



The Georgetown County Chronicle



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

Inside this Issue

- Former County Administrator Tommy Edwards has died, Page 2
- County Fire-EMS recognizes employees, volunteers with annual ceremony, Page 4
- Members sought for Transportation Committee, First Steps Board, Page 5
- Children's librarian retires after 50 years of service, Page 7
- Capital Project Sales Tax FAQ, Page 9

Calendar

Nov. 21 – Planning Commission meeting, 5:30 p.m., at the historic county courthouse, 129 Screven St.

Nov. 21 – Library Board meeting, 5:30 p.m. at the Georgetown Library.

Nov. 21-22 – Job Fair with more than 60 employers; open to all job seekers. Located at the Howard Center. See page 8.

Nov. 28-29 – County offices are closed for Thanksgiving.

Dec. 10 – County Council meeting, 5:30 p.m., at the historic county courthouse. (Council only meets once per month in Nov. and Dec.)

Dec. 19 – Planning Commission meeting, 5:30 p.m., at the historic county courthouse, 129 Screven St.

Dec. 24-26 and Jan. 1 – County offices are closed for the holidays.

Jan. 10 – Legislative delegation meeting, Jan. 10, 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Pawleys Plantation (Sawgrass Room).

See more events and meetings at gtcounty.org.

Volume 13, Issue 3

November 2024

Community unites following IP closure announcement

Georgetown County, SC Works and a coalition of local, regional and state partners have united to assist those impacted by the upcoming closure of the International Paper mill. To aid the hundreds of employees who will lose their jobs, the agencies are coordinating resources, including a job fair and skill development workshops this month.

IP, which has operated its Georgetown mill since 1937, announced on Oct. 31 that it would cease operations by the end of the year. The box plant will remain open, employing about 125. The mill was one of the county's largest employers and will leave 526 hourly employees and 148 salaried employees without jobs. Additionally, the closure will have a ripple effect, impacting some 200 contractors, as well as local businesses.

In response, Georgetown County and partner organizations began formulating a coordinated assistance

plan to mitigate the economic and social impact of the closure. The initial response efforts include Georgetown County Economic Development, the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce, the City of Georgetown, Waccamaw Regional Council of Gover-

See "Paper Mill," Page 8



Residents approve new sales tax, elect new council members

Georgetown County residents approved a new one-cent sales tax and rejected another in the general election this month. Residents also elected two new County Council members: the Rev. Ernie Cooper Sr. in District 3 and Ron Charlton in District 4.

The new sales tax will go into effect May 1 and the new council members will take their oath of office at 4 p.m. on Jan. 14.

The sales tax will fund capital projects across the county, including water and sewer projects in rural areas of the county, a new emergency operations center, re-



Ernie Cooper Sr. and Ron Charlton began County Council Member Orientation on Nov. 13. They are pictured with Clerk to Council Theresa Floyd and Deputy Clerk Alma D. Sierra.

placement of a fire station in DeBordieu, among others. The full list of projects is available at gtcounty.org/cpst.

The tax will be in place for eight years and is conservatively estimated to raise about \$10 million per

year to go toward a list of 22 voter-approved projects. If the tax raises more than needed to complete those projects, voters also approved a list of 19 contingency projects.

Voters rejected a second sales tax referendum that would have offset property taxes and provided a tax savings for most homeowners in the county by having

visitors pay a share of county operational costs currently funded by property tax revenue. This was a Local Option Sales tax. It failed by less than 1%, triggering a recount, which occurred Nov. 12. It was the

See "Election," Page 9

IN MEMORIAM: *Former County Administrator remembered as 'truly effective leader'*

Thomas "Tommy" W. Edwards Jr., who served as Georgetown County Administrator from 1998 to 2008, died at Lowcountry Community Hospice House in Summerville on Nov. 9. He was 84.

Edwards was born on Aug. 15, 1940, in Marion. He was the son of the late Thomas W. Edwards Sr. and Octavia Edwards. He is remembered as a pillar of strength, service and commitment to his family and his community.

In high school, he was the captain of the basketball team, class President and President of the Beta Club. He graduated from Baptist College and received his master's in Public Administration from Central Michigan University.

