

# GORDON Gazette

Weekend, March 6, 2021

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Calhoun-Gordon County's #1 Source for News

## Local VFW undergoing renovations; to hold special community event on April 10 in honor of 75th anniversary

Brandi Owczarz  
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The local Veterans of Foreign Wars Post is receiving a major overhaul, a fitting tribute to the establishment marking its 75th anniversary in Gordon County next month. And on Saturday, April 10, 2021, the VFW will be hosting a special community event to celebrate at their Post, located at 406 West Line Street in Calhoun, from 12 – 4 p.m. There will be a Cornhole Tournament with prizes, a Petting Zoo, Pallet Board Painting, a Water Balloon Toss contest, Cookie Decorating and other family-friendly activities that day. The public is invited to attend.

In addition that day, the Post will receive a special plaque commemorating 75 years since their charter.

"We just wanted to invite the community out to celebrate and see the new direction we're taking this Post and



Major renovations are taking place at the VFW Post 5376 in Calhoun, located at 406 West Line Street. The post will be holding a community event on Saturday, April 10, in honor of their 75th anniversary. The public is invited to attend.

explain what we do," said Post Commander Pro-tem John Brown.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is a nonprofit Veterans service organization with roots back to 1899 when veterans of the Spanish-American War (1898) and the Philippine Insurrection (1899-

1902) founded local organizations to secure rights and benefits for their service. Many arrived home wounded or sick. There was no medical care or veterans' pension for them, and they were left to care for themselves. These groups would eventually band together and become known as the Veterans

of Foreign Wars of the United States. After chapters were formed in Ohio, Colorado and Pennsylvania, the movement quickly gained momentum. Today, membership stands at more than 1.5 million members of the VFW and its Auxiliary. The VFW was instrumental in

establishing the Veterans Administration, development of the national cemetery system, in the fight for compensation for Vietnam vets exposed to Agent Orange and for veterans diagnosed with Gulf War Syndrome. In 2008, the VFW won a long-fought victory with the passing of a GI Bill

for the 21st Century, giving expanded educational benefits to America's active duty service members, and members of the guard and reserves, fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan. And the VFW was the driving force behind

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## Battle of Resaca event to be held May 15-16

CONTRIBUTED

The Battle of Resaca Reenactment is pleased to announce that the annual event will proceed this year. Last year's event was cancelled due to the COVID-19 safety concerns for

our staff, spectators and participants. The reenactment will be held May 15-16 on Chitwood Road in Resaca.

The reenactment is Georgia's oldest and largest event dating back to 1984, it draws national visitors to Gordon County each year.

This event focuses on Gordon County history and is presented professionally, impartially, and non-politically.

Plans are underway to have the Friday's

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Lots of changes ahead as Calhoun City Schools plans for 2022, new Junior Jacket Academy opening.

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## WEEKLY COMMUNITY COVID REPORT: Numbers down in community

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In COVID-19 reporting by both school systems on Friday, March 5, both systems were flat in their number of active cases, a good sign as community cases reported were also lower.

Gordon County Schools' active COVID-19 cases among all of their schools were at 10 active cases in numbers reported on Friday. Last week, GCS had 8 active cases reported; the week prior, the system reported 8 active cases.

The two high schools, Gordon Central and Sonoraville, have both been on a hybrid learning schedule the past few weeks after a climb in both active cases and quarantines. The decision for the hybrid instruction wasn't necessarily based on the active case number, but the quarantine numbers that go along with exposure to the students with active cases. As the active case number rises,

the quarantine number rises.

This week, there are a total of 5 staff members (up 1 from last week) and 5 students (up 1 from last week) that are considered active cases of COVID-19 at the system.

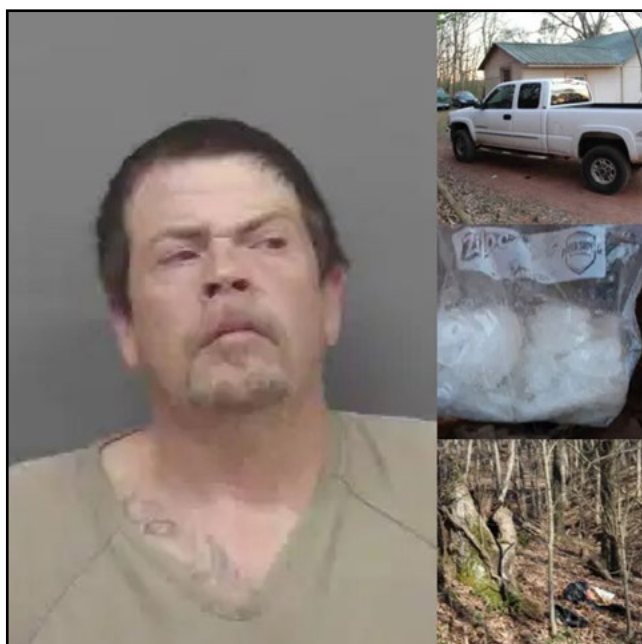
The student breakdown of current active COVID-19 cases at the school system is: 1 student at Gordon Central High School, 3 students at Sonoraville High School and 1 student at Tolbert Elementary.

Among staff with current active cases of COVID, Gordon County

Schools reported 1 staff member at Ashworth Middle School, 1 staff member at Belwood Elementary, 1 staff member at Gordon Central, 1 staff member at Red Bud Elementary and 1 staff member at W.L. Swain Elementary. Classes at the Gordon County high schools will resume to full-time in-person instruction this Monday, March 8.

Gordon County Schools' reporting is slightly different than the City school system.

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## Meth trafficking investigation results in arrest, seizure of large amount of drugs

GCSO

According to Gordon County Sheriff Mitch Ralston, at the beginning of March 2021, Sheriff's detectives initiated an investigation into the trafficking of methamphetamine in Fairmount. A number of leads were followed and information from multiple sources was developed.

At about 4 p.m. on Wednesday, March 4,

Sheriff's detectives and parole officers from the Georgia Department of Community Supervision descended on a private residence on College Street in Fairmount that the investigating officers believed to be at the center of the methamphetamine trafficking case. A drug-sniffing K-9 from the Sheriff's Office was utilized in a search of the

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Second Front

Oostanaula School Community Club holding dinner tonight

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The Oostanaula School Community Club is looking forward to everyone coming to the old Oostanaula School TONIGHT beginning at 5 p.m. for the reopening of the pot luck suppers, cakewalks and great entertainment. Tonight will feature Wayne Howell with Hwy. 411.

The club is located at 1595 Oostanaula Bend Road SW in Calhoun. A great meal with drinks and dessert is \$7.

The club incorporated 46 years ago, in October 1974, to help those in need with benefits. The club is strictly volunteer based. The past year is the only time the club has not been open and is available to rent for weddings, showers, reunions, birthday parties or any other event or fundraiser.

As the club reopens, there is a need for volunteers and anyone who enjoys helping others in the community. For more information, contact Barbara Talley at 770-608-2050.

The club will be maintaining the State mandated COVID-19 policies.



