



The Georgetown County Chronicle



A monthly e-newsletter produced by Georgetown County, S.C., for its residents and visitors.

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Calendar

Feb. 10-11 – Camellia Show and Plant Sale, 1-5 p.m., Murrells Inlet Community Center.

Feb. 13 – County Council meeting, 5:30 p.m., Howard Auditorium, 1610 Hawkins St.

Feb. 13 – Informational meeting for local contractors on bidding opportunities re. new jail construction, 5:30 p.m. See page 6.

Feb. 16 – Planning Commission meeting, 5:30 p.m., Howard Auditorium, 1610 Hawkins St.

Feb. 19 – County offices and facilities are closed in observance of Presidents Day.

Feb. 21 – Free Heirs' Property Seminar and Clinic, 5 p.m., Howard Auditorium, 1610 Hawkins St. See page 3.

Feb. 22 – Capital Project Sales Tax Committee Meeting, 5:30 p.m., Howard Auditorium, 1610 Hawkins St.

Feb. 27 – County Council meeting, 5:30 p.m., Howard Auditorium, 1610 Hawkins St.

Jan. 23 – County Council meeting, 5:30 p.m., Howard Auditorium, 1610 Hawkins St.

Volume 12, Issue 5

February 2024



Parks and Rec. has small team, but big dreams

In the last two decades, Georgetown County Parks and Recreation has grown tremendously. It now manages four regional recreation centers, 15 regional parks and tournament facilities, 15 community parks, 7 mini parks, 77 sports fields, 66 beach accesses, 31 tennis courts, 22 outdoor sport courts, 29 picnic shelters, 30 playgrounds, 32 walking trails and more than 40 miles of nature trails. That's more than 300 total assets.

It manages and conducts programming at these with an annual budget of just over \$4 million and a total full-time staff of 29. That includes 15 in park maintenance and 14 others who do ... well, everything else, ranging from developing and running programs, managing facilities and reservations, answering phones and dressing up as the department's mascot, Forest the Squirrel at community events. In addition, Parks and

Recreation plays an integral role in the county's Emergency Management and response, handling logistics during natural disasters and other emergencies.

"We have a lot to do," said Beth Goodale, department director. "When I tell people what the size of our budget is and how many facilities we have, they're always shocked."

The National Recreation and Park Association outlines standards for parks and maintenance. "We're above the highest standards for all of the different amenities we have," Goodale said. "But our budget is below the lowest standard."

According to a 2023 NRPA agency performance review, Georgetown County's per capita operating expenditure for Parks and Recreation is \$63.87. The

See "Parks and Recreation," Page 10

Chief Magistrate Isaac Pyatt retires after 27 years on the bench

After 27 years on the bench, Georgetown County Chief Magistrate Isaac Pyatt donned his judge's robes for the last time on Jan. 30. He announced his retirement last month.

"I've been doing this for quite a long time now," Pyatt said. "I love the work that I've done. I loved being a police officer. I love being a judge. And the time went

by quick; I just don't know where the time went. But I'm ready for something new now. I've been working toward it for pretty much the last year."

As to what that something new is,



Judge Isaac Pyatt at his retirement party Jan. 26.

he said he's not sure yet. "I'll be taking it day by day."

The transition has given him plenty of opportunity to reflect on his 40 years of service to Georgetown County. A native of Sandy Island

and a 1979 graduate of Howard High School, Pyatt was a young man when he joined the Georgetown County Sheriff's Office in 1983.

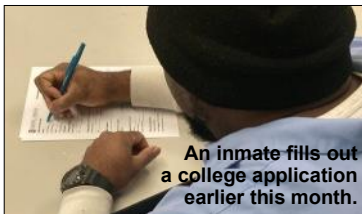
"They had an opening and I applied. Sheriff Michael Carter called me for an interview and hired me on the spot," Pyatt recalled. "I worked as a deputy in the Pawleys Island, Litchfield and Murrells Inlet areas."

He had studied at Morris College and Coastal Carolina University before obtaining a bachelor's in criminal justice from Liberty Univer-

See "Pyatt," Page 9

Partnership allows inmates to pursue higher education

A new partnership between the Georgetown County Sheriff's Re-entry Program and Coastal Carolina University will allow inmates in the program to begin on the path to higher education.



An inmate fills out a college application earlier this month.