The decade Edwards spent leading Georgetown County capped off a 35-year career in local government. Within Georgetown County government, he is remembered as "a quiet, yet truly effective leader," and as someone who was tough but fair, knew how to get things done, and a consummate professional. He was much more easygoing in his personal life and said at the time of his retirement that he was looking forward to being "a professional grandfather." He loved fishing, golf, gardening, photography, and his dachshund, Maggie. He was counted as a friend by many.

During his time as Georgetown County Administrator, Edwards left his mark on the county. Among his most significant achievements, he spurred a group of community leaders to begin work on a long-range strategic plan for the county, which came to be known as Visions. The plan went through two phases, with the second being turned into an 18-year, \$313.5 million capital improvement plan that built new libraries and community centers, parks, sports complexes, and other facilities that helped the county meet the demands of a growing population. The last project in the plan was just completed earlier this year.

During his tenure, Edwards was also responsible for consolidating county departments, establishing the county's stormwater department, and strengthening financial controls. "When Edwards took over as Administrator, no provisions were being made for the future financially or technologically," recalled Dwight McInvaill, Georgetown County Library Director.

"The county was behind," McInvaill said. "There were a handful of computers at most. He turned things around and established a good foundation to allow the county to grow and prosper."

Edwards launched the Georgetown County Efficiency and Effectiveness initiative, which produced a report in 2004 that included 67 major recommendations from technological improvements to solid-waste operations, with a goal of saving \$850,000 in the first year and \$5 million over five years. Notably, Georgetown County was also named a National Civic League All-America County in 2004 under Edwards' leadership.

After his retirement, Edwards served on the Georgetown County Planning Commission from 2008-2011 and remained a resident on the Waccamaw Neck. Due to his significant contributions to the county, the Georgetown County Airport Terminal was named in Edwards' honor upon its completion in early 2009. That facility was



Tommy Edwards
1940-2024

also part of the Visions Plan.

"The Georgetown County team is deeply saddened to learn of Mr. Edwards' passing," said Georgetown County spokeswoman Jackie Broach. "Mr. Edwards dedicated his life to the service of South Carolina's residents. His vision and leadership were transformative, driving major advancements in technology, citizen engagement, and strategic planning initiatives in Georgetown County. Under his leadership, the county achieved many milestones, including the Visions I and Vision II initiatives. We honor his legacy of innovation, efficiency, and community-focused service and extend our deepest condolences to his family, friends, and all who were touched by his dedicated service to our community."

Edwards began his career in government in the early 1970s and over the years served as Director of Administration for the City of North Charleston, and City Manager in Newberry and Florence. In his last post before coming to Georgetown County, he was Florence County Administrator.

Among many honors throughout this lifetime, Edwards was awarded the Order of the Palmetto, the most distinguished civilian award granted by the State, in recognition of his contributions to his community and local government. He was also named a Paul Harris Fellow for his service to the Rotary Club and received a Key to the City of Florence in 1995. He was a life member of the South Carolina City-County Managers Association, and through the years served as its director, secretary, treasurer, vice president, and president.

Edwards is survived by his wife, Linda Fulton Edwards of Georgetown; children Stephanie Hall (Stan), Thomas W. Edwards III (Grace) and Karen Edwards (Rob) of Charleston, and Brian Edwards (Jennie) of Florence; and 10 grandchildren. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the Charleston Animal Society.

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

IN MEMORIAM:

Patricia Byrd worked for County Civil Defense, Elections offices

Patricia Byrd, a longtime resident of Pawleys Island, died Oct. 11. She was 81.

Born July 10, 1943, she was a daughter of Sadie Moore and A.V. Moore. She was a proud graduate of Winyah High School and is remembered throughout the community for her kindness and generosity.

Mrs. Byrd once worked in the Georgetown County Office of Civil Defense, which is now Georgetown County Emergency Management. She was also the long-time director of the county Election Commission.