Defend the Voiceless seeking snack donations

**CONTRIBUTED**

Defend The Voiceless will be providing Easter baskets for a region homeless shelter and other programs affiliated with the homeless shelter. Along with the baskets will be a sack lunch for the child and parent/parents. The organization has everything needed for the baskets, however they are asking for individual snack size bags of Goldfish crackers and juice boxes to go into the sack lunches.

All donations will be collected on Wednesday, March 31, 2021. Defend The Voiceless is a local non-profit organization devoted to ending human trafficking and child exploitation by bringing awareness, changing legislation, and pushing for tougher punishment.

Invasive Species Found In Pet Store Product

**DNR**

The Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources' Wildlife Resources Division (WRD), along with wildlife agencies across the U.S., is urging both pet and aquarium stores and aquarium owners to remove and safely dispose of any moss ball plant designed for aquariums after invasive zebra mussels were discovered inside the product.

"Zebra mussels pose a significant risk to our state, so we urge anyone that may have purchased this type of product in the last month or has them on store shelves to remove it immediately, if they have not already done so," said Jim Page, WRD Aquatic Nuisance Species Coordinator. "But, don't just throw it away anywhere! The concern with this specific mussel is that its' release into the wild via septic systems or from being discarded in nearby ditches, creeks, or other waterbodies could result in establishment of the species in our state and lead to major ecological and economic damage."

Found in Georgia Pet Stores

Georgia officials were alerted about this situation after reports from Washington State indicated zebra mussels were discovered attached to and inside these moss ball plants, like the "Betta Buddy Marimo Ball," found at a local PetCo store. Visits to multiple pet chain stores in Georgia confirmed the presence of zebra mussels in this and other products. PetCo stores across the nation, including Georgia, have since removed the product from their shelves. However, other pet store owners and operators are encouraged to check for this product, and if found, to immediately remove it and safely dispose of it. Consumers are urged to not purchase this product from stores or online. If you have purchased this item in the last month, dispose of it properly and sanitize your tank(s).

Disposal and Sanitation Guidelines

This product can be safely disposed by freezing (for 24 hours) or boiling (for at least 10 seconds) before disposing of it in the trash. Consumers may also contact their local WRD office (www.georgiawildlife.com/about/contact) for additional information on proper discarding techniques. Most importantly, DO NOT flush this product, or the mussels, down the toilet and DO NOT discard them outside.

Aquarium owners who may have infected aquariums are urged to remove the fish from their aquarium and thoroughly clean their tanks, applying household bleach (one cup of bleach per gallon of water) and letting it set for 10 minutes before disposing of the water down a sink or toilet. Additionally, owners should disinfect filters, gravel and structures with a solution of bleach before disposing of the water down the toilet.

Devastating Damage is Preventable

Zebra mussels cause millions of dollars in damage to boats and water intake pipes while creating ecological harm to native mussels and other aquatic biota. As such, WRD officials are actively seeking the help of the public to maximize efforts to prevent the introduction and establishment of these destructive mussels in our state.

"Currently, there is not a known established population of zebra mussels in Georgia state waters, and we are hopeful that with the public's help that we can keep that streak going," said Page.

For more information on zebra mussels and other invasive species, visit <https://georgiawildlife.com/ans>.

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HERITAGE 2021

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# Obituaries

## March 6, 2021

### Patsy Colleps

Patsy Ann Smith Colleps, 81, of Resaca, died Thursday, March 4, 2021 at her residence following a period of declining health.

Patsy was born on March 18, 1939 in Gordon County, daughter of the late Dennis E. and Ida Mae Culberson Smith. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by two sisters, Wynette King and Neatha McClain; four brothers, Robert Smith, Jimmy Smith, Toby Smith and Billy Smith.

For many years she was employed by the Dalton Elks Lodge as bookkeeper and later owned and operated J&P Convenience Store located on Highway 53 in Calhoun. She was a graduate of Resaca High School and Rinehart College.

Survivors include her daughter, Missy Colleps Green of Resaca; her son, David S. Colleps Jr. of Resaca; grandchildren, Candi Horton, Corey Colleps, Jordan Romaine and Grace; great-grandchild, Kendall Colleps; three sisters, Mary Dell Smith Waters, Jane Smith Defoor, Linda Smith Potts; several nieces, nephews and other relatives.

A graveside service will be held on Monday, March 8 at 3 p.m. at Hill City Baptist Church Cemetery. The family will receive friends Sunday evening, March 7 between the hours of 5 – 8 p.m. at the funeral Home.

The Brannon family and staff remind anyone in attendance to keep in mind the current guidelines and restrictions set forth by the CDC as it pertains to social distancing, gathering limits, and face masks.

Online condolences may be expressed and the guestbook signed at [www.maxbrannonandsons.com](http://www.maxbrannonandsons.com).

The Brannon family and staff are honored to serve the family of Patsy Ann Smith Colleps.



### Frances DeFoor

Frances Janette DeFoor, 89, of Resaca, died Wednesday, March 3, 2021. She was born on Nov. 13, 1931 to the late Lawrence and Rose Etna Gallman Jones. She was preceded in death by her husband of 49 years, Wayne Earl DeFoor; daughter and son-in-law, Diane and Willie Fleming; brother, Bill Jones; great grandchild, Tyler Fleming; great great grandchild, Junia Fleming.

She was a member of Higher Praise Church of God.

She is survived by her son and daughter-in-law, Rodney and Deborah DeFoor; daughter and son-in-law, Debbie and Gary Starks; brothers and sisters-in-law, Richard and Virginia Jones, Mrs. Bill “Peggy” Jones and Roy and Peggy Jones; grandchildren, Eric and Kim Fleming, Jarrod and Melba Starks, and Josh and Theresa Spence; great grandchildren, Kagan and Moriah Fleming; Gavin Fleming, Cameryon Fleming, Kiersten Fleming, Bryson Starks, Cody Starks, Chloe Starks, and Seth Spence.

The family will receive friends on Sunday, March 7, 2021 from 12 – 3 p.m. at Max Brannon and Sons Funeral Home. The funeral service will follow the visitation at 3 p.m. with Rev. Ricky Spence and Rev. Kagan Fleming officiating and Josh Spence singing. Burial will follow in Sardis Church of God Cemetery. Pallbearers are, Kagan Fleming, Gavin Fleming, Cameryon Fleming, Bryson Starks, Cody Starks, and Seth Spence.

To leave condolences and sign the online guest book, please go to [www.maxbrannonandsons.com](http://www.maxbrannonandsons.com)

The Brannon family and staff are honored to serve the family of Frances Janette DeFoor.



### Jeffrey Eaton

Mr. Jeffrey Dennis Eaton, age 55, of Calhoun, departed this life Thursday, Feb. 25, 2021 at his home. Jeffery was born April 4, 1965 in McGraw, New York, the son of the late, Gary Clifton Eaton and Linda Beth Winfield Eaton. Jeffery was retired from DHM Adhesive.



