be reached at (478)954-1507 or timlewis1@windstream.net.



BILLY POWELL
Columnist

Parables To Ponder NEVER EVER GIVE UP

During a World Series game in which the Atlanta Braves were losing, the TV camera caught several Braves players in the dugout laughing and joking. At the time the New York Yankees were beating them pretty badly. It bothered me that these players could have a cavalier attitude, particularly since they had already played 164 games to win their division, beat Houston in 6-games to win the National League and now were playing for the championship of the world. How could they be smiling and displaying such levity? True competitors do not take losing lightly. Vince Lombardi, the great Green Bay Packer coach said, "Show me someone who doesn't hate to lose and I will show you a loser." Bear Bryant, the famous Alabama Crimson Tide coach said, "Winning isn't everything but it beats anything that comes in second." And this writer once said, "The game is not lost until the fat lady sings and, if she purses her lips to sing, slap her face."

I have never enjoyed losing any contest, whether it be

a game or another type endeavor. I played basketball at Perry under legendary Coach Eric Staples who was a fierce competitor. Ask any of his former players if they ever saw Coach Staples smile when he was behind. In fact, I never saw him smile when we were ahead. He was always intense, striving for perfection, never being satisfied with anything short of total effort and unyielding determination.

I have played a lot of backyard basketball. We would choose sides before playing. I was always happy to be chosen on the same team with Larry Bailey. Larry was the one of the best backyard players I have ever seen. That's because no opponent had a stronger will to win than he. If his team lost, he didn't get over it soon either. He was always ready to play another game for redemption. Larry for some reason never went out for basketball in high school, but were I in a position to play for all the marbles in basketball, I would want Larry Bailey on my team. He had the will to win and never, ever gave up. I

admire that.

The will to win is important, but more important is the will not to sin. Every person has a temptation level at which he or she will succumb to the enticements to sin. That level varies from individual to individual depending upon the closeness of his or her walk with the Lord. In Romans 7, Paul speaks of two opposing forces warring within us—the desire to sin and the will to be righteous. He laments the fact that we sometime fall captive to sin.

Joseph is an example of one who overcame great temptation. His brothers sold him to the Ishmaelites, who carried him to Egypt. There he became a servant of Potiphar, an officer of the king, who placed him in charge of his household. Because Joseph was young and handsome, Potiphar's wife lusted after him and sought to go to bed with him. He refused. One day she made a sexual advance, grabbing his robe. Joseph ran unclothed from the house. Potiphar's wife claimed attempted rape, so her husband dealt harshly with Joseph, sending him to jail. But God looks after His own. Later, Joseph interpreted the king's dream and was restored to great power as the Governor of Egypt.

go against the things of Jesus.) Amen again.

4). verse 6 and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled. (Disobedience comes from Satan, and he will try to load Christians down with a whole truckload unless we allow our obedience in Jesus rule the day and situation. Amen.

Here is the summation of today's article: I (we) can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (us).

My word to all of us: when Satan tempts us let's "slap him upside the head" with a heavy dose of God's word. Amen Jesus loves us to heaven and back. Until next time.



DR. LANIER ROBERTS
Columnist

Writings From The Heart CHRISTIAN STYLE OF LIVING

1). I Cor. 10:3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. (Yes, we are walking around in this human body, but Christians do not go after the worldly life-style.) Amen.

2). verse 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, (everything Satan throws against us, we,

with the help of the Holy Spirit, pull down those temptations in a heartbeat.) Amen.

3). verse 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, (We keep our discernment on the ready so we can do instant battle when error and ridicule

In Politics, Process Is Power

Charlie Harper
Guest Columnist

As we older folks think about A former Georgia House Majority Leader once told his caucus "Never confuse what you do when campaigning with what you (have to) do when governing." There is some wisdom in this statement. What voters demand they be told in order for candidates to be elected and re-elected is often very different from the hard choices that must be made when governing.

This is not to feed a trope that says "politicians always say one thing and do another". It's instead to demonstrate that slogans and actions now live in almost parallel universes, where campaigns are centered on feelings. It's the job of those elected to channel these vibes into actual policies.

Campaigns are designed to show you, the voters, how you will be winners. The missing details would show tradeoffs – what must be given up in order to get something. In campaigns these details become lines of attack for the opposition. Good policy can often die due to a bad campaign.

The Georgia General Assembly is now officially in the process of governing. The one constitutional requirement is that they deliver a balanced budget to the Governor at the end of their session. Anything else they choose to tackle is up to them.

The process of campaigns is also ongoing. Many of the state's top positions are without incumbents. Qualifying officially occurs the first week of March, inside the Capitol.

The first week of March also contains "Crossover Day", the deadline for a bill to pass either chamber for it to be considered by the other this year. As such, the politics of campaigning now marches side by side with the politics of governing. Broad and purposely vague slogans will meet those details that not only will determine spending and policy for this year, but will set

up the base spending scenarios for those soon to be elected.