Launched in 2007, the re-entry program is a recidivism prevention initiative that gives qualifying inmates the skills they'll need to make a fresh start once their sentences have been served and avoid the pitfalls that lead so many back to jail.

It focuses on job skills and has always encouraged participants to get their GEDs if they didn't finish high school. But now the program has partnered with Coastal Carolina University to allow five inmates to enroll in a sociology course taught by associate professor Jennifer Schlosser, Ph.D. Participants filled out college applications earlier this month.

"Higher education is an incredibly effective conduit toward personal development and human flourishing and, because of this, is associated with significant reductions in one's likelihood of reoffending," said Jonathan Branch, program director. "Better choices start with better opportunities."

Library cardholders now have free access to movie streaming service

Thanks to the generosity of the Friends of the Waccamaw Library, Kanopy streaming service is now available free of charge to all Georgetown County Library patrons. The Friends group kindly agreed to pay registration costs so that all Georgetown County Library cardholders have free access to streaming Kanopy videos.

Any Georgetown County Library cardholder can visit Kanopy.com and follow the instructions to register. Once registered, each patron will have 15 tickets per month to use in order to stream videos (e.g., it takes 2 tickets to view 1 feature film).

Kanopy's catalogue includes more than 30,000 feature films, documentaries and series from around the world, including works from prominent studios like A24, The Criterion Collection, and PBS. Patrons can choose from Kanopy's array of classic Hollywood films, acclaimed foreign movies and stimulating documentaries.

For any technical issues, patrons are asked to directly contact Kanopy Support.

"We are thrilled about this wonderful new service that has been so generously provided to all Library patrons throughout Georgetown County by our devoted Friends of the Waccamaw Library," said Dwight McInvaill, Georgetown County library director. "Of course, we still love books and encourage folks to visit our five beautiful Library facilities and bring home a stack of good books. But this opportunity to offer Kanopy video streaming represents another exciting step forward for the Georgetown County Library as we continue to provide cutting-edge media services to our public. Free access to Kanopy will enable all communities across Georgetown County to engage with the amazing worlds of international films and award-winning documentaries."

For more information, call (843) 545-3300.

GEORGETOWN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



Citizens' Academy 2024

Hands-on learning about law enforcement taught by GCSO officers

Tuesday nights
March 5 - March 26
6:00 - 8:00 pm

GCSO Headquarters
430 N. Fraser Street
Georgetown, SC

Applications are at the
Sheriff's Office or
GCSheriff.org

LEARN ABOUT:

Patrol, Criminal Law, Arrests, Investigations, K-9 Unit, Traffic Stops, Forensics, Victim's Advocate Services, Vice and Narcotics Unit, and much more!

Questions? Contact Lt. Chris Geno,
(843) 436-6088 or (843) 546-5102



Get the Chronicle

At Georgetown County, we want our residents and property owners kept abreast of what's going on inside their local government. That's why we created the Georgetown County Chronicle.

It's a vehicle for information about county services and events, important messages from county officials and behind-the-scenes glimpses at how government works.

You can find the Chronicle on our website at www.gtcounty.org or through our social media accounts. If you'd rather have it delivered to your inbox, sign up at gtcounty.org by clicking the "News & Alerts" icon on the home page.

If you have questions or comments about this newsletter, please contact Jackie Broach at (843) 545-3164 or jbroach@gtcounty.org. We welcome your feedback.

www.gtcounty.org

Living history day will bring American Revolution to life on March 2

Revolutionary War officer Francis Marion died nearly 230 years ago, but his legacy will be alive and well on Saturday, March 2 in Georgetown.

"We'll be celebrating Francis Marion Living History Day from 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. with reenactors and artisans at Rainey and Francis Marion Parks," said Corinne Hoch, co-chair of the Georgetown 250 Committee. The group was appointed to help educate and celebrate South Carolina's role in the American Revolution, as the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence nears.

The Committee is a sponsor of the event, along with the Georgetown County Library, the Georgetown County Museum and the Winyah Auditorium. All Living History Day events will be free.

The Museum will be open from 5-6 p.m. on Living History Day to reveal special plans for the new Francis Marion Interpretive Center, which will be one of only four in South Carolina.

To cap off the day, a special presentation, "Francis Marion, History or Hollywood" by Scott Kaufman, professor of history at Francis Marion University, will begin at 7 p.m. at Winyah Auditorium.



