



Firefly looks to add Lexington spur

**By Hank Tatum
The Oglethorpe Echo**

Firefly Trail Inc. is exploring the possibility of adding a spur to Lexington.

John Kissane, the Firefly Trail's development coordinator, seemed to surprise Oglethorpe County Commission Chair Jay Paul and the commissioners with the news at Monday's meeting, but they un-

animously approved his request for their support to prepare a grant proposal to plan the spur.

"I've never heard Lexington mentioned before," Paul said after the meeting.

The planning of a segment from Crawford to Lexington wouldn't affect the organization's intention to complete the trail from Winterville to Greene County.

Firefly Trail Inc. plans to apply for the Rebuilding American Infra-

structure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant, through the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The project wouldn't fund trail construction, but would enable planning of the trail along the "most desirable corridor" from Arnoldsville through the Smokey Road Community to Crawford and Lexington, according to a statement from Firefly Trail Inc.

The application deadline is Jan. 30. Kissane said the organization has

"heard for a few years that people in Lexington wished the trail would come over there." He said Tuesday that he spoke with Ronnie Boggs, who is on Lexington's City Council, which was scheduled to meet Thursday night.

"We feel like for this grant, which emphasizes safety and connecting communities, this just seemed natural to focus on the cities here and because there's interest (from Lexington)," Kissane said.

He also mentioned that Firefly

board members met with five residents of the Smokey Road Community, who he said were thrilled about the prospect of the trail.

"We knew there was interest, but they're 100% excited about it," he said. Firefly Trail Inc. said benefits from the spur would include:

- Increased recreational opportunities for people of all ages.
- Enhanced safety for non-motorized transportation.

See FIREFLY, Page 5



SUBMITTED PHOTO

April Moore, the Oglethorpe County Family Connection coordinator, works with several organizations throughout the county. She donated literacy learning toys and Smart Sacks filled with books, handwriting tools and other items to students last year.

Plenty of love to go around

Moore does best to fill needs as the county's Family Connection coordinator

**By Dakota Meeks
The Oglethorpe Echo**

April Moore has learned to become creative with Oglethorpe County Family Connection.

About a month ago, she started to lead an early literacy program in the school system to encourage the educational growth of kindergartners.

That effort joined with an initiative that Moore, coordinator for Family Connection in Oglethorpe County, launched earlier in 2024 called "Smart Sacks," a sling bag that was gifted to upcoming kindergartners. Each bag contained a Vtech Write and Learn, a tablet for writing, along with a pencil, a water bottle and a book named, "Twas the Night Be-

RESOURCE GUIDE

Check out The Oglethorpe Echo's annual resource guide that features a list of organizations — including Family Connection — that are available to assist individuals and families throughout Oglethorpe County. ... **Page 2**

fore Kindergarten." The upcoming kindergartners received them in April at Kindergarten Roundup at Oglethorpe County Primary School.

"They were able to take home all these tools and work with them over the spring and summer to be better prepared for kindergar-

ten," Moore said.

These and other efforts show how Moore, who is from Sandy Cross, has strived to do more for Oglethorpe County, which she calls a "small, but mighty" community that is family-focused.

"It builds you as a person," she said.

Before her role at Family Connection, she worked at different organizations around the county, including the Farm Bureau and the school system.

Samai Argueta, a member of The Light of The World Church and volunteer for Family Connection, said it takes skill to do what Moore does.

"I think she does it with a lot of love, and I think she is someone that truly cares about helping those in our community who need it," he said.

See LOVE, Page 8

Snow, ice expected on Friday

Staff Report

Public Works director Adam Nation said his crews are ready if Oglethorpe County is impacted by snow and ice this week.

Nation said Monday the county has blades that can be used to help clear roads and equipment to spread a sand/salt mix on the county's bridges.

Marshall Shepherd, director of UGA's Atmospheric Sciences Program, posted on Facebook on Tuesday that models show the potential for a wintry mix, including rain, freezing rain, sleet and snow, throughout North Georgia — including the Athens area — on Friday and into Saturday morning.

Temperatures are expected to be below or remain near freezing Friday and into Saturday, when skies are expected to clear.

GDOT crews will begin brining roads on Thursday, particularly in areas north of I-20, according to a release from Gov. Brian Kemp's office.

See SNOW, Page 8

Post office closure delays delivery

Post offices across the U.S. were closed on Thursday to honor former President Jimmy Carter, meaning delivery of The Oglethorpe Echo likely was delayed at least one day.