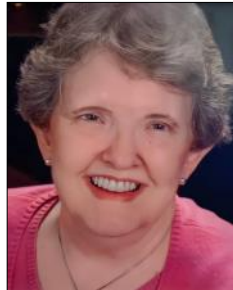
She had a passion for helping people and spreading the light and love of Christ, loved ones said. She could often be found helping out at her church and organizing fundraisers for the Salvation Army. She also never missed a family event or holiday.

She is survived by her grandson, Ronald E. Moore Jr. (Stephanie) of Johns Island; her sister, Sylvia Friedner (Jerry) of Columbia; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Her daughter Melissa Byrd Moore, died before her.

Funeral services were Oct. 18 at The Abbey at Pawleys Island. Burial was in Prince George Winyah Church Cemetery.

Memorials may be made to the Dementia Society of America.



Patricia Byrd
1943-2024

County staff gives back



Georgetown County employees recently collected 888 pounds of non-perishable food items to donate to Helping Hands of Georgetown, Inc. during its annual fall food drive. Pictured from left are staff members Randy Akers of the MIS Department, Russell Goodale of Emergency Services and Maya Morant of Economic Development with Brendon Barber, Executive Director of Helping Hands. This was the fourth consecutive year county employees have had a fall food drive. We're proud of our team and their enthusiasm for helping our community! For anyone else interested in donating, Helping Hands said donations are badly needed for the holiday season. Located in Georgetown, Helping Hands has a longstanding commitment to serving the needs of Georgetown County's most vulnerable residents. It impacts more than 2,000 local households each year. The expansion of services over the years, from its emergency dental care to the establishment of the Youth Empowerment Program (YEP) in 2018, demonstrates a deep understanding of the community's evolving needs and a proactive approach to addressing them. Learn more at helpinghandsofgeorgetown.org.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS
A series hosted by the Frances P. Bunnelle Foundation

POVERTY
IN GEORGETOWN COUNTY

Please join the Frances P. Bunnelle Foundation to listen and share about Poverty in Georgetown County. We want to listen to you!

The conversation will be facilitated by Marlanda Dekine, LMSW and Rev. Scott Neely, M.Div.

Dinner will be provided.

We look forward to seeing you!

NOVEMBER 21
5pm
The Glisson Center
at Bethel AME Church
417 Broad Street
Georgetown, SC 29440

RSVP <https://ConversationNov.rsvpify.com>

Scan here Please join us for the fourth session of our Community Conversations series. New topic each month!

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.

County Fire-EMS presents annual awards during ceremony

A number of career and volunteer members at Georgetown County Fire-EMS were recently honored for their hard work and dedication. The department hosted its annual awards and recognition ceremony on Nov. 14.

Award Winners are as follows:

- The Meritorious Service Award is presented annually to department members who go above and beyond normal operations or duties to benefit the department, department members, or the community. The award was presented this year to Volunteer Firefighters Danny Mills and Gary Smalls, as well as Firefighter/EMT Jerry McCommack and Lt. Dale Hewitt.
- Jerry McCommack was also named Firefighter/EMT of the Year.
- Lt. Brad Benjamin was named Firefighter/Paramedic of the Year.
- Lt. William Shulzaberger was named Career Officer of the Year.
- Volunteer of the Year is Volunteer Firefighter Charles Linen.
- Several department members were awarded the Phoenix Award, which is given to department members who successfully resuscitate a patient from cardiac arrest or major life threatening trauma in which the patient survives to hospital discharge. Phoenix Award Winners are Firefighter/Paramedic Ashley Baker, Master Firefighter Tyler Baker, Firefighter/EMT Jamie Barnes, Paramedic Kim Blake, Firefighter/Paramedic Christina Carciah, Master Firefighter Andrew Dougan, Chief Jim Falkenhagen, Firefighter/Paramedic Colby Gerrald, Firefighter/EMT Cody Hamilton, Lt. Dale Hewitt, Lt. Matt Howell, Firefighter/EMT Tosha Plass, Lt./Paramedic Steve Richards, Lt. David Scoggins, Lt. William Shultzaberger and



Pictured from left are Chief Jim Falkenhagen, Paramedic of the Year Brad Benjamin, Firefighter/EMT of the Year Jerry McCommack, Volunteer of the year Charles Linen, Officer of the Year William Sultzaberger and Assistant Chief Aaron Bostic.