Despite campaign influences, the governing process remains the same. In the middle of this mix, the power subtly shifts.

Governor Brian Kemp holds line-item veto power, lest any legislator get the idea that he's irrelevant in this process. And yet, the final accountability for the finished product will lay at the feet of those who remain in office next year.

Lieutenant Governor Burt Jones hopes to hold that veto pen next year, while presiding over the Senate chamber this year. Central to his campaign is a plan to eliminate the state's income tax over time, with the first step to exempt each individual's first \$50,000 of income from taxation. A lot of the details of where the spending would be cut or what other revenues would be raised and from whom would presumably come once Jones has the Governor's mansion – and the power of the veto pen.

House Speaker Jon Burns, meanwhile, wants to eliminate property taxes for Georgia's homeowners. This comes from growing frustrations with local governments who both collect and spend property tax revenues, and have allowed rising real estate prices to grow their tax collections and local spending.

The details for either plan will eventually have to come out in the state's budget. Each Appropriations Chairman will work with his committees to arrive not only at a budget for this year, but with eyes looking through to next year's challenges and changes, and beyond.

The Senate Budget Chairman responsible for reconciling these pledges into details is Blake Tillery of Vidalia. He, too, is running for a different office. By anecdotal accounts and the sparse public polling available, he seems to be doing well in the crowded field to replace Jones as the Lieutenant Governor. He

also chaired the LG's committee on how to eliminate the state income tax.

There is no policy daylight between the Lt Governor who would be Governor and the Appropriations Chairman who would replace him on the issue of phasing out the income tax. Both are charting their political futures on it, with the power of their current office part of the institutional process to help get them there.

There is always risk in future elections of who holds power now versus who might in the future. The other side of this risk coin is the House Appropriations Chairman, Matt Hatchett of Dublin. Given the high likelihood that Republicans will retain control of the legislature after the elections, he's the most certain of those in the budget process to be in the same seat – and to wield the same power.

Those campaigning for statewide office will get the most headlines, and they should. Within the Capitol, however, stability and certainty are currency. Both Appropriations Chairmen hold an outsized amount of power and influence over the entire legislative process that extends well beyond the budget.

Chairman Tillery has a decent chance to direct not just the Budget but the entire Senate next year. In the Capitol's power players, that gives him currency now with an upside option for the future.

When it comes to landing the plane with details this year and next, however, don't sleep on Matt Hatchett. He's the one who must internalize that this year's details will become next year's problems or opportunities.

His peers know he'll be acting today for the starting point they will begin with this time next year, under new leadership with new goals and agendas. They understand and value this stability in a season of change. That directly equates to even more political power.

PROPERTY TAX CONTINUED FROM 1A

of Transportation performs an annual final risk assessment score for the Dooly County Transit Program.

Following a review of the third-party operator Resource Management Services, according to the county administrator, it "Was determined that your program meets the requirements established by the Federal Transit Administration. It's running well. I get virtually no complaints." The county's

annual contribution to the retirement program is due Jan. 31 in the amount of \$750,593.

In other news:

- The Dooly County Chamber of Commerce is planning its 'Dooly Delegation Trip to D.C.' Wednesday, March 4.
- The next meeting of the county commissioners is scheduled for Thursday, Feb. 5 at 9:00 a.m.

PENNY CONTINUED FROM 1A

period, and his debut album, "Georgia Lady," produced several singles that climbed into Cashbox Magazine's Top 100. These achievements placed him firmly among the most promising Country artists of his era, yet Penney's story was never just about the spotlight.

At the height of his momentum, Penney made a decision that revealed the heart behind the artist. When his daughters Candace, Carla, and Caitlin were born, he stepped back from the demands of touring to prioritize home life.

"Family has always come first," Penney has often shared, and that conviction led him deeper into his local church alongside his wife, Carlene, and their girls. It was there that he began writing and performing Christian songs, discovering a new dimension of his musical identity. Though he never drifted far from music, Penney entered a quiet season of reflection and growth. But God was not finished with his voice.

The birth of his granddaughter, Stella, reignited something powerful in Penney's spirit. That moment became the catalyst for his return to the studio, resulting in his first Christian album, "The Gospel Truth." The project was warmly re-

ceived, but Penney sensed there was more to uncover, more to say, more to surrender, more to share. "I have a sense of purpose now," Penney said.

"I want to spread what God is doing in my life, and I am able to play music to do it. That's exciting!" His renewed passion led to a season of prolific writing, even as his family walked through painful battles with cancer and drug addiction. Those struggles deepened his ministry, shaping songs that carried both honesty and hope. One of the most poignant examples is found in the lyrics of I Will Be Saved, written with his daughter Carla: "Mercy comes down from heaven... washed in the blood of Jesus... I will be saved by His amazing grace." These words reflect the heartbeat of Penney's message: redemption is real, grace is available, and Jesus is still changing lives.