Carter died Dec. 29, leading the USPS to suspend mail deliveries, retail services and administrative office activity on Thursday.

Postal service operations were set to resume Jan. 10.

Students get first look at new school

**By Sarah Coyne
The Oglethorpe Echo**

The first round of students and parents walked through the new Oglethorpe County Elementary School at an open house on Tuesday.

"I like being in the building and having a ton of room, being with my coworkers and just getting to meet all the children," said Rebekah Poss, the music teacher for third through fifth grades.

Tuesday's group, for students with last names beginning A-F, was able to spend two hours exploring the school,

which is scheduled to open to all students on Friday. Other groups were scheduled to visit on Wednesday.

Teachers and staff were excited to welcome the students into the new school, which consolidates students from the primary and elementary schools into one location.

"We're used to being at the far end of the building, away from everybody," paraprofessional Sheena Hathcock said. "Now, we're right here in the middle of the building, so it'll be nice to see everybody and be somewhere brand new."

Kindergarten teacher Pen-

ni Stoudenmire said the new environment will benefit the students, thanks to "reliable" technology and a bigger gym and lunchroom.

"I do feel like they'll have better opportunities," she said.

The open house served as a way to help the students adapt to a new layout and to learn where their classrooms are located.

"I used to be on the other side of the school," said Heather White, who teaches language arts and is the special education resource teacher.

See SCHOOL, Page 8



SARAH COYNE/THE OGLETHORPE ECHO

Grady Deaton, 6, and first-grade teacher Katie Cook are all smiles during the first open house at Oglethorpe County Elementary School on Tuesday. The new school is scheduled to open on Friday.

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INSIDE

More than 90 people participated in the annual First Day Hike at Watson Mill Bridge State Park on New Year's Day, about three times more than last year. ... **Page 9.**



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OGLETHORPE COUNTY RESOURCE GUIDE

Nonprofits, individuals provide help year-round

By The Oglethorpe Echo

An array of nonprofits, government organizations, churches and other institutions offer assistance throughout the year to individuals and families in need in Oglethorpe County.

About 11.1% of the 14,825 people who lived in Oglethorpe County experienced poverty in 2022, the most recent data available from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Here's an overview of resources, from hot meals to fresh food to diapers to classes and more, that are available year-round. The list includes contact information for those who need help and ways to support these efforts.

If you know of other resources not listed, please contact us at editor@oglethorpeecho.com.

SENIORS

Oglethorpe County Senior Center

oglethorpecountyga.gov/seniors
706-743-8848
crobinson@oglethorpecountyga.gov
19 Oglethorpe Drive, Crawford

The Senior Center provides a variety of services to individuals aged 60 and older.

Seniors who can drive and walk into the center can fill out a membership application in person. Those clients, also known as "congregate clients," can come to the center five days a week to receive a hot meal for lunch and do an activity with the other seniors.

The center is part of the Oglethorpe County government.

Homebound clients should call the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission (706-583-2546). The commission will fill out an assessment report and send the information to Corie Robinson, the center's director. She will visit the client's home to set them up to receive a weekly delivery of frozen meals to last the whole week. To sign up, seniors should provide a photo ID, a list of emergency contacts, a list of medications and an insurance card.

There is a \$60 annual membership fee (\$5/month), which can be made in payments throughout the year. If someone is unable to pay, there are sponsorships for free memberships.

Robinson said to contact her if the membership fee is a barrier and she will provide assistance. In addition, there is also a required donation of \$2 for every meal, \$5 for non-member family members and friends.

The center takes individuals to doctor appointments within the county (must be scheduled in advance) and to the grocery store, bank and pharmacy on Tuesdays. The center has a gym that is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The center also takes trips twice a month. The trips require a \$3 donation, while they require a \$2 donation for meals (\$5 for non members).

The center partners with the Ninth District Community Agency with heating and cooling assistance; contact the NDO at 1-855-636-3108.

The calendar of events and the menu for each week is printed in The Oglethorpe Echo; the monthly calendar of events is on its Facebook page.

"Everyone, every staff member here, is here because they care, and they love each and every one of these members and our clients, and I cannot think of anything better than working in a place where you get to give back to the community that you live in," Robinson said. "You know, it's just fantastic. I can't even almost put it into words."