Firefighter/EMT Austin Vazquez. Ashley Baker, Dougan and Hamilton all received two Phoenix Awards.

- Several members were recognized with the Community Service Award. This award is presented to all members who participate in a community event or project that benefits the community in a positive way and brings honor to Georgetown County Fire-EMS. Presented with the award were Lt. Derriell Baxley, Firefighter/Paramedic Robert Coker, EMT Jackson Mann, Firefighter/EMT Daniel Beil, Firefighter Henry Barnes and Chief Jim Falkenhagen.

Christmas TOY DRIVE

DONATE NOW

YOUR DONATION ALLOWS US TO PROVIDE TOYS TO CHILDREN IN NEED IN THE BLACK MOUNTAIN, NC AREA

UNTIL DECEMBER 7, 2024

ANY GCFE Fire Station

Contact: BBaxley@gtcounty.org
AABaker@gtcounty.org

Andrews Library
 Decorate A
 Gingerbread
 Man Into a
 Book Character

NOVEMBER 20-21

Wed: 3pm-4:30pm
 Thur: 4pm-5pm

8+

Must Register, Limited Supplies
 Will be voted on by library patrons!
 Winners announced December 18th

105 N Morgan Ave Andrews, SC 29510
 843-545-3621

Members sought for CTC, Georgetown First Steps Board

The Georgetown County Legislative Delegation is seeking applicants for the following boards and commissions that have vacancies, expired terms or terms that expire in the near future:

- Georgetown County First Steps
- Georgetown County Transportation Committee

Download an application at gtcounty.org/delegation. Applications will be accepted through Friday, Nov.

22. Hard copies of applications may be picked up at the Delegation Clerk's Office, located at 716 Prince St., Georgetown.

Email applications to adsierra@gtcounty.org, or mail to: Georgetown County Legislative Delegation, P.O. Drawer 421270, Georgetown, SC 29440. For more information, contact Alma D. Sierra at 843-545-3146 or adsierra@gtcounty.org.

Tickets on sale for Legislative Breakfast

The Georgetown County Chamber of Commerce has scheduled its annual legislative breakfast for 8 a.m. Jan. 10 at Pawleys Plantation. Tickets are \$40 for chamber members and \$50 for non-members. The event features the county's members of the state legislative delegation and a moderated Q&A. For information, call 843-546-8436.

Sheriff launches Explorers program



On Nov. 7, Sheriff Carter Weaver conducted a swearing-in ceremony for members of the new Georgetown County Sheriff's Office Explorers Post 333, which allows students from 10th, 11th, and 12th grade an immersive experience in law enforcement. The group first met in mid-October and have already toured our equipment and vehicles, had a fingerprinting lesson in Forensics, explored the work of our Traffic Unit, met K9 Officer Pelle and our bloodhound Lucy, did our agility test, and visited 9-1-1 and Emergency Operations. The group's charter teens include Hailey Barnhill, Christina Brown, Ian Dennison, Anslie Fornith, Jack Hodges, Ashley O'Neil and Jah-Jah Ward. Explorers pledged to avoid drugs and alcohol and obey the laws of the state and nation. At the swearing-in, family members participated in the ceremony, pinning badges on the Explorers' new uniforms.

MAKE YOUR OWN
Oyster Shell Ornaments!

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2024
@ 10 AM

Adults Age 18+
Limited seats
Registration Required

Email: mallen@gtcounty.org
or sball@gtcounty.org

Waccamaw Neck Branch Library
41 St. Paul Place, Pawleys Island

The Friends of the Georgetown Library's

YULETIDE HOME TOUR

Tour historic homes, museums, and places of worship in Georgetown!

December 14, 2024
1:00PM-5:00PM

\$20.00/person, member of any Georgetown County Library Friends group
\$25.00/person, nonmember

To pre-register, visit myfogl.org/our-events

Applications accepted for Minority Business program until Dec. 5

The Minority Business Accelerator, a 10-week program designed for Georgetown County entrepreneurs, is accepting applicants until noon on Dec. 5. Entrepreneurs at all levels, from beginners on up, are eligible.