Reenactments will be among the events planned for March 2.

Brigadier General Francis Marion (c. 1732-1795), also known as "the Swamp Fox," grew up in Georgetown and was a well-known Patriot throughout the Carolina Lowcountry. Though he never commanded a field army or served as a commander in a major engagement, Marion's use of irregular warfare against the British has led him to be considered one of the fathers of guerrilla and maneuver warfare.

Living History Day will be the first of many celebrations planned to commemorate the approaching 250th anniversary, said Paige Sawyer, planning committee co-chair.

For more information, contact Hoch at (201) 452-0270 or Sawyer at (843) 546 3745.

FREE Heirs' Property Seminar & Clinic



Join us for a **FREE Educational Seminar**
Wednesday, February 21, 2024 at 5:00 PM

Howard Center

1610 Hawkins St, Georgetown, SC 29440

Learn about Heirs' Property, Wills, and Basic Estate Planning

- Free Private Consultations with an Attorney following the seminar
- Bring related deeds, tax bills, or probate documents

Must attend the seminar to receive free on-site consultation.

HEIRS' PROPERTY CLINICS ARE FUNDED BY: FRANCES P. BUNELLE FOUNDATION, SC BAR FOUNDATION, USDA/SC NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE, AND US ENDOWMENT FOR FORESTRY & COMMUNITIES



8570 RIVERS AVENUE, SUITE 170,
 NORTH CHARLESTON, SC 29406
 PHONE: 843.745.7055
 FAX: 843.745.7054

(843) 745-7055 | info@heirsproperty.org | heirsproperty.org





Bright Star Theater
 presents
WINTER Fables
 Waccamaw Neck Branch Library
Wednesday, February 21, 2024
10:30 AM

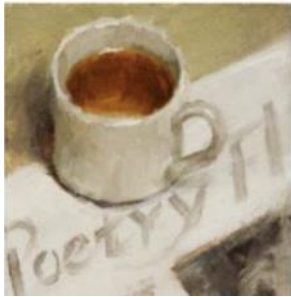


Best for Grades Kindergarten - 6th

For this cozy little show we are returning to Aesop's fables to bring to life some amazing winter-inspired tales. Our spirited performers take your young audience on a hilarious and highly entertaining journey. They cover valuable lessons from 'The Ant and the Grasshopper' to 'The Country Mouse and the City Mouse'.

41 St Paul's Pl, Pawleys Island, SC 29565
 (843) 545-3349

The Friends of the Waccamaw Library
are pleased to announce



The 2024 Litchfield Tea and Poetry Series



Monthly presentations through April, each featuring thought-provoking poets with S.C. connections.



Programs are free, open to the public and start at 10 a.m. at the Waccamaw Library.



New this year: an Open Mic event will follow the featured poet's presentation at every session.

February 15: Jessica K. Hylton



Hylton is Artist in Residence at Coastal Carolina University. She is also author of the chapbook "The Great Scissor Hunt," and her work appears in "East Coast Literary Review," "Lavender Review" and "Panoply," among other venues. According to Jess Hager, Hylton's poetry is "full of turbulent inner dialogue — a war within the poet's mind — stuck straddling the fence between lust and love, forgiveness and hate, grand images and mundane trivialities of daily life ..."

March 14: Hastings Hensel



A resident of Murrells Inlet, Hensel's poetry collections include "Ballyhoo," "Winter Inlet," and chapbook "Control Burn," which won the Iron Horse Literary Review Single-Author Competition. Mary Jo Salter counts Hensel as "one of the most accomplished young poets now writing in this country." Hensel earned his MFA from John Hopkins University and is a senior lecturer in English at Coastal Carolina University. He is owner of River Reader Kayaking.

April 11: Richard Allen Taylor



Taylor, of Myrtle Beach, is author of three poetry collections, including "Armed and Luminous" and the recently published "Letters to Karen Carpenter." His poems, articles and reviews have appeared in numerous publications. His work has been described as "traversing the music of his universe while navigating the complexities of love, loss, aging and dying" with "poems created not as comic relief from sorrow, but as natural reflections on life, myth and art."

JOIN OUR TEAM

View and apply for open county positions at gtcounty.org/jobs. We offer terrific benefits, government holidays, and a no-wait, no-copay health clinic for employees and family members covered under their insurance.