Jeffery is survived by his wife of 29 years, Virginia Eaton; son, Tyler Luck; daughters, Tabitha Breeding, Ashley Kirby; brothers, Todd and Christine Eaton of Calhoun, Kevin Eaton of Calhoun; sister, Valerie Achord of Calhoun; grandchildren, Ethan Breeding, Elijah Breeding, Brittanie Kirby, Javin Kirby; mother and father-in-law, Barbara and Jimmy Middlebrooks; sister and brother-in-law, Meletha and Woody Moss; and several nieces and nephews.

The family will hold a private memorial service at a later date.

Due to the National health crisis and the Covid-19 virus, masks must be worn properly at all times and social distancing must be observed when visiting the funeral home.

Condolences may be expressed to the family at [www.pondersfuneralhome.com](http://www.pondersfuneralhome.com).

Arrangements by, Ponders Calhoun Chapel 675 Jolly Rd Calhoun GA 30701

[www.selectedindependentfuneralhomes.org](http://www.selectedindependentfuneralhomes.org) and [www.ogr.org](http://www.ogr.org)



### Joe Ledford, Jr.

Mr. Joe Frank Ledford, Jr., age 53, of Adairsville, passed away unexpectedly Tuesday, Feb. 23, 2021, at his residence.

Mr. Ledford was born in Calhoun, Nov. 8, 1967, son of Nettie Sue Harris Denova and the late Joe Frank Ledford, Sr. Joe was an awesome dad, son grandpa, brother, and friend. He loved to fish; on the water with a rod in hand was where you could always find him. He was talented, could do anything he put his mind to. Joe never met a stranger and was loved by everyone he met. He was preceded in death by his father, Joe Frank Ledford, Sr.; brother, William Floyd Ledford; grandparents, Floyd and Flonnie Ledford and Peawee and Eula Harris.

Survivors include his mother, Nettie Denova and step-father, Paul Denova; children, Ashley Ledford and Dakota Ledford; sister, Charlotte Jameson; brother, John Morgan; grandsons, Bentley and Daniel; granddaughters, Raleigh, Jaylee, and Raegan; a number of aunts and uncles and a host of friends.

The family will receive friends Saturday, March 6, 2021 from 3 – 4 p.m. at Pleasant Valley Baptist Church.

A Celebration of Joe’s life will be held Saturday, March 6, 2021 at 4 p.m. at Pleasant Valley Baptist Church, Adairsville with Rev. Burnan Hall officiating.

Flowers will be accepted or in honor of Joe the family asks that you bring a favorite fishing lure with a special memory or note.

Family and friends attending services will be required to wear face mask and observe social distancing.

R. Dudley Barton & Son Funeral Home, Adairsville, is in charge of funeral arrangements for Mr. Joe Frank Ledford, Jr.

### Barton Funeral Home

### Zachary Lumpkin

Mr. Zachary Douglas Lumpkin, age 25, of Resaca, departed this life Thursday evening, Feb. 25, 2021 as the results of an automobile accident. He was born Dec. 1, 1995 in Dalton. He was preceded in death by his grandparents, Elmer Lumpkin, Alva Jane and Douglas Silver, David Keener, great grandparents, Tommy and Mary Lumpkin, Lee and Kizzie Ponders; uncle Elmer Lumpkin Jr.

He is survived by his parents, Joe and Connie Lumpkin of Resaca; birth mother, Jennifer and Tyler Thomas of Rocky Face; son, Elijah Lumpkin of Virginia; daughter, Kaydence Jones of East Ridge, Tenn.; sister and brothers-in-law, Tairen and Kevin Landen of Rocky Face, Candice and Ryan Dyer of Paulding County, Dalyn Hall of Rocky Face; grandparents, Marlee Lumpkin of Dalton, Gina Cearley of Resaca, Mike and Gwen Phillips of White; great grandparents, Charles and Barbara Phillips of Calhoun; aunt, Sandi Keener of Decatur; loved by several cousins, nieces and nephews.

Service to celebrate the life of Mr. Zachary Douglas Lumpkin will be held Saturday March 6, 2021 at 3 p.m. from the Ponders Melrose Chapel with Reverend Michael Phillips and Bret Allen officiating. Interment will follow in the Old Tilton Baptist Church Cemetery with Ryan Nelson, Ricky Tenney, Alex Dagnan, Kevin Lankford, Hunter Stokes, Cody Betts, and Chris Lumpkin serving as pallbearers. The family will receive friend at the funeral home from 12 p.m. until 3 p.m. on Saturday.

In Lieu of flowers please make donations to Ponders Funeral Home.

Due to the National health crisis and the Covid-19 virus, masks must be worn properly at all times and social distancing must be observed when visiting the funeral home.

Condolences may be expressed to the family at [www.pondersfuneralhome.com](http://www.pondersfuneralhome.com).

Arrangements will be announced by, Ponders Melrose Chapel 138 Melrose Drive Dalton, GA 30721, 706-226-4002

[www.selectedindependentfuneralhomes.org](http://www.selectedindependentfuneralhomes.org) and [www.ogr.org](http://www.ogr.org)



### Vicki Neal

Mrs. Vicki Lynn Carter Neal, 47, of Resaca, died Wednesday, March 3, 2021 at WellStar Medical Center at Austell, Ga.

Vicki was born in Whitfield County on Aug. 2, 1973, daughter of the late Ronald T. and Linda Lee Buchannan



Carter. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by a brother-in-law, Jonathan Morrison.

She was a loving mother to her son, Alex and a dedicated wife to Wayne, was member of the 1992 graduating class at Dalton High School, served as a youth leader at Hill City Baptist Church where she is a member, was a Band Mother at Gordon Central High School. Prior to her recent illness, she was employed by the Gordon County Board of Education as a substitute teacher at Ashworth Middle School.

Survivors include her husband of 24 years, Rev. Wayne Neal; son, Alex Neal; sister, Angie Morrison Chitwood and her husband David of Chatsworth; brothers, Jeff Carter and his wife Leah of Ringgold, and Chris Carter of Athens, GA; a host of nieces, nephews and other relatives.

A service to celebrate the life of Vicki Lynn Carter Neal will be conducted Saturday, March 6 at 1 p.m. from the chapel of Max Brannon & Sons Funeral Home with Rev. Barry Brock officiating. Interment will follow at Hill City Baptist Church Cemetery. Pallbearers serving will include Paul Parker, Ron Carter, Bill Thompson, Chris Darnell, Brian Holland, Dan Jones, Rodney Goble and Brian Bailey.

The family received friends at the funeral home on Friday, March 5 between the hours of 5 – 8 p.m.

Flowers are accepted but in lieu of flowers, donations can be made in her memory to Gordon Central High School Band or Hill City Baptist Church.

The Neal family, along with the staff of Max Brannon and Sons Funeral Home remind anyone in attendance to keep in mind the current guidelines and restrictions set forth by the CDC as it pertains to social gatherings including social distancing, gathering limits, and face masks.

Online condolences may be expressed, and the guest book signed at [www.maxbrannonandsons.com](http://www.maxbrannonandsons.com)

The Brannon family and staff are honored to serve the family of Vicki Lynn Carter Neal of Resaca.