Students Serving Seniors

Oglethorpe County Extension and 4-H Office
extension.uga.edu/county-offices/oglethorpe.html
706-743-8341
55 Oglethorpe Drive, Crawford

The Oglethorpe County 4-H Club introduced an initiative in 2022 to help senior citizens with small chores.

"We team up with the Senior Center and (connect with) some elderly folks around the county who just need some simple help around the house, around the yard, and we go and help them out," said Marcus Eason, Oglethorpe County 4-H agent.

Through a questionnaire distributed at the Senior Center, the 4-H learned of seniors' needs and re-

quests for help at home. Students involved in the program have the opportunity to help others, contribute to household chores and log community service hours. The club has helped put up and decorate a Christmas tree, cut down dead plants and rake leaves.

Students Serving Seniors has served five households as a new program with 50 youth participants, according to the 4-H Office's 2023 impact statement. The project's total participants have logged over 180 community service hours and will continue in the colder months, Eason said.

FAMILY SERVICES

Family Connection

Oglethorpe.gafcp.org
762-445-4020
amoore@oglethorpe.k12.ga.us
735 Athens Road, Lexington

Family Connection connects community members committed to improving the well-being of children and families to the resources people need. The organization also can provide links to online resources, such as findhelp.org, and see if families meet the criteria for these programs. There is no cost for assistance.

Coordinator April Moore said if she doesn't have an immediate answer, she will research and reach out to area partners and organizations.

"It's just like a big family here," she said. "People really want to help and if there's not something that we know automatically, or that the person would qualify for, so to speak, people just want to help and sometimes we just figure out a way and make it happen by just talking and you know, seeing if we can all pull together to give that family or that person the support they need."

Moore said Family Connection is working on/with organizations and projects such as Athens Area Diaper Bank, Community Day, Community Christmas, literacy events and the student athlete nutrition and hydration program.

Oglethorpe County Extension and 4-H Office

extension.uga.edu/county-offices/oglethorpe.html
706-743-8341
55 Oglethorpe Drive, Crawford

The extension's Cooking to Share Program provides meals cooked by youth students to families in need identified by the Oglethorpe school district. The program is an effort to foster students' confidence with cooking skills, kitchen safety and to also teach them how to lead a healthy lifestyle.

The program has raised approximately \$7,425 for supplies and ingredients, and over 90 families have been impacted since 2013, according to the 4-H Office. Over 3,000 youth have participated in the community service opportunity, which hosts a cooking event with about 25 students once a month.

"Every family that comes to pick (the meals) up are so grateful, and they always say that the food's delicious," Eason said. "This is for the families but it's also for the kids. ... I have heard that the kids go back home after they've participated and want to help cook more."

Athens Area Diaper Bank

athensareadiaperbank.com
706-621-7265
diapers@athensareadiapers.com
130 Conway Drive, Suite E, Bogart

The Athens Area Diaper Bank is a resource for families struggling with the expense of diapers. About 35 organizations partner with the bank and distribute the diapers in multiple counties: Athens-Clarke, Barrow, Oconee, Oglethorpe, Jackson and Madison. The Athens Area Diaper Bank began collecting diapers in 2015, founder and executive director Erin Campbell said.

Free diapers are available at Deliverance Temple Ministries (220 Smithonia Road, Winterville 30683). If transportation isn't available, call 706-621-7265 to request delivery.

Also, Community Christmas of Oglethorpe County distributes free diapers to families who have been interviewed for assistance. Call 706-201-7241.

Brightpaths

brightpathsathens.org
706-546-9713
info@pcaathens.org
1450 Barnett Shoals Road, Athens

Brightpaths Athens offers multiple free programs to serve families



SIDNEY/CHANSAMONE/THE OGLETHORPE ECHO

The Oglethorpe County Senior Center provides a place for Cindy Lou Phelps (left) and Patsy Cruce, among other seniors, for activities and lunch.

and parents in several counties, including Oglethorpe County. The Healthy Families program teaches child development, proper discipline, healthy parent-child interactions and more through in-home visits by Brightpaths' family support specialists.

Brightpaths holds parenting classes in both Spanish and English at its Athens location, as well as online sessions when needed. It also offers the First Step program in which new moms and the families of newborns at Athens-Clarke County hospitals are visited within 12-48 hours of giving birth.

A family resource closet is at the Brightpaths Athens location. Check out Brightpathathens.org for up to date shopping hours. It has items such as pack and plays, diapers, baby food, formula and strollers. Parents can take one can of formula and one pack of diapers per week as supplies last, and the other items are given as needed.