Morris named Manager of the Year



Michael Morris (center), fire marshal for Georgetown County Fire-EMS, is Georgetown County's Manager of the Year for 2023. He was recognized by County Council Jan. 23. Morris performs his daily duties with extreme regard for community safety, all in accordance with the adopted fire codes for all business, his supervisors said in nominating him. One of his primary focuses is community outreach. "Fire Marshal Morris is the happiest person to be around, always upbeat and excited to do projects," the nomination reads. "He has been instrumental in organizing the fire inspection program for the department and always has time to offer help or advice." He is pictured with, from left, Georgetown County Fire-EMS Chief Jim Falkenhagen and Assistant Chief Aaron Bostic, County Council Chairman Louis Morant and Emergency Services Director Brandon Ellis.

Two recognized for volunteer service

Carolos Aulet and William Shultzaberger were recognized on Jan. 23 for donating their time, experience and skills in service to the community in 2023.



Shultzaberger



Aulet

Aulet is a volunteer with Georgetown County Fire-EMS who has quickly become a trusted team member. He

has worked to strengthen the bond between full-time and volunteer personnel and assists full-time members with providing specialty training, in addition to assisting with staffing. He regularly staffs apparatus as a Driver Operator, adding to the safety and manpower provided when the apparatus are initially dispatched. Aulet also assists in staffing apparatus in place of full-time personnel. This has provided the opportunity for personnel to attend courses that will benefit the community. Aulet has also been assigned as a Volunteer Coordinator and is working on developing the volunteer core to make the volunteer staff more effective.

Shultzaberger, an officer with Georgetown County Fire-EMS, started his career as a volunteer Firefighter/EMT with Horry County Fire and Rescue, where he climbed through the ranks from Probationary Firefighter to Lieutenant. He came to work in Georgetown County five years ago, but still helps with teaching and transitioning recruits in Horry County to being active and productive Firefighters. He has applied all his training as a Volunteer and a Career Firefighter with both Horry County and Georgetown County to help build and teach everyone he comes in contact with.

Sheriff's Office recognizes employees of the Year for 2023

Georgetown County Sheriff Carter Weaver recognized three outstanding employees from his department during an awards ceremony on Jan. 11.

Kendaydrilla Knowlin, a member of the Transport Division, was named Deputy of the Year. She is responsible for safely and securely moving arrestees, inmates and people with mental health issues to and from facilities.

"As long-serving members of the Georgetown County Sheriff's Office, we all have had the privilege of working alongside Deputy Knowlin and can attest to the exceptional dedication and commitment she has consistently shown to the department and the community we serve," her nomination form said.

"Deputy Knowlin's outstanding contributions to our department are numerous and commendable. She is reliable, coming to work each day with a positive mental outlook, a smile on her face and a sincere desire to help as many people as she possibly can. She consistently goes above and beyond her duties as a transport deputy, displaying a level of competence and integrity that sets a high standard for all of us."

Haley Hardee is Tele-Communicator of the Year for Central Communications, better known as 911. During her two years at Central Dispatch, her skills have grown tremendously, according to her supervisors. She never backs down from a challenge and is usually the first to step up to cover special details such as warrant round-ups.

She is an excellent trainer, loves passing her knowledge on to new employees and pours herself into making sure they have all the tools to succeed. She is always willing to help cover open shifts and helps out anytime she is available.

"Haley is a positive influence on our center and puts forth her best effort every shift when she walks in the door," said 911 Director Joseph Williamson. "She sets a good example for everyone she works with."

Lucy Perez was named Detention Center Officer of the Year. She is a senior officer who stays motivated, according to supervisors. She takes on the task of training new officers and making sure they understand their duties. She listens and tries to help anyone, whether they are inmates or co-workers. Her work ethic and determination help the Detention Center run more efficiently and effectively.

Congratulations to these outstanding employees. To find more news and announcements from the Georgetown County Sheriff's Office, follow their [official account on Facebook](#) and [@gcsheriff](#) on Instagram.



Knowlin



Hardee



Perez



TRAIL STATUS ALERT

Prescribed controlled burns are planned at the Rocky Point Community Forest in February 2024. These burns will affect the Georgetown Outdoor Adventure Trails in the area.