Created by Georgetown County Economic Development and administered by the Georgetown County Chamber of Commerce, the program helps minorities including women and veterans elevate their business skills, strengthen community ties and grow their vision through powerful sessions and hands-on workshops. The program helps participants master topic areas such as management, legal structure, marketing, finance, customer service and business plan development. Participants will also have the chance to pitch their business plans for a chance to win a \$5,000 business development grant.

The program begins Jan. 14. Applicants will be notified of whether they are accepted by Dec. 7.

Apply online at visitgeorge.com or call (843) 546-8436 for more information.

Officials cut ribbon at main branch



Three months after a soft reopening, the Georgetown Library celebrated the official end to a two-year major renovation. Officials and library patrons gathered in the library auditorium for a ribbon cutting and grand reopening ceremony on Nov. 7. County Council Vice Chair Lillie Jean Johnson, who is also a dedicated library volunteer, had the honor of holding the scissors. Down the hall in the main area, staff handed out special tote bags and other swag commemorating the Georgetown County Library System's 225th anniversary, which is being celebrated with special programs throughout this year. The nearly \$3 million renovation included a 3,120-foot expansion, in addition to new flooring, lighting, paint, fixtures and furniture. The renovation was possible in part to a \$1.4 million bequest from the late Jean Flournoy Moody.





December @ Waccamaw Neck Branch Library: KIDS!



Mondays
Toddler Time
10:30-11:30am

Wednesdays
Storytime
(babies to age 5)
10:30am

Crafternoon
(all ages)
3-5pm



Fridays
Lego Free-Build
9:00am-5:00pm

Tuesdays
Puzzle Time!
(all ages)
3-5pm

Thursdays
Crochet Club
(age 7+)
4-5pm

Puzzle Time!
(all ages)
3-5pm

Special Dates

Holiday Party!

During our usual crafternoon time, we will be crafting our own ornaments and making cheer!

December 18th
3-5pm

Holiday Storytime!

The Polar Express and other stories...
Read by a special guest!

December 11th
10:30AM

*Please make note that the library is closed the 24th, 25th, & 26th.



Two events for children @ the Waccamaw Neck Branch Library



Holiday Storytime

Wednesday, December 11th
10:30 AM



A joyful Mrs. Claus will be visiting our littlest library patrons from the North Pole with treats and stories!

Holiday Party

Wednesday, December 18th
3-5PM

Make ornaments at our Crafternoon time and share some holiday cheer! (for all ages)



Smittle completes Chief Fire Officer Program



Walter Matthew Smittle, Division Chief of Special Operations at Midway Fire Rescue, recently completed the S.C. Chief Fire Officer Program, hosted by the State Association of Fire Chiefs. This was the second year the program has been offered in the Palmetto State, which is geared toward empowering fire service leaders with the knowledge to navigate many of the unique challenges that come with managing today's fire service and planning for the future. The course involved presentations, classwork, work sessions and out-of-class assignments. Smittle will now bring the knowledge and experience gained from this program back to his roles at Midway and the county's Technical Rescue Team. Smittle (center) is pictured with Midway Chief Brent McClellan (left) and Georgetown County Emergency Services Director Brandon Ellis.

Sullivan retires after 50 years at Library

On Oct. 14, Shelia Sullivan celebrated 50 years as a Georgetown County employee — a milestone that has only ever been achieved by a handful of people. On Nov. 8, she worked her last day before entering into a well-deserved retirement.

The head of children's services and outreach at the Georgetown Library, Sullivan has touched many lives over five decades at the library. She insisted on no party or fanfare for her retirement, but the Friends of the Georgetown Library still got her a special cake and recognized her during a ribbon cutting event for the newly renovated main branch on Nov. 7. They also snuck in a more lasting tribute. A mural in the children's area of the newly renovated library has an homage to Sullivan: it includes a duck reading a book to a brood of ducklings. The book is titled "The Golden Librarian: 50 Years of Memories."