### James ‘J.C.’ Starks

Mr. James (J.C.) Starks, 51, of Calhoun, died Wednesday, March 3, 2020 from a sudden heart attack while at work.

James was born in Dalton on Feb. 9, 1972, son of the late James Earl and Barbara Ann Morris Starks. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by a brother, Robert Heath. James attended Valley Point School and Southeast Whitfield High School and was employed by W.A. Kendall & Company for the past seven years.

Survivors include his wife, Mary Ellen Ghorley Starks, to whom he was married for 20 years; three sons, David Starks of Crossville, Tenn., Andrew Starks of Calhoun and Christian Starks of Calhoun; grandchildren, Travis Fortner and Athena Gowan; sister, Phyllis Heath Hudgins of Rocky Face; brother, Ben Earl Starks of Dalton; nieces, nephews and other relatives.

Funeral services for Mr. James (J.C.) Starks will be held on Sunday, March 7 at 1:30 p.m. from the chapel of Max Brannon & Sons Funeral Home with Rev. James David Nix officiating. Interment will follow in Faith and Deliverance Church Cemetery at Resaca. The family will receive friends on Saturday, March 6 between the hours of 5 – 8 p.m. at the funeral home

The Starks family, along with the staff of Max Brannon and Sons Funeral Home remind anyone in attendance to keep in mind the current guidelines set forth by the CDC as it pertains to social gatherings including social distancing, gathering limits, and face masks.

Online condolences may be expressed, and the guest book signed at [www.maxbrannonandsons.com](http://www.maxbrannonandsons.com).

The Brannon family and staff are honored to serve the family of James (J.C.) Starks, 51, of Calhoun.



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Education

Calhoun City Schools plans ahead to 2022

Calhoun City Schools

Spring - Fall 2022.... Another year away, but it will come quickly and Calhoun City Schools will be ready!

The new Calhoun Early Learning Academy will open at the Barrett Road site with 37 regular classroom spaces, a cafeteria, media center and gymnasium. Junior Jacket Academy (three-year-old preschool), PreK and Kindergarten classes, presently housed at the Primary / Elementary School, will transition to the new facility once completed. Mrs. Susan Bennett will serve as the principal.

Calhoun Primary School will add back the second-grade classrooms displaced when Pre-K joined the complex. Third grade classes will move to the primary side of the complex. Calhoun

Primary School will then function with grades first, second and third for the 2022-2023 school year under the leadership of Mrs. Mana Smith.

Sixth Grade will transition to Calhoun Elementary School following the transition of 2nd/3rd grade classrooms to the primary side of the complex facility. Calhoun Elementary School will house fourth, fifth and sixth grades. Mrs. Jaime Garrett will serve as the principal.

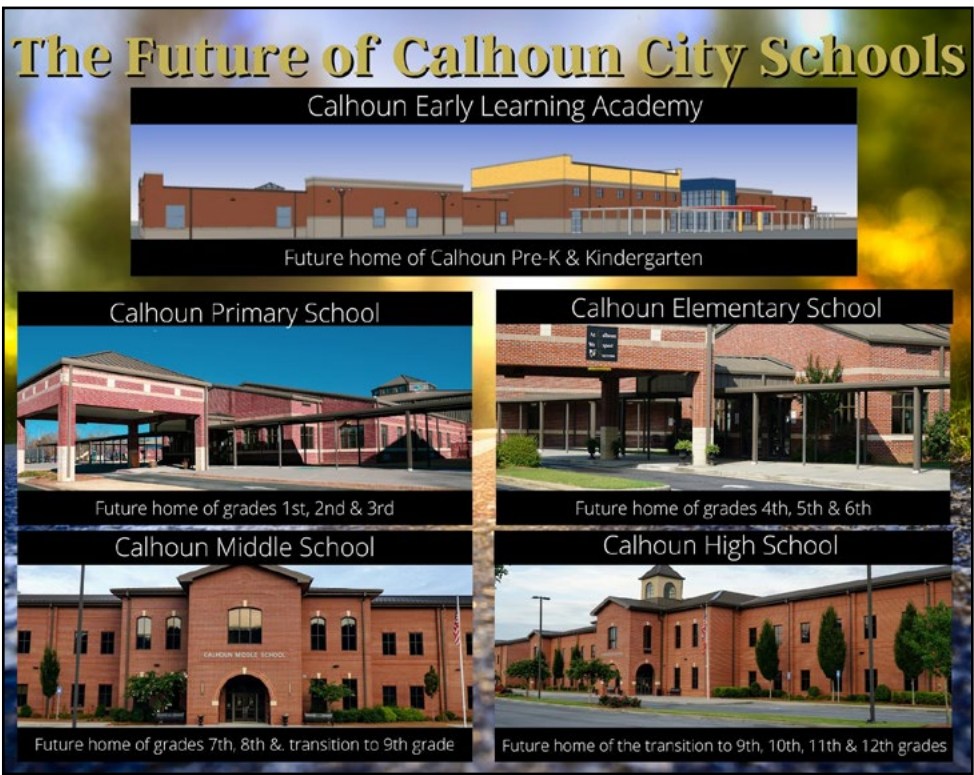
These transitions are in line with CCS's school improvement plan to focus on curriculum alignment and support for all students, PreK-12.

Calhoun Middle School will focus on seventh, eighth and the transition to ninth grade as they work with Calhoun High School on the freshman academy concept. Mrs. Casey Parker will serve as Calhoun Middle

School's principal and Dr. Peter Coombe will continue as Calhoun High School's principal.

Leadership succession plans also consider the educational backgrounds of administrators and support staff. This transition plan will support the next five-ten years as we prepare for student growth.

Calhoun City Schools underwent a similar transition when the K-5 complex was constructed in 2004 and opened its doors with two schools (Eastside Primary and Calhoun Elementary) relocating to that site. Pre-K and the Central Office, (formerly located in the old City Utilities building on Line Street) moved that same year to the Eastside campus on Barrett Road. The middle school left the high school side of the campus and relocated to the former elementary



school on River Street.

We know that growing pains are sometimes challenging, and we know there will be many, many questions. We ask that students, staff and parents be patient and understanding as we make these transitions. We will spend the next year carefully preparing and engaging stakeholders in the process. We want to hear from you. Please send any questions and/

or concerns to [ccs@calhounschools.org](mailto:ccs@calhounschools.org). This will help us draft a FAQ sheet so that we can communicate more effectively.

Holcomb to Retire at the Close of the 2021 School Year

Calhoun City Schools

Beth Holcomb is a proud product of the Calhoun City School System beginning as a first grader at Eastside in 1975 and graduating from Calhoun High School in 1987. She has helped ignite a love of learning in our primary and elementary aged students and provided many memorable experiences for our Junior Jackets.