TEMPORARILY CLOSED

- Choppee Creek Trail (RED BLAZE)
- Back Country Route (RED and BLUE BLAZE)
- Rocky Point Route (BLUE and ORANGE BLAZE)

WILL CLOSE DURING BURNS

- Coachman Trail (GREEN BLAZE)
- White Tail Deer Trail (WHITE BLAZE)
- Choppee Woods Trail (BLUE BLAZE)

Once controlled burns have been completed, maintenance will be conducted on the damaged trails and they will reopen as soon as possible.

For more info, visit gtcparks.org



Clerk of Court receives Patterson Award

Georgetown County Clerk of Court Alma White was recently presented the Robert K. Patterson Sr. Community Achievement Award by Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc.'s Georgetown Chapter.



In honor of Patterson's legacy, the award is presented annually to an individual who is instrumental in shaping Georgetown County and giving back to the community.

White was selected for her many decades of contributions to both the City of Georgetown and Georgetown County. She has served as Clerk of Court since January 2001. Prior to serving the public through the court system, she was a public school teacher for more than 20 years and had also worked for the Georgetown Times, where she was the newspaper's first African-American reporter. She also served as a member of Georgetown City Council from 1990 to 2000, and held the position of Mayor Pro Tem during her tenure.

"Ms. White has been instrumental in getting people involved in activities in Georgetown," said Louis Morant, President of Alpha Phi Alpha and chairman of Georgetown County Council. "She goes about it somewhat quietly, but she was selected for this award because of her insight and ability to move things forward. She is always trying to find ways to make things better in the community."

White attended Howard High School and graduated from Winyah High School in 1971. She is a graduate of Claflin University and continued her graduate studies at Armstrong State University, Coastal Carolina University, the University of South Carolina and the Citadel. She is a member of Bethel AME Church, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority and several other civic organizations.

Ard retires after 25 years with Sheriff's Office



Sheriff Carter Weaver honored Major Clark Ard upon his retirement from Georgetown County Sheriff's Office recently. Ard joined the Sheriff's Office in 1999 and attained the rank of Sergeant in the Patrol Division before transferring to the Detention Center in 2016. He and his wife, Deborah, are pictured with Sheriff Weaver following presentations.

Deputies recognized for heroic acts

Two Georgetown County Sheriff's deputies were recently presented with challenge coins for actions on the job.

Austin Hansmeyer was recognized for assisting a quadriplegic left alone after a private ambulance service missed his appointed pickup. The man had spent about seven hours with no assistance when Hansmeyer arrived at his home and took clean clothing from his own vehicle to help him. Hansmeyer displayed a deep sense of caring and service to the public, Sheriff Carter Weaver said.



Pewthers

Hansmeyer

Jacob Pewthers was honored for his actions during the recent winter storm. He waded through flood waters in a lot off High-market Street during heavy rain to rescue a dog on a chain. Water had reached the dog's shoulders and was continuing to rise. He approached the frightened dog carefully and established trust before removing the chain and rescuing the animal.

First Friday

with Georgetown County



New episodes on the first Friday of every month. Join us as we discuss topics important to residents of our county. Listen on YouTube or anywhere you normally stream and download podcasts.

ATTENTION SUBCONTRACTORS: MEETING REGARDING BID OPPORTUNITY ON FEB. 13

Local, small, minority and women-owned businesses are invited. Meeting is 5:30-6:30 p.m. at 8259 Choppee Rd.

Library seeks state funding increase



Georgetown County Library Director Dwight McInvaill and library supporters from our community traveled to Columbia Jan. 31 to embark on an advocacy campaign. They met with state legislators to ask for an increase in funding for public libraries. They hope to see per capita support increase from \$2.25 to \$3. Funding was slashed during the recession more than 15 years ago. "If it had risen consistently from where it was in 2017, it would now be \$3.27 per capita, so I don't think it's unreasonable to ask for \$3," McInvaill said. McInvaill is pictured with Friends of the Georgetown Library members Bob Willey, Jackie Hoelscher, Rachael Jobin, Vennie Deas Moore and Pam Toemmes, as well as S.C. Reps. Lee Hewitt and Carl Anderson. Willey said Anderson and Hewitt were "very supportive." The other members of the Georgetown Delegation, Sens. Stephen Goldfinch and Ronnie Sabb, were in committee meetings all day, but the group left information regarding their request at their offices.