As Penney stepped fully into Christian Country music, doors began opening once again - this time with a deeper purpose behind them. His work in recent years has been met with tremendous affirmation. He has been honored with the Horizon Award, recognized as 'Male Vocalist of the Year,' celebrated for 'Video of the Year,' and named

a Living Legend by the International Country Gospel Music Association. His songs have repeatedly risen to the top of Christian Country charts, earning him multiple number-one placements and solidifying his voice as one of the genre's most heartfelt storytellers.

In 2024, Penney reached a milestone few artists ever experience: he was inducted into the Georgia Country Music Hall of Fame, a recognition that affirmed both his early Country career and his later Gospel ministry.

Today, John Penney continues to travel, sing, write, and minister with a renewed sense of mission. The stages may vary - from churches to festivals to award shows - but the message remains the same. He sums it up simply: "I just want to tell the story of Jesus." Through every lyric, every testimony, and every mile on the road, Penney is doing exactly that.

His music is more than melody - it is ministry. It is the overflow of a heart transformed by grace and determined to share the love of Christ with anyone willing to listen. And as long as God keeps opening doors, John Penney plans to walk through them guitar in hand, singing the truth that changed his life.

Deadline for legal submission is Friday Noon prior to First publication. Email word document to editor@ganevobserver.com

LEGALS

Please enter "LEGAL NOTICE" in the email subject headline. Please be sure to have your contact information listed. Most legal notices run \$15 per 100 words Per publication. Plus a \$10 affidavit fee.

NOTICE PROBATE COURT OF DOOLY COUNTY RE: PETITION FOR APPROVAL OF ANNUAL ACCOUNTING OF THE ESTATE OF FRANCES KEENAN aka HAPPI KEENAN ESTATE NO. 18-0011
 TO: ALL PARTIES OF INTEREST
 The County Administrator, John W. Sherrer, Jr., acting in his capacity as Administrator of the Estate of Frances Keenan aka HAPPI KEENAN has filed a Petition for Approval of Annual Return in reference to the estate of Frances Keenan aka HAPPI KEENAN. This is to notify you that objections to the petition, if any, must be filed by February 23, 2026. All objections to the petitioner must be in writing setting forth the grounds of any such objections and all pleadings must be signed before a notary public or probate court clerk. If any objections are filed, a hearing will be scheduled for a later date in the Probate Court of Dooly County, Courtroom 11, located at Second Street Vienna, Dooly County, Georgia. If no objections are filed, the petition may be granted without a hearing. Rooney Bowen, Dooly Probate Judge By D. Fluellen, Probate Court Clerk 104 2nd Street South Vienna, GA 31092 229-268-4217 1/22, 1/29, 2/5, 2/12, 2026 0768-VNO

NOTICE PROBATE COURT OF DOOLY COUNTY RE: PETITION FOR APPROVAL OF ANNUAL ACCOUNTING OF THE ESTATE OF DEDRICK FUDGE ESTATE NO. 18-044
 TO: ALL PARTIES OF INTEREST
 The County Administrator, John W. Sherrer, Jr., acting in his capacity as Administrator of the Estate Of DEDRICK FUDGE has filed a Petition for Approval of Annual Return in reference to the estate of DEDRICK FUDGE. This is to notify you that objections to the petition, if any, must be filed by February 28, 2026. All objections to the petitioner must be in writing setting forth the grounds of any such objections and all pleadings must be signed before a notary public or probate court clerk. If any objections are filed, a hearing will be scheduled for a later date in the Probate Court of Dooly County, Courtroom 11, located at Second Street Vienna, Dooly County, Georgia. If no objections are filed, the petition may be granted without a hearing. Rooney Bowen, Dooly Probate Judge By D. Fluellen, Probate Court Clerk 104 2nd Street South Vienna, GA 31092 229-268-4217 1/22, 1/29, 2/5, 2/12, 2026 0769-VNO

STATE OF GEORGIA, COUNTY OF DOOLY.
 Under and by virtue of the power of sale in a certain Deed to Secure Debt from **JAMES F. BRANCH, Grantor, to 1ST FRANKLIN FINANCIAL CORPORATION, Grantee**, dated the 31st day of January, 2022 and recorded in Deed Book 645, Page 54-57, Clerk's Office, DOOLY County Superior Court, said Deed to Secure Debt having been given to secure a Note dated the 31st day of January, 2022 in the sum of **\$27,246.57**, there is due to be sold by the undersigned at public outcry, during the legal hours of sale on the **first Tuesday in February, 2026, to-wit: the 3rd day of February, 2026**, to take place at the steps of the DOOLY County Courthouse, Hawkinsville, DOOLY County, Georgia, to the highest and