Brightpaths also has a car seat tech who can show families how to install them.

To learn how to access these programs, visit brightpathsathens.org or call 706-546-9713. Go to the "connect with us" page and fill out the registration form (brightpathsathens.org/programs/register-online). You will receive a phone call from Brightpaths after registering.

Brightpaths accepts monetary donations, as well as donations to the resource closet; visit brightpathsathens.org/get-involved/donate. You can find a list of needed items at brightpathsathens.org/parents/shop.

Resource closet donations can be dropped off at the center during any shopping hours. There are also volunteer opportunities for the Brightpaths events, child care for parenting classes, and admin support.

There are also ongoing opportunities to help with administrative work in the office or to staff the resource closet on Friday mornings.

"I think it's important because all parents need help," said Sallie Starrett, executive director.

Brightpaths provides connection and education for those who don't have a built-in support system from families and friends, she added.

"So we're trying to kind of decrease the stigma of asking for help as a mom or dad," she said.

EDUCATION

Lena Wise Community Center

facebook.com/Lenawisecc
706-614-1044
lenawisecc@gmail.com
134 Church St., Crawford

The Lena Wise Community Center, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, provides a space for several helpful educational and senior programs accessible to Oglethorpe County residents.

"The reason for the Lena Wise Community Center is to operate this building on behalf of the nonprofits that make up the organization," said Cary Fordyce, the nonprofit's chairman. "It acts as the home base for all the other organizations."

These include free GED classes taught remotely by Athens Technical College. Adults who want to enroll in the GED program should contact Vicki Ussery (706-552-0949), a GED course instructor who also provides tutoring in a renovated room of the center.

County residents can also enroll in free technical skill classes like welding safety, cutting and grinding and gas metal arc welding from

Athens Technical College by calling 706-552-0949. Seniors can enroll at any time.

Athens Tech is working on offering ESL — English as a second language — classes, and the center will announce when that's available, Fordyce said.

The Athens Community Council on Aging offers the Senior Community Service Employment Program for unemployed residents over the age of 55. People can contact 706-549-4850 to apply for part-time job training working in local agencies. For a full and up-to-date list of organizations, contact the Athens Community Council for Aging at 706-621-0001.

ACTION, Inc.

actionathens.org
706-546-8293
2440 West Broad St., Suite 5, Athens

ACTION Incorporated provides higher education and community services. The organization can help with rent, energy and mortgage expenses, or employment supplies depending on individual and family needs, said Margo Fowler, a Community Services Block Grant and Emergency Food and Shelter Program manager for ACTION, Inc.

Its food rescue program, called Full Plate, picks up unused food from commercial sources and delivers the food to other nonprofit agencies, such as the Food Bank of Northeast Georgia, that focus on food distribution.

Weatherization is a service that makes low-income homes more energy efficient by increasing energy efficiency and safety through services including insulation, air leakage reduction, smoke detectors and weather stripping.

Individuals can make an appointment for an evaluation of goals and needs by reaching out to Dove Smith, coordinator for Oglethorpe County, at 706-546-8293, ext. 40.

FOOD

Lexington Baptist Church

lbc-lex.org/mobile-food-ministry
facebook.com/LBCoglethorpe
706-743-8216
103 West Church St., Lexington

Lexington Baptist Church's mobile food ministry is held on the second Monday of each month. Food distributions start at 3:30 p.m. and are served on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Recipients are asked to complete a short form and answer basic questions in order to receive food.

One crate is allowed per family, in order to serve as many families as possible. Individuals can pick up nonperishable food items such as breads, soups and other pre-packaged items. Food is placed in crates and delivered to vehicles.

Its Facebook page (facebook.com/LBCoglethorpe) lists dates of the food distribution.

Burts United Methodist Church

ngumc.org/churchdetail/2934798
facebook.com/BurtsUMC
706-296-0415
77 Veribest-Enterprise Road, Carlton

Burts United Methodist Church has a food pantry on the third Wednesday of each month. Members and non-members of the church can stop by and pick up food in the worship hall from 10 a.m. to noon. Nonperishable food items are placed in boxes and given to individuals upon arrival. Fruits, vege-

tables and perishable items are supplied on a varied basis from month to month depending on availability.

Special seasonal events include offering cider during Thanksgiving, hot chocolate around Christmas and an appearance by Santa at the food distribution in December to take photos with community members as part of an initiative to add a heightened sense of community to the food pantry.