Drew named employee of the quarter



Firefighter-EMT Joshua Drew of Midway Fire-Rescue was selected as Georgetown County's Employee of the Quarter for the last quarter of 2023. He was recognized by County Council on Jan. 23. During the last quarter, Drew was instrumental in beginning the budget year with positive oversight in the uniform and clothing line item. He voluntarily took over the responsibility of overseeing the uniforms and clothing purchases for Midway Fire-Rescue in July of last year. He was instrumental in changing the process by contacting the vendor and initiating a portal process. This process allows each employee to "shop" the portal and purchase the pre-approved uniform items ensuring sizing is accurate. Each person was allotted a set amount to spend, keeping the department within budget. Drew still has final approval of each purchase. He also worked with the vendor to obtain better prices and products. He has taken this duty very seriously and keeps his superiors updated. Drew managed to finish the year with the uniform line item in the positive last year and the entire department was properly outfitted. He is pictured with, from left, Midway Fire-Rescue Chief Brent McClellan, County Council Chairman Louis Morant and Emergency Services Director Brandon Ellis.

Friends of the Georgetown Library

**SPRING
COMMUNITY
YARD
SALE**

**MARCH 16th,
8:00AM - 12:00PM**

New County Courthouse Parking Lot

(RAIN DATE: MARCH 23rd)

Sellers: \$15 single space, \$20 double.

Register online at www.myfogl.org/projects

**Umpire
Clinic**



Interested in
working as a
paid umpire?

Learn how and
get the needed
training.

COST: \$30 CASH OR CHECK

MARCH 10 @ 3 PM

BECK RECREATION CENTER, 2030 W. CHURCH ST., GEORGETOWN

To register, email w.hardee@yahoo.com

Senior center participants going on the road

After a successful weekend trip to Charleston late last year, the Georgetown County Bureau of Aging Services is expanding its Seniors on the Road program. It recently started registering for two more trips. Seniors will have the opportunity to travel together to Harrah's Casino Cherokee Resort in April and on a Carnival cruise out of Charleston to Nassau Bahamas and Half Moon Cay in September.

Space is limited and registration is open now for those ages 60 and up. Cost for the Cherokee trip April 23-25 is \$325 plus meals with deposits due by Feb. 16. Cost for the cruise Sept. 9-14 is \$716. For more information about these trips and other programs offered by our Bureau of Aging Services (many for free), call 843-833-1582.

**Georgetown County Parks & Recreation
2024 Outdoor Adventures**



GOAT Hiking & Walking Series
Extra Day - Hike with the HERD - 02/29
Hikes, Walks, Rides, Paddles, Trail Days & More TBA

JOIN the HERD!
tistaub@gtcounty.org
Win COOL Stuff!

**Student Angler League
2024 Spring Tournament Trail**
Carroll Ashmore Campbell Landing
February 24th
April 13th
May 4th
<https://www.saittfishing.com/>

03/16 OUTDOOR EXPO
04/13-14 Vibe Time 2 - Flying Disc & Music Festival
05/11 TAKE A KID FISHING
05/17-18 Youth Adventure Camp
06-07/1 Wave that Flag 2 - Food, Music, Kickball & Laser Show

Sponsors & Volunteers NEEDED! - recadmins@gtcounty.org

Georgetown County Parks & Recreation
2030 Church Street Georgetown, SC 29140
www.GTCParks.org

Elections, IT staff recognized for innovation



Georgetown County's Office of Elections & Voter Registration, and the County's IT Department were presented with the Innovation Award for a project that allows voters to watch the vote tabulation process live on Election Nights. The departments worked together to implement this measure based on resident requests and recommendations from the Department of Homeland Security and the S.C. Election Commission. A camera in the secure tabulation room linked to a monitor in the lobby is highly effective and efficient in two major ways: 1.) It eliminates claims that the election system is rigged. On Election Night, voters can view the process as it takes place with full transparency, avoiding any fraud or manipulation claims. 2.) While Georgetown County ensures that the process is transparent and viewable by the public, the current setup still allows for the securing of the voting systems and election materials, and prevents any unauthorized access without cheapening the process. This implementation is critical and a major advancement in the Georgetown County Election's Office with the 2024 general election approaching.

Dorsey receives promotion to manager

James Dorsey has been promoted to Environmental Service Division Manager. He previously filled the position in an interim basis after Michelle LaRocco moved away. Dorsey has consistently exhibited his expertise in landfill management, and his proactive approach has positively impacted his team's efficiency and effectiveness, said Ray Funnys, director of the Public Services Department, which includes Environmental Services.