best bidder for cash, the following described property:
 ALL THAT IMPROVED TRACT OR PARCEL OF LAND being parallelogram containing approximately 3.247 acres lying and being in Lot of Land No. 251 in the Seventh Land District of Dooly County, Georgia; said tract being more particularly described as follows: To obtain the point of beginning, start at the intersection of the center line of State Route No. 27 and the center line of Dooly County Road No. 91. From said point, thence proceed along said center line of Dooly County Road No. 91, South 00°22'51" East a distance of 2,521.85 feet to a point; thence proceed North 89° 00' 00" East a distance of 30 feet to a point in the East right-of-way line of said Dooly County Road No. 91; thence proceed along said right-of-way line North 01° 00' 00" West a distance of 100 feet to a point, said point being the point and PLACE OF BEGINNING OF THE WITHIN DESCRIBED TRACT. From said point and PLACE OF BEGINNING, thence proceed, first course, North 89° 00' 00" East a distance of 345 feet to a point; thence proceed, second course, South 01° 00' 00" East a distance of 410 feet to point; thence proceed, third course, South 89° 00' 00" West a distance of 345 feet to a point in the aforementioned East right-of-way line of Dooly County Road No. 91; thence proceed, fourth course, along said East right-of-way line North 01° 00' 00" West a distance of 410 feet to the aforementioned point and place of beginning. Said tract comprising the 2.066 acre parcel delineated in plat of survey for James A. Braxton prepared by Earl D. Rained, dated 29 December 1993, revised 13 January, 1994 and recorded in Clerk's Office Dooly Superior Court in Plat Book 11, at Page 10, and the 1.181 acre parcel delineated in plat of survey for Mrs. Ferol A. Vaughn, prepared by William A. Pryor, Georgia Registered Land Surveyor, bearing plat date of December 12, 1969 and recorded in aforementioned Clerk's Office in Plat Record 5 at Page 87. The aforementioned plats being by reference thereto incorporated herein for a more complete description. Be-

ing the same property conveyed from Calvin Renault Towns and Lisa Ann Towns to Branch Agricultural Transport, Inc. by deed dated October 17, 1995 and recorded in Deed Book 203 at Page 289 in the Office of the Clerk of Superior Court of Dooly County, Georgia.
 The debt secured by said Deed to Secure Debt and Note has been and is hereby declared due and payable in full because of default pursuant to the terms of said Deed to Secure Debt and Note. Notice has been given to enforce provisions for collection of attorney's fees and foreclosure in accordance with the legal requirements and the terms of the Deed to Secure Debt and Note. The indebtedness remaining in default, the sale will be made for the purpose of applying proceeds thereof to the payment of the indebtedness secured by the Deed to Secure Debt, accrued interest and expenses of the sale and other sums secured by the Deed to Secure Debt, including the attorney's fees and the remainder, after applying said proceeds to other indebtednesses owed by Grantor to Grantee, if any, shall be applied as provided by law.
 To the best of the undersigned's knowledge and belief, the property is in the possession of **JAMES F. BRANCH and said property will be sold as the property of JAMES F. BRANCH**. Said property will also be sold subject to all outstanding ad valorem taxes, street improvements, and easements or restrictions of record, if any, unpaid water or sewage bills that constitute a lien against the property whether due and payable or not yet due and payable and which may not be of record, the right of redemption of any taxing authority, any matters which might be disclosed by an accurate survey and inspection of the property, and any assessments, liens, encumbrances, zoning ordinances, restrictions, covenants and matters of record superior to the Deed to Secure Debt first set out above. The undersigned will execute a deed to the purchaser at said sale as provided in the Deed to Secure Debt. The sale will be conducted subject (1) to confirmation that the sale is not prohibited under the U.S. Bankruptcy

Code and (2) to final confirmation and audit of the status of the loan with the holder of the Deed to Secure Debt.
 The law firm of Emmett L. Goodman, Jr. for Plaintiff is acting as a debt collector attempting to collect a debt. Any information obtained will be used for that purpose.
 Pursuant to O.C.G.A. Section 44-14-162.2, the name, address and telephone number of the individual or entity who shall have the full authority to negotiate, amend or modify all terms of the above described mortgage is as follows: DELORIS L. O'NEAL, P.O. BOX 1933, AMERICUS GA 31709, TELEPHONE: 229-924-5393.
 1ST FRANKLIN FINANCIAL CORPORATION as attorney-in-fact of JAMES F. BRANCH EMMETT L. GOODMAN, JR., LLC 544 Mulberry Street, Suite 800 Macon, Georgia 31201-2776 Telephone: (478)745-5415 1/8, 1/15, 1/22, 1/29, 2026 0763-VNO

NOTICE OF INTENT TO INCORPORATE
 Notice is given that articles of incorporation which will incorporate **Middle Georgia EMC Foundation, Inc.** will be delivered to the Secretary of State for filing in accordance with the Georgia Business Corporation Code. The initial registered office of the corporation will be located at 600 Tippettville Road, Vienna, Georgia 31092 and its initial registered agent is John C. Cotton, 119 E. 12th Avenue, Cordele, Georgia 31015. 1/22, 1/29, 2026 0767-VNO