Beth began her career in education as a gifted teacher serving students in first through fifth grades. After nine wonderful years in the classroom, she transitioned into a leadership role and became an Instructional Coordinator at the elementary level. She has served as an administrator in both Calhoun and Gordon County Schools for more than 20 years. Calhoun City Schools has been blessed to have Mrs. Holcomb's exemplary leadership and we wish her the absolute best in her retirement.

Beth is married to Greg Holcomb and



has a daughter Kate who is a freshman at Calhoun High School. While Beth is looking forward to retirement, we know we will continue to see her supporting the Yellow Jackets in many ways. A retirement reception is scheduled for Monday, May 24th at 6:00 pm at the Board of Education office.

Garrett to Lead Calhoun Elementary School

Calhoun City Schools

The 2021-2022 school year will mark Mrs. Garrett's 20th year in education. She began her career teaching fourth grade at CES in 2002. In 2007, she became the Library Media Specialist at the CPS/CES Complex. During her time in the media center, Mrs. Garrett was selected by her peers as the CES Teacher of the Year for the 2012-2013 school year. She moved into the role of Assistant Principal at the Complex in 2014, where she served until moving to the Calhoun Middle/High Campus as Assistant Principal in April 2016.

Mrs. Garrett is a proud CHS graduate (Class of 1997). She holds a bachelor's degree from Kennesaw State University, Masters from Brenau University, Specialist from Tennessee Tech University and is currently pursuing a Doctoral Degree in curriculum and assessment from the University of West Florida, which she will complete this spring.

Mrs. Garrett is a 2014 graduate of the Chamber of Commerce's Leadership Calhoun / Gordon County Program where she represented Calhoun City Schools. She currently serves as the Co-President of the



Alpha Lambda Chapter of Alpha Delta Kappa Teacher Sorority and is Past President of the Gordon County Literacy Council.

Mrs. Garrett's seven years of administrative experience has prepared her for the role of principal, and we feel she'll do an excellent job leading. Please help CCS welcome her back to the complex.

Bennett to Serve as Principal at Calhoun Early Learning Academy

Calhoun City Schools

Susan Bennett has been an educator for the past 23 years serving as a teacher and administrator for Calhoun City Schools. Susan spent the majority of her time as a classroom teacher in preK and kindergarten and she can't wait to get back to working with four and five year olds! Presently, Ms. Bennett serves as Teacher / Leader Development Specialist for PreK-12. Prior to this appointment, she served as the instructional coordinator at the Calhoun Educational Complex for grades kindergarten through fifth grade. Her experience and on the job performance demonstrate her readiness to tackle the new role of principal as we prepare to open the Early Learning Academy in the fall of 2022.

Susan is a product of Calhoun City Schools, graduating from Calhoun High School in 1993. Susan obtained her bachelor's degree from Berry College in 1997 and her master's degree from Piedmont College in 2000. She completed her Educational Specialist degree in Leadership and Administration at Lincoln Memorial University in 2004. Susan also holds endorsements in Gifted Education, ESOL, and Reading.

Susan serves on the Calhoun/Gordon County Library Board of Trustees and was formerly the co-chair of this board. She is a member of the Alpha Delta Kappa Teacher Sorority, and formerly served as the treasurer of this



organization. Susan is also a graduate of the Gordon County Chamber of Commerce Leadership Calhoun - Gordon County Program. She has participated in Northwest Georgia RESA's Principal's Center and the RESA Coach's Collaborative. She has also been trained in the Coaching for Design framework through the Schlechty Center.

For the 2020-2022 school year, Ms. Bennett will continue her role as teacher/leader development specialist while preparing to open the Early Learning Academy as the principal. She will also serve as Pre-K Director and begin working directly with kindergarten and kindergarten staff at the primary school to prepare for the 2022-2023 school year.

Dr. Hayes To Transition to District Office as Director of College and Career Programs PreK-12

Calhoun City Schools

Dr. Brandi Hayes serves as the Director of College and Career Programs for Calhoun College and Career Academy and has been a part of the Calhoun City Schools family for nine years. Throughout her 20+ year career in education, Dr. Hayes has served as a business education teacher, Work-Based Learning Coordinator, Dual Enrollment Coordinator, and Career, Technical, and Agriculture Education Supervisor. She was awarded the Teacher of Year by her peers while in her business education role.

Dr. Hayes is a graduate of Reinhardt University (BS in Business Administration), the University of West Georgia (MA Business Education), and the University of Georgia (EdD in Workforce Education). Career and Technical Education has always been a passion for Dr. Hayes. She seeks to unite students with their career goals while training them to meet the needs of business and industry.

Dr. Hayes is a 2013 graduate of the Gordon County Chamber of Commerce's Leadership Calhoun/ Gordon County Program and served on the Board of Directors for the Gordon County Chamber of Commerce where her focus committees included Youth Leadership and the Education and Industry joint committee. She is also a 2017 graduate of Leadership Northwest Georgia and 2016 graduate of the Georgia Academy for Economic Development's Regional Economic and Development Training.



Dr. Hayes served as a member of the Georgia Work-Based Learning Executive Council and was named the "Top Gun" of the inaugural group of the Georgia Department of Education's (GaDOE) Top Gun training program. Dr. Hayes was the 2014 Georgia Work-Based Learning Coordinator of the Year and a GACTE nominee for Teacher of the Year.

Dr. Hayes has two children, Holcomb and Hadley, who both attend Calhoun City Schools.

Dr. Hayes will continue in her role as College and Career Programs Director and will transition to the district office to support college and career program initiatives PreK-12. She will work with all schools and departments to align school improvement efforts on college and career readiness. We welcome Dr. Hayes to the CO.





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# CAPITOL BEAT NEWS: Georgia House passes \$27.2B state budget

DAVE WILLIAMS  
Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — Gov. Brian Kemp’s \$27.2 billion fiscal 2022 state budget cleared the Georgia House of Representatives Friday after lawmakers earmarked \$58 million to boost mental health services.

The spending plan, which passed 136-31 and now heads to the Georgia Senate, originally had set aside a \$22 million increase for the state Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities. The House added another \$36 million for what Speaker David Ralston has made a key part of his agenda for this year’s legislative session.

“I think we’ve added a huge amount of resources to this important issue,” Ralston, R-Blue Ridge, said after Friday’s vote. “It’s never as much as you hope to do, but I think this was a realistic effort, and I think it

sends a strong message that we’re making mental health a priority in Georgia.”

The additional mental health funding would provide more resources for addiction treatment, suicide prevention and school mental-health specialists.

The budget, which takes effect July 1, also put a special emphasis on education, restoring 60% of the spending cuts lawmakers imposed at the height of the coronavirus pandemic last June on Georgia’s K-12 schools and the state university system.

The House also added \$50 million to the \$883 million bond package Kemp recommended in January for construction projects around the state. Much of that money would go toward buildings on university and technical college campuses.