Library celebrates 225th birthday

The Georgetown County Library celebrated its 225th birthday on Jan. 31. Established in 1799, it is one year older than the Library of Congress. At the time, the Georgetown Library functioned as an exclusive library joint-stock company serving an elite group of 50 rice planters and merchants. Together they owned 5,000 to 10,000 books bought by a Committee of Correspondence and Purchase — mainly from London, Edinburgh, New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Charleston. Donations were also presented to the society by the likes of Vice President Aaron Burr, whose daughter Theodosia married Joseph Alston of the Georgetown District in 1801.

In the 1850s, ownership of the library was transferred from the Library Society to the Winyah Indigo Society. Today, the library proudly serves as a valuable resource to all, regardless of race or economic status. The Georgetown County Library circulates more than 200,000 items per year. Throughout this year, the library will host a series of programs focusing on the library's history. Look for more information coming soon

[See what the library's most circulated items of 2023 were.](#)

CAPITAL PROJECT SALES TAX COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Meetings begin at 5:30 PM



Upcoming Meetings

Feb. 22 Howard Center 1620 Hawkins St. Georgetown	Feb. 29 Southern Georgetown Library 4187 Powell Rd. Georgetown	March 7 Andrews Library 105 N. Morgan Ave. Georgetown
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Pyatt

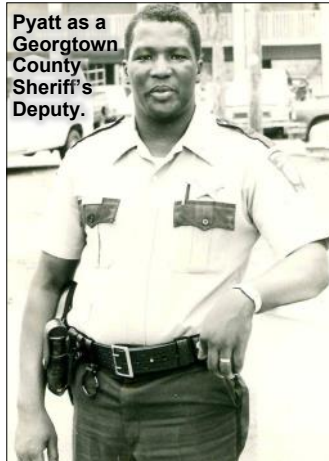
Continued from Front Page

sity. Initially, he thought he might have wanted to be a teacher before deciding to try law enforcement.

At the Sheriff's Office, he advanced up the ranks to Master Deputy, Investigator and Lieutenant. He worked as a narcotics investigator for a time, as well as the D.A.R.E. Officer when the program was introduced in Georgetown County. An acronym for Drug Abuse Resistance Education, the program brought law enforcement officers into elementary schools across the country in the 1980s and 1990s to warn about the dangers of drugs and educate children about how to resist peer pressure to engage in harmful behaviors.

Then, in 1996 he was appointed to the bench at the request of Yancey McGill and Greg Smith, state senators at the time. It was a smooth transition for Pyatt, who was 35. "I was ready for it," he said. Working in law enforcement had tempered him to listen to all sides of a dispute, he told local media at the time.

He initially filled a county-at-large post before becoming Municipal Judge for the Town of Andrews. He had also served in the Army National Guard HHB, 4th Battalion 178th Field Artillery until retiring from that position in 2001. The following year he was appointed as



Pyatt as a Georgetown County Sheriff's Deputy.

Chief Magistrate for Georgetown County, a role he has proudly served in since.

Asked about some of the cases he has presided over throughout the decades, he said there have been plenty of interesting ones, including some that received national attention. "I can't even recall half of them by now," he said. Those aren't the ones that stand out for him. More meaningful to him are the ones that may have never gained any public attention, but where he knows the action he took in the courtroom changed someone's life for the better.

"I've had so many people who approached me and thanked me for intervening," he said. "As a result of that, they are very productive citizens now. It's good to feel like I was helpful and I have had a positive impact on my community and the people here."

Community has always been important to Pyatt. He owns a home on Sandy Island where he grew up, and he and his wife Comeletia still attend church on the island. Comeletia is founding principal and executive director at Mingo Creek Academy, and Pyatt said he expects he'll spend some time there helping her once he retires. He also has three children and three grandchildren he'd like to spend more time with.

As to the rest, "I'm leaving it open," he said. "I'm not closing any doors, and I'm still going to be somewhat involved in the court system, but on a different level."

He is and will remain chairman of the Board of Magistrate and Municipal Judge Certification and the Magistrates and Municipal Judges Mentor Program. He also serves on the S.C. Judicial Council and the Chief Justice's Commission on the Profession for S.C.

But he said he also wants to spend time doing more things that aren't related to the justice system.