NOTICE OF ELECTION OF Ocmulgee River SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT SUPERVISOR February 1, 2026
To all qualified voters in Dooly County:
 Notice is hereby given that on November 3, 2026, a non-partisan election will be held to elect 1 supervisor(s) for Dooly County in the Ocmulgee River Soil and Water Conservation District. District Supervisors serve as unpaid state officials

who represent their counties in support of soil and water conservation activities.
 March 6, 2026, is the last day on which nominations for candidates for the election will be accepted. The signatures of at least 25 qualified electors of the county are required to nominate a candidate. Candidates must also be qualified electors of the county. Nominating petitions must be received in the office of the Dooly County Election Superintendent at 402 HAWKINSVILLE HWY, VIENNA, GA GA, 31092, no later than 12:00 noon on March 6, 2026. Petitions may be obtained from the Conservation Commission at the address below, from the Commission's website at <https://www.gaswcc.org/> or from the Election Superintendent of Dooly County.
GEORGIA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Mitch Attaway, Executive Director
4310 Lexington Road
Athens, GA 30605
 1/29, 2/5, 2026
 0770-VNO (GNS 54191)

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF DOOLY COUNTY STATE OF GEORGIA CIVIL ACTION NO. 25DV-0117 CRAIG COOPER, PLAINTIFF VS. MEGHAN HANNAH COOPER, DEFENDANT NOTICE OF PUBLICATION
 By order for service of publication dated the 31st day of December, 2025, you are hereby notified that on the 3rd day of November, 2025, Craig Cooper, filed suit against you for divorce.
 You are required to file with the Clerk of the Superior Court, and serve upon Plaintiff an answer in writing within city (60) days of the date of the order for publication.
 WITNESS, the Honorable Amy B. Bryant, Judge Superior Court. This the 22nd day of January, 2026. P.B. Clerk Dooly County Superior Court 1/29, 2/5, 2/12, 2/19, 2026 0771-VNO

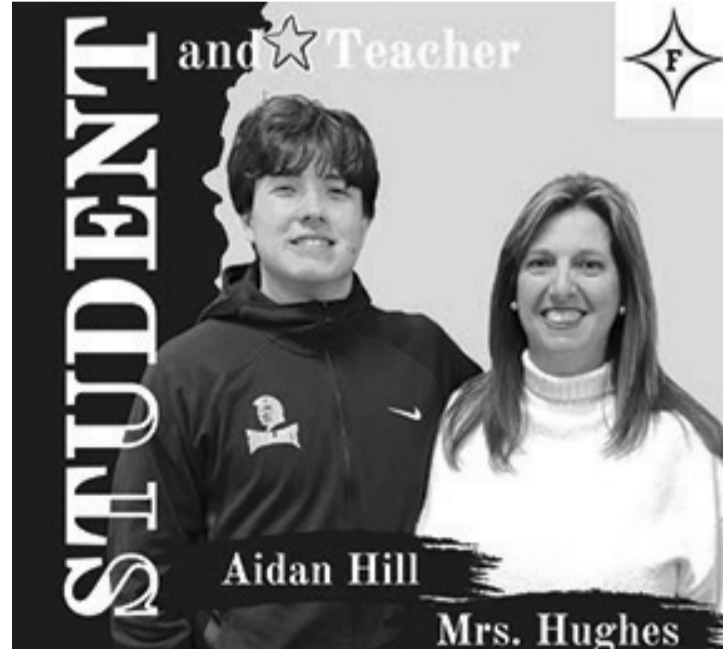
Fullington Academy 1st Semester Honor Roll ending December 19, 2025