Visit Berts United Methodist Church on Facebook for distribution dates.

The CAYA House

facebook.com/profil.
php?id=100091483063750
706-963-0610
thecayahouse@gmail.com
1240 Comer Road, Crawford

The CAYA House, which stands for "come as you are," is a non-profit founded in 2023 by Becky Soto and Jill Kort as a way to serve and minister to the people in Oglethorpe County, Soto said. It serves primarily as a food pantry, delivers monthly to families in need that are referred to them, and provides household items and clothes on an as-needed basis for displaced families.

"We strive to serve anyone who needs a helping and non-judgmental hand, whatever circumstances they may find themselves in," Soto said.

The CAYA House is housed on the grounds of Mt. Pleasant Community Church in Crawford, but it is a separate nonprofit entity from the church and a standalone structure, she said. It partners with multiple churches and non-faith-based organizations.

The 501(c)(3) nonprofit accepts donations of non-perishable food items, toiletries and cleaning supplies, and it also accepts cash donations.

"Simply reach out to us," Soto said. "We will help in every way possible."

She added that The CAYA House operates 24/7 and can be reached by phone or email. It does not hold open hours unless there is an appointment with someone in need.

Plowshare

plowshareoc.org
706-255-9005
925 Athens Road, Crawford

Plowshare is a gardening organization with free membership. Community members can attend their monthly potluck held on the second Monday each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Farm Bureau. Around 40-50 people attend the monthly meetings, according to co-founder Don Williamson.

Plowshare offers a space for the free exchange of produce, seeds, plants and other gardening items that allow people to reap the benefits of growing their own food. Experts often attend meetings to speak and provide guidance. People can find farming information, resources, recipes and more on the Plowshare website.

"To me, if you want to eat healthy, you need to grow it yourself or at least buy it from organic farmers," Williamson said. "And as far as the potlucks, that's the best restaurant in town."

This story was updated by Jack Keys and Isabelle Farina, who are Fink Fellows in the Cox Institute's Journalism Writing Lab at the University of Georgia.

OBITUARIES

POLK ELLIS BARNETT

Polk E. Barnett, 78, of Colbert, died Dec. 25, 2024. A celebration of life service was held at 1 p.m. Jan. 4 at Jones Funeral Chapel. Evangelist Christine Eberhart was the eulogist. Survivors include his wife Manda Barnett; daughters Kimberly Barnett, Cheyanne (Calvin) Smith and Yolanda Barnett; brothers Charles (Joyce) Barnett, Robert Barnett and Jerry Barnett; sister Mary Barnett; one granddaughter; and other relatives and friends. Jones Funeral Chapel, Crawford, was in charge of services.

CHRISTINE HULL COLLINS

Christine Hull Collins, of Athens, died Dec. 17, 2024. The funeral service was 1 p.m. Dec. 28 at Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Bishop. Calvin Turner was the eulogist.

Interment was in the church cemetery.

Survivors include her daughters Kimmie Collins and Tranelle Collins; sisters Anita Hull, Freddie Mae Mapp and Dorothy Smith; brother Terry Hull; six grandchildren; great grandson that was raised in the home, Jaden Mason; great niece who she helped raise, Laquinta Hull; nieces, nephews and other relatives and friends.

Jones Funeral Chapel, Crawford, was in charge of services.

MINNIE DELL DILLARD-HEATH

Minnie Dillard-Heath of Stephens, died Dec. 20, 2024. The funeral service was 1 p.m. Dec. 29 at Clarke Grove Baptist Church. Pastor James Wymbs was the eulogist.

Interment was in Springhill Church Cemetery.

Survivors include children Clara Bozaman, John Dillard, Mary (Bryant) Collins and Willie Walker; sister Sallie Gresham; brother Fieldmore Gresham, Willie James Gresham and Brady Gresham; eight grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren; special niece Shannette Gresham; niece, nephews, and other relatives and friends.

Jones Funeral Chapel, Crawford, was in charge of services.

ALICE JANE HILL HUGHES



Alice Jane Hill Hughes, 84, of the Beavertown community of Oglethorpe County, Georgia, passed away at her home on Sunday, Dec. 15, 2024.