Pictured at top, Sullivan accepts a hug from County Administrator Angela Christian while enjoying a piece of the cake the Friends of the Library got for her. At right is an undated photo that shows Sullivan at work during the early years of her career.





jr. nba

JUNIOR NBA BASKETBALL

REGISTRATION CLOSES DEC. 31ST

AGES:
 - 5-6, 7-8 (CO-ED)
 - BOYS: 9-10, 11-12
 - GIRLS: 9-12
 - CHEERLEADING (5-8) & (9-12)

COST:
 - \$40

REGISTER AT GTC Parks.org

For more information call 843-545-3320





@GTC Parks
<http://secure.rec1.com/SC/georgetown-county-sc/catalog>






GTC PARK'S G.O.A.T. HERD PRESENTS

HIKE & SEEK

RULES:

- TEAMS OF 2-4 PEOPLE
- 90-MINUTE TIME LIMIT
- 25 CHECKPOINTS LOCATED THROUGHOUT THE 8 OAKS PARK TRAIL SYSTEM
- CHECKPOINTS ARE WORTH 3, 4, OR 5 POINTS DEPENDING ON THE DIFFICULTY OF LOCATING
- SCORE BASED ON 100 POSSIBLE POINTS
- TIE SCORES WILL BE BROKEN BY THE FASTEST TIME.
- TEAMS MUST REMAIN ON TRAILS AND OPEN SPACES.
- TAKE A TEAM PICTURE AT EACH CHECKPOINT TO DOCUMENT COMPLETION



8 OAKS PARK

6610 HIGHMARKET ST

SAT. NOV. 23

11AM



Georgetown County Parks & Recreation
 2030 Church St. Georgetown, SC 29440
 (843) 545-3320 | www.GTCParks.org






Paper Mill

Continued from Front Page

nments, the Georgetown County Chamber of Commerce, Georgetown County School District, and Tidelands Health, among others. This group met with IP officials to get a better understanding of shutdown plans and the benefits terminated employees will receive. Then they built a multi-phase support strategy.

A key priority is to help those who will be left unemployed find new positions locally so those families can remain in Georgetown County.

"That is vital to us," said Angela Christian, Georgetown County Administrator. "Helping these families find good jobs right here so they can continue to call this community home and thrive here is our top priority."

Following the closure announcement, Christian said she started receiving calls from employers who want to help by hiring. Officials with Tidelands Health said they have 200 job openings they want to fill. Efforts need to be coordinated, getting all partners on the same page, for the maximum effect, Christian said.

"There are opportunities here," Christian said. "As a community, we just have to identify them and be ready to grab them."

Many mill employees have worked there long-term and haven't had to job seek for years or even decades, said Kimberly Burke, Statewide Rapid Response Program Manager for the Dislocated Worker Unit of the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce. The agency set up at IP earlier this month to assist IP employees with resume writing and other important skills for job seekers. Contractors impacted by the shutdown were invited to participate also. SC Works staff worked with small groups in one-hour blocks. IP agreed to provide flexibility to workers to help ensure they could take advantage of the resources. One-on-one coaching sessions were available for those interested. Workers were also connected with Horry-Georgetown Technical College for retraining opportunities.

All that will lead up to a two-day job fair taking place at the county's Howard Center on Hawkins Street from 2-7 p.m. on Nov. 21 and from noon to 5 p.m. on Nov. 22. The job fair is also open to any other job seekers in the community.

About 160 new jobs were created this year by new or expanding industries in Georgetown County. All of those industries are currently hiring and have asked to be included in the upcoming job fair, Morant said.

The job fair marks just the beginning of the community's response to the closure.

"It's not going to be a short process," Christian said. "The impacts felt here are going to be far-reaching."

The company has promised to make good on commitments to nonprofits for the remainder of this year, but those agencies will also be feeling the impacts of the mill's closure in 2025.

"This was a shock for our community, and it's not going to be easy to recover," Christian said. "But our community is committed to working together to get through this. We're going to support each other and come through the other side stronger. Team Georgetown is resilient."

Georgetown County and partner agencies had a news conference to talk about actions taking place following the mill closure announcement and answer questions. The event was livestreamed and can be watched in full on the County's YouTube channel at youtube.com/gtcountysc.