Ralston dismissed criticism from House Democrats over not pulling more money from the state’s “rainy-

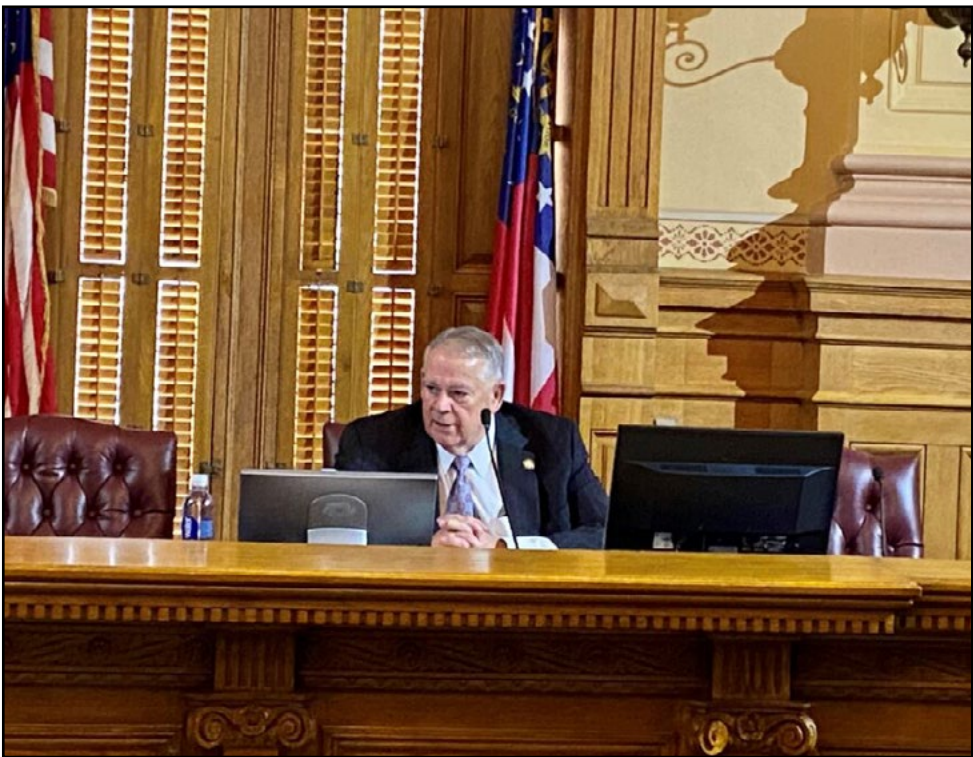
day” reserves fund to plug budget gaps, noting state lawmakers have approved millions of dollars in emergency spending to fight COVID-19 since last summer.

“We have to be very cautious in terms of drawing down large sums out of the rainy-day fund,” he said.

But House Minority Leader James Beverly, D-Macon, and Rep. Jasmine Clark, D-Lilburn, the only Democrats who spoke from the House floor Friday, said it’s ridiculous to use federal COVID-19 relief money to plug budget gaps without spending down the reserves.

They also used the budget debate to renew Democrats’ longstanding call to expand Medicaid coverage in Georgia under the Affordable Care Act, which could be done largely with federal money.

“I absolutely cannot reconcile throwing away billions in federal funds that would help all of



Georgia House Speaker David Ralston previewed his priorities for the 2021 legislative session at the state Capitol on Jan. 7, 2021. (Photo by Beau Evans)

our constituents have access to health care, that would save our rural hospitals from closing and that would save as well as create jobs, especially when we take federal funds when it’s convenient for us,” Clark said.

“I think there’s a better way moving forward,” Beverly said. “We just need to take the time to do it.”

Both Kemp and former Gov. Nathan Deal, his immediate predecessor, have argued there’s no guarantee the federal money would continue flowing into Medicaid indefinitely. They have said any reduction in federal support would leave the state holding the bag.

# BACK THE BLUE: Congresswoman Greene Eviscerates The Democrats’ Hate All Police Bill

OFFICE OF REP. MARJORIE TAYLOR GREENE

On Monday, March 1, 2021, Congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene released the following statement in opposition to the Democrats’ Hate All Police Bill:

“This week Democrats will be trying to pass the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act.

They will say this is in the name of racial justice, but this bill actually castrates police and stops them from bringing justice for victims of crimes, and

creates lawlessness in America.

Facial profiling at every level of law enforcement would be prohibited.

Facial recognition means an automated process that analyzes biometric data of an individual from video footage to identify or assist in identifying an individual.

That means if a man rapes a woman and kills her on the street and a store’s video surveillance captures it, then police cannot use it to find the man who did it.

This is the way Democrats want “racial

justice” and I’m only telling you about one tiny piece of this disaster.

The Anti-police Bill defines “use of force” as pointing a gun at someone.

So, if someone is breaking the law, police cannot pull their gun and tell them to stop.

I guess police are supposed to ask them nicely, and surely a criminal will so kindly abide.

The Hate All Police Bill also takes away qualified immunity for officers and would be overhauled, and a national police misconduct registry

would be created, so officers who were fired for such discretions could not be hired by another police department.

Democrats literally hate all police officers.

By taking away qualified immunity, this declares open season on police so they can be sued by blood thirsty racial justice attorneys and anyone who feels offended bc they got caught breaking the law.

Remember no matter what color your skin is if you wear a law enforcement badge, you are automatically racists according to the deranged lawless leftists.

While the anti-police media, radical groups like BLM, and gun grabbing groups like Everytown for Gun Safety are telling you that police kill unarmed black men because they are racists, the actual numbers are much lower than many people think.

In 2019, 27 unarmed black people were killed by police, but that also doesn’t tell you each story and circumstances.

It also doesn’t tell you how many countless lives were saved by police.

While Democrats in Congress have surrounded themselves



with a wall with razor wire, the NG, and they demand security literally from federal law enforcement, they are going to take away police rights.

You can’t even make this up.”

# To-go cocktails with limits closer to reality in Georgia as Senate bill passes

BEAU EVANS  
Capitol Beat News Service

Cocktails-to-go edged closer to becoming a reality in Georgia with passage in the state Senate Friday of a measure allowing restaurants to sell curbside alcoholic beverages in tightly sealed containers with takeout food.

Sponsored by Sen. Matt Brass, R-Newnan, the bill would permit Georgians ages 21 and older to buy up to two

mixed drinks in to-go cups with a maximum 3 ounces of liquor in each, or about two shots-worth. Georgia already permits to-go sales of beer and wine.

The drinks would have to be kept in cups without any holes for straws and sealed so securely it would be easy to tell if the cup has been opened before the purchaser arrives home. To-go drinks would also have to be stored in a glove box, locked trunk or behind the

back seat while driving.

To-go drinks could not be sold on their own: Customers would have to buy food along with a takeaway alcoholic beverage. Third-party delivery services like Uber Eats, Doordash and Grubhub also could not bring cocktails to someone’s home due to legal liability issues, Brass said.

“One thing we learned from the pandemic is our hospitality industry was hit very, very hard,” Brass

said from the Senate floor. “All we’re simply trying to do here is give them one more tool here to bounce back.”

“That tool is going to be a screwdriver,” he added. “And that screwdriver is going to be to-go.”

The measure passed 36-10 and now heads to the state House of Representatives.