Born to Dennis Odell Hill and Bernice Wright Hill in Gadsden, Alabama, she was reared in the family homeplace, where she feasted on folklore from her aunt Flor-

ence Wright. Home was 112 Franklin Street, located within the "Magic of West Gadsden," which also included Eleventh Street Grammar School and Twelfth Street Baptist Church (her great-grandparents and grandmother being founding members with her grandfather being the first baptized member).

Her greatest gift from her mother was tolerance. Whenever things got tough, Alice remembered her father's words: "Straighten yourself up, and march right back in there."

With her strong work ethic, Alice always seemed to find yet another project.

She was a medical research technician prior to becoming a state social worker and daycare director. She volunteered at Social Circle City Schools and served as president of the Parent Teacher Organization.

Her most fun job was as a showgirl on the Stone Mountain Scenic Railroad, and she enjoyed telling of this experience to an unsuspecting audience.

After earning her degree at Oglethorpe University, Alice sailed to Australia by freighter. She worked as a governess on a sheep and cattle station in the Queensland Outback, then on a cattle station in Tropical North Queensland.

While visiting New South Wales, Alice met a property manager named Chris Hughes.

They were to marry and manage that cattle property for another year before sailing to the U.S., where they settled in Georgia.

Living first in the Decatur area (with a sojourn in Hoboken) and followed by a 30-year residency in Walnut Grove, they retired to Oglethorpe County in 2007.

Always an avid writer, Alice filled pages with real-life stories.

Early on, she focused on journalism. She wrote children's stories, quilt stories, family histories, historical accounts and celebrity interviews.

Alice completed two novels. One chronicles the life of her adventurous mother-in-law; the other is of religion gone wrong.

Alice served as assistant editor of the daily newsletter for the 1996 Paralympics in Atlanta, living and working in the Athlete Village. Her writing is incorporated into the book, "The Triumph of the Human Spirit: The Atlanta Paralympic Experience."

Remembering Aunt Florence's folktales, Alice connected to Cloud's Creek Baptist Church in 1995.

She spearheaded the application for a historical marker from the Georgia Historical Society. The marker was dedicated in 1999, along with a charter member plaque given by descendants.

Alice loved Cloud's Creek and its people. In 1788, her third and fourth great-grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins had founded the little church. Upon moving to Oglethorpe County, she joined Cloud's Creek Church.

"My family was gone for 173 years, and I came back."

She represented descendants on the stained glass windows committee. The windows were installed in the 100-year-old sanctuary in 2009. The following year, she delved into the history of Beavertown Primitive Baptist Church, whose founding connected back to Cloud's Creek.

In later years, she has enjoyed learning the history of Piney Grove Baptist Church, which came out of

Cloud's Creek after the Civil War.

During her years in Oglethorpe County, Alice was to become an officer in Historic Oglethorpe County and thus on the organization's board of trustees. She likewise served on the Oglethorpe County Library Board of Trustees.

She served on the committee working on a historical marker application for the Lexington birthplace of Columbia Theological Seminary.

Alice's strong sense of history, both place and person, drove her endeavors. She worked with The Georgia Historical Society, researching the marker installed at Howard's Covered Bridge.

Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport would have lost its identifying name had she not campaigned tirelessly for one of her Cloud's Creek family lines.

In February 2023, she was recognized in receiving the Historic Oglethorpe County Annual Award in recognition of her contributions in preserving local history.

The Hughes family's art and devotion to preserving the stories of family and local history were featured in an article from the Nov. 7, 2024 edition of The Oglethorpe Echo.

Her commitment to family and honoring connections served her well: "I have the best friends on the face of the earth."

She celebrated those friendships with an annual Christmas Open House, from 1976 onward.

Alice was preceded in death by her husband, Christopher Maddock Hughes. She is survived by the daughter she loved so dearly, Vyvan Lorraine Hughes of Atlanta.

A graveside service will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 18 at Forrest Cemetery, Gadsden, Alabama, with Dr. Duane Embry of Monroe, Georgia, officiating.

Please consider making a memorial donation to Cloud's Creek Baptist Church (P.O. Box 604, Crawford, Georgia 30630) to be applied to the Pioneer Cemetery Clean-up Fund.

Lord & Stephens Funeral Home, East, is in charge of the arrangements.

LEE WILLIE (BILLY) NORMAN



Lee Willie (Billy) Norman, 90, of Oglethorpe County, died on Jan. 1, 2025, in Athens. Born on Nov. 16, 1934, he was the son of the late Willie Ralph Norman and Xaver Dudley Norman.