JOB FAIR THURS & FRI

Thurs., Nov. 21 from 2 to 7 pm
Fri., Nov. 22 from noon to 5 pm
Howard Center, 1610 Hawkins St, Georgetown



Talk with 60+ area employers who are looking for quality employees


Open to International Paper employees and others looking for jobs



The Georgetown Library


Bookmobile

We're closed while we search for a new bookmobile librarian!
We'll be back soon!



BOOK

For more information: 843-545-3346



**Did you know you can watch
Georgetown County Council
meetings online?**

Watch at YouTube.com/GtCountySC.

Capital Project Sales Tax FAQ

Q: When will the new CPST go into effect?

A: Collection of the CPST will begin May 1, 2025, and end on April 30, 2033.

Q: How will it be collected from businesses?

A: The new 1% tax will be reported by businesses in Georgetown County to the S.C. Department of Revenue via Form ST-389 and will be attached to their monthly sales and use tax ST-3 Form.

Q: To what items will the tax apply?

A: The 1% tax will only apply to those goods and services that are subject to the state's 6% sales tax. Food and prescription medicine are currently exempt from the 6% tax and will be exempt from the 1% CPST.

Q: How much will the CPST generate and how will funds be used?

A: The CPST is conservatively estimated to raise about \$10 million per year. Funds must be used for the projects approved by voters as part of the ballot and projects must be completed in priority order. If enough is raised to complete all projects on the priority list with money left over, funds must then be used on the contingency list. View both lists at gtcounty.org/cpst.

Election

Continued from Front Page

biggest recount in memory, according to Aphra McCrea, Georgetown County director of Voter Registration and Elections.

While recounts in the past have typically been for individual districts, requiring 5,000 to 6,000 ballots to be recounted, this was a countywide recount. Approximately 38,000 ballots had to be recounted, creating the need to bring in a high-speed ballot processor. The machine can count 350 ballots per minute.

Ultimately the LOST referendum failed by just 54 votes. Staff will likely ask County Council to consider putting the Local Option Sales Tax on the ballot again in two years as it would provide recurring funds that could be put toward providing much-needed salary increases for employees, including emergency responders.

On the County Council front, the two newly-elected Council members and one re-elected Council Member — District 2 Representative Bob Anderson — will take their oath of office in a ceremony beginning at 4 p.m. Jan. 14 in Council Chambers. The first Council meeting of the year will follow at 5:30 p.m.

Cooper, a Democrat, won District 3 (the Santee/Sampit area and part of Andrews) against Republican Craig Cumbee. Cooper defeated incumbent Everett Carolina in the June primary.

Charlton, a Republican and the son of a former Council Member by the same name (but not a Jr.), defeated Democrat Hobson Henry Milton in the election for District 4 (the Georgetown area). He will replace retiring Council Vice Chair Lillie Jean Johnson, a Democrat, who opted not to run for re-election this year.

Charlton and Cooper began their Council Member Orientation on Nov. 13. In the weeks leading up to their oath of office ceremony, the two will get a crash course in county government operations, meeting staff and learning about all that the county's various departments take care of day-to-day.

View complete election results at gtcounty.org/vote.

Cappel named Employee of the Quarter



Phil Cappel of the Finance Department is pictured with his family at the November County Council meeting.

Phil Cappel of the Finance Department was recently recognized as Georgetown County's Employee of the Quarter for the 3rd quarter of this year. Cappel, a staff accountant, has been employed with the county since November 2021. Since that time, he has consistently demonstrated exceptional dedication and innovation in his role, going above and beyond to ensure the smooth operation of the Finance Department.

Cappel was handed a challenging set of responsibilities with minimal transition from his predecessor, yet he quickly mastered the position and made it his own. He manages all accounts receivable duties, which includes working closely with Human Resources to accurately bill retirees for health insurance. His attention to detail ensures retirees are informed and current on their payments, contributing to his effective financial management of the County's Self-Insured Health Plan.

Cappel also handles the billing for the County's rental properties, including hangar leases at the Airport, property leases at the Litchfield Exchange, Port property leases, and tower rentals. His ability to collaborate effectively with the Airport Manager, Economic Development staff, and the County Attorney ensures all lease agreements are up to date and compliant with their provisions. In addition, Phil works alongside Environmental Services to manage landfill billing and maintain accurate accounts.