Supporters have hailed legalized to-go drinks as a way to help struggling restaurants

prop up sales amid the COVID-19 pandemic, which has pummeled the food-service industry in Georgia over the past year.

Nearly 4,000 restaurants have closed in the state during the pandemic, with \$5 billion lost in sales and around 100,000 employees left jobless, according to Karen Bremer, president of the Georgia Restaurant Association.

Opponents who have long resisted expanding

alcohol sales on moral and practical grounds worry allowing motorists to take home cocktails could worsen traffic safety, spurring more drunk driving and potentially fatal car crashes.

Brass’ bill follows a separate law change passed last summer that allowed restaurants, supermarkets and liquor stores to make home deliveries of beer, wine and distilled spirits, subject to the approval of local voters.

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— Kevan Carpenter, Commercial Floor Resources



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LEFT PHOTO: Members of the local VFW give a tour and update to Calhoun Mayor Jimmy Palmer and City Administrator Paul Worley. Pictured left to right: Randy Boatner, John Brown, Mayor Palmer, Paul Worley, Travis Queen and Joe Federico. RIGHT PHOTO: Members working on one of the rooms inside the VFW building. BELOW RIGHT: The Event Hall at the VFW is also getting an overhaul.



## VFW

From page 1A

the Veterans Access and Accountability Act of 2014, and continually fights for improved VA medical centers services for women veterans.

The VFW Post 5376 in Calhoun was established on April 4, 1946 in honor of its namesake Pvt. Renis W. Barrett, a soldier from Calhoun who was killed in action on July 27, 1945 in the Philippines. Barrett’s family donated the land that the VFW, and the land across the street where the National Guard Armory, sits.

Over the years, the local VFW, a branch of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, served the community in various capacities, having ball fields for youth to play on and hosting event for local veterans but interest has waned in the last few years as an age gap between the Vietnam-era Veterans and the more recent Afghanistan-era Veterans left a hole in participation.

Now, some of the younger Veterans of our community, many still serving with the 1-108th Cavalry located at the National Guard here in Calhoun, have made it their mission to reinvent the local Post, bringing it into the modern era, with the goal of bridging the gap between the different Veteran groups.

“A lot of VFW posts are run by Vietnam vets, which is perfectly fine, but Vietnam-era vets and Afghanistan-era vets have two different lifestyles,” said Brown. “So previously, a lot of the younger Veterans did not want to come into the posts because things were geared toward an older audience. The biggest thing we’re trying to conquer is the 50-year age difference between the current era Veterans and the Vietnam-era Veterans. We’re trying to bridge that gap.”

In bridging the gap at the local post, massive changes have already taken place, including a still-in-process renovation project of the building and grounds, and plans for a major community outreach.

“The local post opened in 1946 in a small, wooden shed,” said Brown. “This land frequently flooded until Carter’s Dam was constructed and fixed the flooding issue. Members have slowly added onto the building, becoming what it is today.”

Today, the brick building is receiving a major overhaul, with new electrical and updated decorating throughout, including a new bar area.

“This is a fairly old building and it has been labor intensive getting this place up to code,” said Randy Boatner, Post Quartermaster Pro-tem. “We’ve had some donations of both labor and supplies, and we’re looking for others in the community who would like to help volunteer.”

“We had a company donate about a full week of his entire electrical company, donating all of the materials for the electrical work, bringing everything up to code,” said Brown. “We are extremely appreciative of this company for their donation. And Coloso Construction, which is owned by a Guatemalan immigrant, has donated labor to help us fix a big roof leak on the back of the building. His entire goal is to make sure the veterans and the community knows he appreciates our service and that he wants to be a part of this.”

Queens Tree Service has also donated a lot of labor-intensive hours to helping clean off the outside, as well as owner Travis Queen building a beautiful the new bar for the post.

While in the past the VFW has been known as a place for its members to unwind at the bar, that service is no longer a main offering of the Post.

“The bar will not be the main focus of the Post,” said Brown. “We probably won’t open the bar during the week until 4 p.m. each day. The bar on post is used to generate revenue to put back into the community; this is a business but it is not-for-profit. Everything we make will

### ATTENTION:

**The local VFW is looking for family members still living of the late Pvt. Renis Barrett, of whom the VFW Post 5376 is named.**

**Any living relatives of the late Pvt. Renis Barrett is asked to contact the post at [VFW5376@gmail.com](mailto:VFW5376@gmail.com)**

be generated back into the community.” Another change is that the Post is a smoke-free facility at this time; anyone interested in smoking cannot do so inside the building but there will be an area outside for smokers.

In addition to the building rehab, internally there are many programs the Post is working to implement in the future.

One of the major programs the Post is wishing to implement is Veteran assistance with VA Claims.

“The VFW itself has a position called a Service Officer; that position is specifically for serving Veterans with those types of needs,” said Brown. “We want to have someone in our Post fully dedicated to that service.”

Another program the Post would like to implement is counseling and job assistance services to vets.

“We’d like to partner with counseling students, who need volunteer hours to get their license, to offer free counseling for Veterans out of the Post. That’s obviously a big issue in the Veteran community, with Veteran suicide and Veteran substance abuse and arrests on the rise,” said Brown.

“We’d also like to offer a Veteran job fair,” said Boatner. “As we get Veterans in, get them housed, get them counseling and get their benefits set up, we can also help them find a job.”

“Most of the people who are coming into the VFW are still serving,” said Brown. “We’re able to keep up on the current issues because we’re seeing them. We can take a lot of resources from mandatory briefings that we get and bring those resources, like Work for Warriors or family support, here (to the VFW).”

In addition, the Post wants to address Veteran homelessness by being able to partner with local hotels to provide that segment of the population a place to stay until more permanent residency can be obtained, and offer funeral service assistance to Veterans.

The members of the Post also look forward to holding special ceremonies and events on Memorial Day, Veteran’s Day and Independence Day, as well as holding a holiday outreach for Veteran families and low income families in November and December.

For non-members, the Post wants to hold community events, such as Saturday morning family movies in their event



hall and Movies Under the Stars events, as well as giving access to their event hall to local church groups as needed for meetings.

These programs are in the planning stages and will be implemented as funds are raised for the Post.

The local VFW is also interested in letting local teams use their ball fields as needed and on March 27, anyone who would like to volunteer is welcomed to join in a property clean-up on the site, where the Post will be getting their ball fields in shape.

“I met the coach of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes that play out here, and we want to do a partnership with them, get the back field cleaned up so they can start having tournaments here without having to pay for a field,” said Brown.

Some of the land will also be cleared to be used as a practice field for the North Georgia Cardinals, a local semi-professional football team whose roster is made up of many Veteran players.

“We’d like to use some of our land, as we develop our future programs by doing a garden for the Veterans, which can be therapeutic,” said Boatner. “Then as we open up our kitchen, we have our own garden center, all home grown, farm-to-table offerings. That’s a type of program we’d like to initiate in the future, and it would be supplied by the Department of Agriculture.”

Some of the old activities of the Post will be reincorporated as well.