- By FA
- 1st Grade: Elijah Bates, Colt Burns, Clayton Eddins, Winn Gardner, Lilly Grace Hair, Wren Herman, Ava-Jean Kelley, Cole Lamb, JD Mixon, Audrey Ransom, Mack Warbington, Maddox Warbington, Mary-Austin Warbington, Hudson Wiggins, Cecelia Wood
 - 2nd Grade: Vera Carr, Audrey Fletcher, Henry Grinstead, Persephone Hubbard, Linley Little, Eliza Mashburn, Judd Morgan, Kynlee Nelson, Blake-ly Phillips, Samantha Roney, Reed Russell
 - 3rd Grade: John Monta Averill, Forrest Cox, Millie Drew Gardner, Grayson Godfrey, Amelie James, Jackson Mixon, Jett Offenbergh, Cullen Speight, Mason Turner, Emma-Reese Warbington
 - 4th Grade: James Ansley, Landree Averill, David Cox, Lyla Fletcher, Annalise Grinolds, Paige Phillips, Candler Register, Mary Grace Smith
 - 5th Grade: Jacob Averill, Harper Grinstead, Luke Roney, Riley Smith, Hollie Tilley, Sarah-Margaret Warbington, Abigail Wehunt
 - 6th Grade: Kinslee Campbell, Finn Gordon, Malachi Leverett, Wyatt Smallwood, Cole Sparrow, Josie Willcox, Kinley Williams
 - 7th Grade: Bailey Grace Averill, Dakota Bowen, Bevie Burk, Brooklyn Cannon, Jessa Grinolds, Evan Handley, Zoey Pope, Allison Roney, Katie Street, Madelyn Thompson, Charlotte Woods
 - 8th Grade: Caroline Akin, Eli Handley, Colt Hughes, Madison Lamberth, Ember Mashburn, Abby Mixon, Ellie Claire Willcox, Paisley Williams, Emma Woods
 - 9th Grade: Eli Ashley, Lily Bass, Olivia Cawthon, Tori Langford, Brantley Ross, Tucker Sorrow
 - 10th Grade: Morgan Causey, Sadie Chambless, Will Posey, Ragan Rainey, Evelyn Ramsey, Alexis Smith, Kade Vaughn
 - 11th Grade: Bethany Alexander, Dawson Allen, Evelyn Fletcher, Carli Gibson, Augie Harris, Carson Stevens, Payton Williams
 - 12th Grade: Kaitlyn Bloodworth, McKinley Causey, John Wilson Floyd, Aidan Hill, Charlie Jackson, Keira Musselwhite, Rylee Reed, Izzy Ross

District Attorney Brad Rigby Announces Campaign for Re-Election Proven. Prosecutor. Protector.

By keepbradrigbyda.com
 CORDELE, GA — January 23, 2026 — District Attorney Brad Rigby today announced his campaign for re-election as District Attorney for the Cordele Judicial Circuit, which serves Ben Hill, Crisp, Dooly, and Wilcox counties, pledging to continue his proven record of tough, principled prosecution and an unwavering commitment to public safety.
 "For nine years, I have had the honor of serving our community as District Attorney," Rigby said. "I am running for re-election to continue keeping our citizens, businesses, and communities safe, and to protect and advocate for victims of crime who need a strong voice." Rigby brings 25 years of experience as a career prosecutor, a role he describes as his life's work. He emphasized that the District Attorney's position is not a role that allows for inexperienced, trial-and-error leadership.
 "I know how to do this job, and I understand what it requires," Rigby said. "The safety of our families cannot be left to on-the-job training or political experiments. One bad decision can put a violent criminal back into our community."
 Rigby said his mission as District Attorney is clear: to serve victims of crime, advocate on their behalf, and maintain a safe community where families can thrive and grow.
 Guided by his faith and a deep sense of right and wrong, Rigby says his approach to justice is rooted in compassion for victims, accountability for criminals, and integrity in every decision.
 As District Attorney, Rigby has:
 • Aggressively prosecuted violent offenders
 • Stood up for victims of crime, especially children
 • Worked to keep schools and neighborhoods safe
 • Backed the men and women of law enforcement
 • Rejected soft-on-crime, woke prosecution policies that put criminals first
 Rigby's record has earned statewide recognition. In 2024, he was named District Attorney of the Year for the State of Georgia, has served as President of the Georgia District Attorneys' Association, and currently serves as a board member of the Prosecuting Attorneys' Council of Georgia.
 In addition, Rigby regularly trains prosecutors and law enforcement officers across Georgia, speaking at statewide conferences on how to build strong cases, secure convictions, and keep repeat offenders off the streets.
 "This job is not about politics — it's about results," Rigby said. "It requires experience, judgment, and the backbone to make hard decisions when public safety is on the line."
 Rigby said he is seeking re-election to continue delivering proven leadership and moral clarity for the Cordele Judicial Circuit.
 "Our families deserve a District Attorney who can do the job on day one," Rigby said. "I will always put law-abiding citizens first, fight for victims — not criminals — and enforce the law firmly, fairly, and without apology."
 "Public safety comes first," Rigby added. "And I will never back down from that responsibility. I look forward to earning the trust and support of the people of the Cordele Judicial Circuit in the months ahead."

2026 FA STAR Student Announced



Contributed
 Congratulations to Aidan Hill, Fullington Academy's 2026 STAR Student. He selected Mrs. Michelle Hughes as his STAR Teacher.
 Together, they were named both school winners for Fullington Academy and system winners for Dooly County and they will be recognized at upcoming local and regional events. Congratulations to Aidan and Mrs. Hughes on this outstanding achievement.

Dooly K-8 Second Nine Weeks Honors Day



Contributed
 We are proud of our K-2 and 3-5 students who earned honors for their hard work and dedication. Keep up the great work. Congratulations to Reagan Whitehead for winning the poetry contest and sharing her winning poem during the program. We are so proud of your talent and confidence. Thank you to our families and teachers for their continued support.