A standout achievement during his tenure has been his identification of about six businesses that were not remitting their Local Accommodation and Hospitality taxes as required. Through Cappel's diligence, the County was able to collect over \$250,000 in back taxes, bringing these businesses into compliance and significantly increasing revenue. Phil is responsible for overseeing the collection of these taxes monthly for the unincorporated areas of the County, the Town of Andrews, and Pawleys Island, ensuring accuracy and timely payments.

Cappel's impact on the Finance Department is evident in the numerous improvements he has spearheaded, streamlining processes that enhance efficiency and effectiveness. His proactive approach and problem-solving mindset have made a substantial difference across multiple functions. In addition to Cappel's duties in the Finance Office, he also serves on the County's Central Safety Committee, further demonstrating his commitment to the well-being and overall success of the organization.

Georgetown County, South Carolina

County Government

Numbers to know

(All begin with area code 843)

Animal Control, 546-5101

Assessor, 545-3014

Auditor, 545-3021

Clerk of Court, 545-3004

County Council, 545-3058

Coroner, 546-3056

Elections, 545-3339

Finance, 545-3002

Parks & Rec., 545-3320

Planning/Zoning, 545-3116

Probate Judge, 545-3077

Register of Deeds, 545-3088

Sheriff, 546-5102

Treasurer, 545-3102

P.O. Box 421270
129 Screven Street

Phone: (843) 545-3063
Fax: (843) 545-3292



T.L. Staub cuts the ribbon on the new kids TRACK trail at Rocky Point Community Forest on Nov. 13.

County GOAT program opens new kids trails

On Nov. 13, Georgetown County Parks & Recreation, in partnership with the Kids in Parks program, officially opened a new TRACK Trail at Rocky Point Community Forest. The ribbon-cutting ceremony took place at the welcome kiosk and included a guided hike along the newly dedicated trail. This milestone is part of a broader initiative to encourage outdoor exploration and healthy activities for children and families.

The Kids TRACK Trail at Rocky Point offers a self-guided adventure, supported by educational brochures designed to engage young hikers. These brochures provide fun and informative activities, such as identifying various species of oak, maple and pine trees or learning about the area's birds through the "Birds of the Woods and Wetlands" guide. By transforming an ordinary walk into a family-led exploration, the program seeks to instill a lifelong love for nature in young participants.

Teddi Garrick, S.C. Program Manager for the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation's Kids in Parks initiative, emphasized how these trails empower children to lead their outdoor adventures while reconnecting families with nature. The Kids in Parks program, funded through a grant by Blue Cross Blue Shield of South Carolina Foundation, has transformed existing trails nationwide by adding kid-friendly elements to encourage learning and outdoor activity. Garrick praised Georgetown County for its community engagement and resources, describing the area as a "hidden gem" for outdoor recreation.

Georgetown County will be home to three Kids TRACK Trails, including one each in development at 8 Oaks Park in Georgetown and Stables Park in Litchfield, in addition to the one at Rocky Point. Kids who complete a TRACK Trail adven-

ture can register their hike online at KidsinParks.com to earn prizes, making their next outdoor adventure even more exciting. One of the prizes includes a sticker featuring Parks and Rec. mascot, Forest the Squirrel.

T.L. Staub, Outdoor Recreation Coordinator for Georgetown County Parks & Recreation, highlighted the educational benefits of the new TRACK trails. "The new materials for children offer great opportunities to learn more about wildlife, plants, and the unique features of each park site," Staub said.

With the addition of the Rocky Point trail, Georgetown County continues to foster community engagement and outdoor exploration for children and families, creating memorable experiences in the natural beauty of its parks.

For more information about the TRACK Trails and outdoor recreation opportunities in Georgetown County, visit the Georgetown Outdoor Adventure Trails (GOAT) webpage at gcounty.org/GOAT or KidsinParks.com.



Georgetown County Parks and Recreation mascot Forest the Squirrel with the new trail signage at Rocky Point.