“I think, historically, this place has been known for Bingo every Thursday night, so bringing that back and even incorporating things like trivia and karaoke night, so this can be a hangout spot,” said Rachel Brown, wife of John who is heavily involved in the renovation. “There is the Auxiliary as well, which is for spouses and family members. We want to grow the Auxiliary side of the Post to provide the support group to those members as well.”

“The VFW Auxiliary is a huge part of what we do here, and it’s not just women,” said Brown. “It is comprised of spouses and it encompasses two generations on each side. My service makes my parents and grandparents eligible to join the Auxiliary and my future children and grandchildren can join because of my service, along with my siblings. You can have five generations of family members

join VFW.”

Boatner said that the Post would also like to be available to students as well.

“We’d like to have a place for our local students to hang out on a Friday night and enjoy playing corn hole or horseshoes, buying food from the concession stands and just having a safe place for them.”

“We want the Post to be a staple of the Calhoun community,” said Rachel Brown.

While the Post is accepting donations and volunteers, several companies have already stepped up to help out.

Brown said the Post is very appreciative of the folks at Samantha Lusk & Associates Realty, especially Samantha Lusk and her father, Joey, who have been supportive of the group, helping the Post provide a meal to the Calhoun Police Department recently.

The Post is also thankful for Coloso Construction and Queens Tree Service for all their help in the renovation.

During the clean-up, the Post has recovered some disability-assistance items, such as electric wheelchairs, walkers and other items, while cleaning, that need a little TLC, but the Post said the community can reach out to them if those items are needed by emailing [VFW5376@gmail.com](mailto:VFW5376@gmail.com)

On Saturday, April 10, the Cornhole Tournament will consist of 16 teams; there is a \$20 entry fee per team. The winning team will receive two \$50 gift cards. The tournament is scheduled from 1 – 3 p.m.

Pallet Board Painting is \$2 per board and Cookie Decorating is \$2 each for 3 for \$5. There will also be a water balloon toss that day, where the winning team gets two \$20 gift cards to a local business. Various food items will be available for purchase as well.

While the community event will be held outside, the building will be open for tours so the community can see the progress being made.

Anyone who would like to donate to the renovation project or find out ways they can volunteer their time, can email [VFW5376@gmail.com](mailto:VFW5376@gmail.com) or the Post now has a Venmo account set up where donations can be made: [@VFWCalhoun](https://www.venmo.com/VFWCalhoun)

To learn more about the local VFW, visit their Facebook page at [https://www.facebook.com/VFWCalhoun/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/VFWCalhoun/?ref=page_internal)



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Georgia Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities



## BoR

From page 1A

free “School Day” demonstrations for students, home schoolers, church youth groups, and all Scout troops.

Different battles will be presented Saturday and Sunday with period military and civilian camps will be open. The period Sunday church service will also be open to the public.

Period Sutlers (vendors), modern food and tee-shirt vendors, hand sanitizing station with be on site for your needs. A covered dining area with tables and chairs, and Portable restrooms will be available.

Free transportation from the parking area to the event areas will be provided by the Gordon County Antique Engine and Tractor Club.

The event will be hosted by the Georgia Division Reenactors Association and sponsored by the Battle of Resaca, Inc. and various community organizations.

Enjoy being outdoors and seeing history unfold. We encourage you to use any and all COVID-19 personal safety precautions during your visit.

For additional information please see [www.georgiadivision.org](http://www.georgiadivision.org) under the Battle of Resaca Reenactment page or contact [battleofresaca@gmail.com](mailto:battleofresaca@gmail.com)



## ARREST

From page 1A

home and surrounding yard. The K-9 located a large amount of methamphetamine hidden in a hollow tree in the back yard. Additional drugs were found inside the home.

The resident, identified as Jason Matthews, age 46, of 998 College Street in Fairmount, was arrested without incident. He was out of custody on parole from a previous methamphetamine trafficking conviction until 2045. He was lodged in the county jail charged with Trafficking and Distribution of Methamphetamine, and other drug-related offenses. Matthews has several past offenses and convictions related to the distribution of methamphetamine.

## COVID

From page 1A

Gordon County Schools’ weekly numbers, reported each Friday afternoon, show the new cases of COVID-19 for the week, plus any previous cases that are still active. You can find those numbers on their website at <https://www.gcbe.org/domain/5112>

Calhoun City Schools reported new cases of COVID-19 this week were up slightly, at 10 new cases, up 4 new cases from last week. There were 8 new cases among students (1 at Calhoun Primary, 1 at Calhoun Elementary, 3 at Calhoun Middle and 3 at Calhoun High), and 2 new cases among staff members (2 at Calhoun Primary).

Calhoun City Schools post the new case numbers each Friday afternoon, and includes the previous week’s numbers separately on their website at <https://www.calhounschoools.org/summer-resources/ccsd-covid-19-case-status-reportnew-page>

Both school systems have adopted strict cleaning procedures and are following the health and safety guidelines set forth by the CDC concerning social distancing. Students and staff who have tested positive for COVID-19 or who have recently had close contact with a person with COVID-19 at either school system cannot return to school until they meet the Department of Public Health’s Return to School Guidance After COVID-19 Illness or Exposure.

Numbers of new COVID19 cases in Calhoun-Gordon County lowered significantly this week, with 116 new cases reported in the community since last Saturday, with 2 additional deaths contributed to the virus reported this week. Last week, 226 new cases were reported in the community.

At press time Saturday morning, March 6, 2021, Gordon County has had 6,133 confirmed cases of

COVID-19 since the pandemic began –up 116 cases since the same time last week. COVID-19 related deaths now stand at 94, up 2 deaths from last week. The Department of Public Health also reports 10 probable deaths from COVID. There have been 298 hospitalizations in Gordon County due to COVID-19 since March, up 5 hospitalizations since last week.

The lower numbers come after several weeks of numbers trending down in the community, and after a story by the New York Times last week, where newspaper reported that the City of Calhoun had the greatest number of new cases in the country. As reported by the Gordon Gazette earlier this week, the information the NYT reported is inaccurate due to the number of cases used by the NYT, where it appears a combination of probable (antigen positive) cases and regular COVID testing numbers were used for the report. This inaccurately inflated the numbers used by the New York Times possibly as much as 25%.

The COVID-19 statistics for Gordon’s neighboring counties since the beginning of the pandemic as of Saturday morning are:

- Bartow County...10,310 cases, 184 deaths, 14 probable deaths and 736 hospitalizations;
- Floyd County... 9,407 cases, 163 deaths, 33 probable deaths and 799 hospitalizations;
- Whitfield County...14,250 cases, 212 deaths, 12 probable deaths and 702 hospitalizations.

The State of Georgia this week has had 826,117 cases of COVID-19 since the pandemic began, with 15,526 deaths, 2,289 probable deaths and 56,627 hospitalizations.

County EMA Director Courtney Taylor reminds the public to continue to wash hands often, cover your cough and practice social distancing.

For further information and numbers such as demographics for Georgia and totals all counties please visit: <https://dph.georgia.gov/>

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