SGTC Announces President's List for Fall 2025 Semester

- By SGTC
 South Georgia Technical College President Dr. John Watford recently announced the college's President's List for the fall semester, which included:
 Dooly County: Alex Bueno Fortuna of Unadilla, Welding and Joining Technology; Lorenzo Clayton of Byromville, Early Childhood Care and Education; Andrew James Cranford of Vienna, Business Technology; Jessica Fudge of Vienna, Criminal Justice Technology; Jeremy Mauricio Gonzalez of Vienna, Welding and Joining Technology; Joseph R. Gould of Vienna, Commercial Truck Driving; Martin D. Guillen of Unadilla, Business Management; Masiyah Hamilton of Vienna, Culinary Arts; Angel Hillmon of Vienna, Culinary Arts; Charles Harvey Hutchens of Unadilla, Culinary Arts; Miles Jacobs of Vienna, Welding and Joining Technology; Rosa Sipp of Vienna, Business Technology.

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Trojans Trying to Figure Some Things Out During Nine Game Skid

By Head Coach
James Martin

We played three games last week, the first against Crisp Academy Tuesday, Jan. 20, a team that I think we are much better than. They came out and just seemed to have more energy than us. Their point-guard, he lit us up with around 25-points which was half of their team points on the night and we weren't making our shots. We dug us ourselves a hole and we were down like 18 at one point. We fought our way back and were down just two early in the fourth quarter and every time we got within two, they would hit a three-pointer or a rebound and put it back and would pull away again. We just struggled to catch up and we lost 56-51, down three and we had to foul and they hit both free-throws, so we lost to Crisp by five points. Then Thursday, Jan. 22 we played

Covenant and our plan in that game was to play our starting five a little bit and put the backups in to rest the starters for the region game the next day. However, two of our players, Garlan Godfrey and Aidan Hill both hurt their ankles in this game, so just to be safe, we put them on the bench after five minutes into the game. It was good to see two of our guys who don't get to play a lot, play in this one. Taylor Allen, a junior, was our leading scorer and Brantley Ross were tied with eight-points-a-piece. Taylor would get the ball and was really aggressive to the hoop. It was good to see that and Brantley was our point-guard and it was good to see him become more aggressive every single game and we'll use him more throughout the rest of the season. We ended up losing that one 65-27. That was okay because it wasn't a region game, we'd

been struggling a little bit and get some of our younger guys in and rested our regulars for the region game Friday, Jan. 23 against Grace Academy. They were the team that we played in the region championship last year. This year, they got our number both times. They beat us by two at our place earlier and they beat us 69-43 and once again we dug ourselves a hole. We were down almost 26 early in the second quarter. We only had four points in the first quarter. We finally made a couple of shots and in that game were trying some new defensive strategies and figured out a defense that forced a turnover almost every single time. So, that was incredibly encouraging to see the transition from the last eight games where we had been giving up, it seemed like we had some fight, crawling back into the game and forcing turnovers. We will use that

momentum to go into the rest of our schedule. We have three region games left and one non-region game. Even though we lost, it was a little more encouraging than I expected just to see the growth in the game and take that momentum to this week's games. We played Westwood at home, so that will help us a lot Tuesday, Jan. 27 who is the number one team in the region right now and winning big. After that, the only team that Westwood has lost to, we play Highland Christian in Valdosta Friday, Jan. 30 who has been the surprise team and is competing against everybody, winning easily and has found a recipe with their team. That game should be exciting with two region games. Hopefully we have a more positive and more encouraging report. At press-time, the Trojans were 6-15 overall and 0-5 in the region.



#5 Aidan Hill
Photo by Bonnie Hausler

Lady Trojans Hope to Continue Region Winning Streak This Week

By Head Coach
Van Bailey

This had to be one of the most exciting weeks we've had at Fullington in a while in girls basketball. We opened up the week with our big rival Crisp Academy down the road. We knew coming in they were the odds on favorite to win the region this year and a big game. I don't think either team disappointed the crowd or their coaches. It was just an amazing game from the tip-off to the very last buzzer. You couldn't have seen any two more evenly matched, physical teams that really got after each other. It was very even, the first quarter tied 12-12 and both teams were playing well. Defense set the tone for both sides. Crisp Academy took the advantage at halftime 25-21, but our girls came out in the third quarter and worked on the adjustments we made and we ended up tying the game again in the third quarter at 34 and no different in the fourth with both teams going back and forth and ended up tied in regulation at 44 all. Going into overtime, our first

in a couple of years, just a tremendous atmosphere and we jumped up and CA fought back and we were tied again at 49, where it went to double-overtime. It's only the second game I've ever been a part of that, going to double OT or more. We hit some key shots going down the stretch with Claire Fletcher scoring all nine of her points in the two overtimes sessions including two big 'floaters' that she drove into the lane and hit to give us a lead. We ended up outscoring and we ended up winning this game 59-53 and picked up a huge region win for our Lady Trojans. Just really have to tip the hat to all of our girls, a great team effort and a tip of the hat to Crisp Academy who played very physical and a very good game. We had a huge game from Izzy Ross, one of her best at the point-guard position that she's ever played. Also Claire Fletcher who made huge shots in the overtime sessions to help sew up the win. Kade Vaughan took on the challenge of playing CA's best player and did a wonder-