"I want to go out and really enjoy life," he said.

Judge Pyatt will be recognized by Georgetown County Council for his decades of dedication and service to the county at council's Feb. 13 meeting. The meeting will begin at 5:30 p.m. at Howard Auditorium, 1610 Hawkins St.

BASKETBALL COACHES NEEDED

WE PROVIDE:

- PRACTICE PLANS
- NAYS COACH CERTIFICATION
- LEAGUE RULES TRAINING

COACHES GET FREE REGISTRATION FOR THEIR KID(S) AND A FREE 1 YEAR GYM MEMBERSHIP

REACH OUT TO YOUR REGIONAL RECREATION CENTER FOR MORE INFORMATION



Georgetown County Parks & Recreation
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Georgetown County, South Carolina County Government

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County Council, 545-3058

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Elections, 545-3339

Finance, 545-3002

Parks & Rec., 545-3320

Planning/Zoning, 545-3116

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Register of Deeds, 545-3088

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Parks and Recreation

Continued from Front Page

average is \$94.77. The county also has more parks, facilities and playgrounds per person than the average.

It creates some big challenges in keeping facilities operating smoothly and serving the county's diverse population, but Goodale said she and the department stretch limited resources as far as possible and remain steadfast in their mission to maintain facilities to a high standard while trying to meet the expectations of the community.

"Our angle is efficiency. Doing as much as possible with limited resources has long been the expectation for Team Georgetown," Goodale said.

The ability to do so is largely in part to dedicated staff who go above and beyond, and a team of volunteers who make many of the department's programs possible, including youth sports. There's no way the county could operate youth leagues without volunteer coaches — something the department is always looking for more of.

Parks and Rec. also relies heavily on instructors who contract with the department to offer programs ranging from Zumba, pilates and chair yoga to flower arranging and youth theater.

From the tiniest tots to those in triple digits (A 101-year-old woman participated in last year's Waccamaw Senior Sports Classic at Beck Recreation Center), the department strives to have something to offer every segment of the community. It recently added a number of new programs for seniors through its Bureau of Aging Services, and more than 1,000 kids participated in youth football and cheerleading last fall.

Add in hosting tournaments at its facilities — a way of contributing to the county's tourism economy by bringing in visitors during the off-season — and it's easy to see the department has its hands full. Future projections for tourism and residential growth will continue to increase demands for services. Yet an aging population and fewer in the workforce will make staffing more challenging.

"As a result we are working hard to identify opportunities to improve efficiency and to increase partnerships within our communities," Goodale said. "We always want to say 'yes,' yet the dollars simply do not stretch far enough to do it all. Costs have continued to increase — utility costs have skyrocketed, many basic supplies are now 2-3 times more than pre-COVID levels. Aging facilities also result in increased maintenance costs."

It's partnerships that have made possible local events such as the Fourth of July 'Wave That



A child with a fish caught at one of the department's "Take a Kid Fishing" events. Another one of the events is set for May 11 at the pond at 8 Oaks Park.

Flag' laser light show at Retreat Park and the VibeTime Flying Disc Festival at Stables Park. Parks and Rec. also regularly volunteers to assist Hugs for Horses with events and programs including its annual horse show for individuals with special needs. The department's work with Hugs for Horses was a primary factor in the county's receipt of the Golden Palmetto Award last year from the S.C. Department of Disabilities and Special Needs.

"We really couldn't do what we do without those partnerships in the community," Goodale said. "So many of our resources are tied up just with keeping the lights on and the floor swept and the grass mowed."

Community partnerships and volunteers are crucial to enabling the department to offer a wide range of programs and facilities.

"Each of us are grateful for the Capital Improvement Plan investment in recreation," Goodale said. "The majority of our staff started out working part-time in very old, outdated former school facilities. They understand where we came from and are committed to taking care of our facilities to the best of our ability."

As a result, Goodale said every expenditure and facility schedule is constantly scrutinized to identify potential cost savings and efficiencies.

She acknowledges that many of the county's older facilities are in need of repair and upgrades, and said that can be more of a focus now that the county is done building new facilities for a while.

The department will also continue to focus on seeking out partnership opportunities and volunteers. Paid umpires and referees are also needed for upcoming youth sports seasons.

Goodale said she's excited about all the events and programs this year will bring. For more information about available programs, facilities, or how to get involved, visit gtcparks.org.