Rylee Reed and #20 Kade Vaughan (background)
Photo by Bonnie Hausler

ful job holding Laura Evans to only eight points. She also not only played great defense, Kade turned in a double-double with

10-points and 11 rebounds. Rylee Reed also chipped in 12 rebounds, Izzy Ross had 11 points to go with her great job

as point-guard. Carli Gibson was our leading scorer with 16 and I'm really proud of the girls. It gave them some confidence and our best game we've played buzzer to buzzer all year against a really good opponent in Crisp Academy. That got us through the first half 4-0 in region so far. We traveled down to Covenant Academy Thursday for a non-region game after handling them at home earlier in the season. It's a tough place to play with a great environment, but our girls came out and our defense set the tone early. We jumped up to a 30-7 lead at halftime and then outscored them 18-6 in the third quarter to extend our lead and we ended up winning this game 57-17. Our bench got a lot of valuable playing time. Leading scorer was Claire Fletcher with 13 and Carli Gibson chipped in 11. Rebounds were led by Rylee Reed with eight and Olivia Cawthon with seven. We traveled down to Bainbridge, Ga. for a region game to play Grace Christian Academy Friday and we had a chance to work on our offense,

came out early and set the tone, jumped up 16-0 at the end of the first quarter and took a 26-7 lead at the half. We worked on some things that we needed to work on through the season and picked up another region win 45-13 and a good game with 12 of our 15 girls scoring. Leading scorers with seven points were McKinley Causey, Caroline Akin and Carli Gibson, just a great team effort. Just really proud of my girls and how hard they're playing at this point in the season. We continued our winning streak in region, our 23rd straight region win spanning over the last three years. Over the last four years, the Lady Trojans have won 30 of 31 region games including the region tournaments. We are continuing to do what needs to be done and hopefully continue on this roll. We have two big region games hosting Westwood Tuesday, Jan. 27 and we travel down to Valdosta Friday and play Highland Christian.

Dooly's Teams Hoping to End Current Losing Streak

By Tim Franzén
News Observer Reporter

Dooly County's boys picked up a confidence building 67-51 victory over region opponent Telfair County Friday night in the DCHS gym. Meanwhile, the Lady Bobcats tipped off its game against the Lady Trojans and the first half set the tone as Telfair County outscored Dooly's girls 17-5 in the first quarter and 21-3 in the second frame. The final score was Lady Trojans 59-Lady Bobcats 12. Defense tightened a little in the

second half, but Dooly County was still outscored 13-2 in the third and 8-2 in the fourth quarter of play. Both teams traveled to Rochelle Saturday night to battle a tough region opponent in the Wilcox County Patriots. The Lady Bobcats were defeated in this game 58-25 with Ja'Kayla Hooks, a sophomore leading the way in scoring with 20 points with Cherish Sutton contributing with two and Zeriyah Serrano, a junior with three points on the night. Ja'Kayla and Cherish also had six rebounds-a-piece. In the nightcap,

Dooly's boys lost to Wilcox County 51-30. Now, both teams will be traveling to McRae, Ga. Saturday, Jan. 31 at 3:00 p.m. taking on region opponent Telfair County with the tip-off of the girls game. Then Dooly County will be hosting the Perry Panthers at DCHS gym Monday, Feb. 2 beginning with the girl's game at 6:00 p.m. At press-time, the Lady Bobcats were 8-8 overall and 5-4 in the region, while the Dooly County boys were 5-10 overall and 3-6 in region play.

College and CTAE in the Spotlight at DCHS



Contributed

Last Wednesday was a great day of hands-on learning in our CTAE department. In Ms. Bowen's class, students focused on workplace safety measures, learning how the proper use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) plays a critical role in keeping workers safe on the job. Understanding safety procedures is an essential skill that prepares students for real-world careers. Meanwhile, in Mr. Teeple's class, students got their

hands dirty, in the best way. Students planted tomatoes and peppers, learning about plant growth, responsibility, and agricultural practices through hands-on experience. We are proud of our CTAE teachers for connecting classroom learning to real-life skills that prepare our students for college, careers, and beyond. Our seniors had an amazing opportunity to visit Fort Valley State University last week. During the visit, students were

able to: Tour the campus, eat in the cafe with college students, learn about academic programs, explore college life at HBCU and ask questions about admissions and scholarships. Experiences like this help our students see what's possible beyond high school and take meaningful steps toward their future. Thank you to Fort Valley State University for welcoming our students and pouring into the next generation of leaders.



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