He was dedicated to his family, his country and his faith. Lee enjoyed laughing, joking and spending time with the many friends he made throughout his life.

He was a devoted husband to his wife of 62 years and the love of his life, Claudette, as well as a loving and considerate father to his two sons, Adam and Keary.

A graduate of Arnoldsville High

School in Oglethorpe County, Georgia, he joined the U.S. Army, serving in the artillery, medical corps and quartermaster corps for 40 years before retiring in 1994.

He then worked for Sears in Athens, Georgia, retiring again in 2006 after 21 years.

Lee was a dedicated member of Arnoldsville Baptist Church, serving as a deacon for many years. He also served his community as a scoutmaster and a member of the county zoning Commission, as well as a member of the Arnoldsville City Council for 40 years, where he worked to develop and improve the water system.

In addition to his parents, Lee was preceded in death by his sisters, Trudy Jones (Tom), Virginia O'Kelley (Frank), and his brother, Jack Norman. Survivors include his wife, Claudette Adams Norman; children, Adam Norman (Heather), Keary Norman (Katherine); and his two grandchildren, Abbigayle Norman and Mason Norman, as well as many other beloved nieces, nephews, cousins and family, including sister-in-law Lynda Norman and niece Kathy E. Adams.

A memorial service will be held at 3 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 18 in the

chapel of Lord & Stephens, East, with Larry Davison and Nathan Palmer officiating. The family will receive friends prior to the service, beginning at 1 p.m. There will be no interment ceremony.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Arnoldsville Baptist Church at 240 Yancey Road, Arnoldsville, Georgia, or the Cure Alzheimer's Fund.

Lord & Stephens Funeral Home, East, is in charge of the arrangements.

SYLVESTER RIDEN JR.

Sylvester "TC" Riden, 62, of Carlton died Dec. 25, 2024. A celebration of life service was held at 2 p.m. Jan. 2 at Holly Creek Baptist Church. The Rev. Sherman Mattox was the eulogist.

Survivors include his son DeAngelo Patman; stepchildren Debra Henson, Cassandra Gresham, Rose Henson and Terry Gresham Sr.; brother Samuel Riden; sisters, May Sue (Ricky) Bailey, Anna Riden, and Shanda Pass; special friend, Dorothy Henson; 1 grandson; and other relatives and friends.

Jones Funeral Chapel, Crawford, was in charge of services.

Character is how you treat those who can do nothing for you.

Dennis Peter Helmreich

Attorney-at-Law
120 W. Main Street
Lexington, Georgia 30648
706-743-3410



BE OUR GUEST

BIBLE STUDY WED. 6:30PM
SS 10AM SUN WORSHIP 11AM SUN NIGHT 6:30PM
791 LEXINGTON CARLTON RD CARLTON, GA 30627



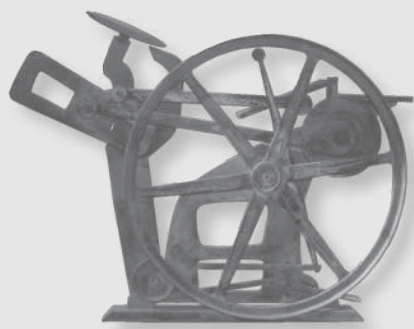
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THE OGLETHORPE ECHO

Serving Oglethorpe County for more than 150 years



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Policies and Deadlines

- The Oglethorpe Echo encourages readers to submit items of community interest. Submissions for community news, obituaries, classifieds, and other sections are due by Monday at 5 p.m., on a week of normal publication schedule. Holiday events often cause an earlier deadline.
- Submissions can be mailed to: Editor, P. O. Box 268, Lexington, Georgia 30648 or emailed to editor@oglethorpeecho.com, along with a name and phone number for more information.

Accuracy Policy

- The Oglethorpe Echo strives to produce error-free news reporting. When mistakes occur, it is our policy to correct them as soon as they are brought to our attention.
- To request a correction, contact the editor at editor@oglethorpeecho.com or 706-743-3111.

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OPINION & COMMENTARY

THE ECHO'S OPINION



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Trash was strewn along a roadside in Oglethorpe County before it was picked up.

Folks need to keep our county beautiful

If you watched TV in the 1970s, you no doubt saw the anti-pollution ad for the nonprofit, Keep America Beautiful.

The commercial depicted a Native American — actor Iron Eyes Cody — being upset over litter and pollution in our nation's streams and on our landscape.

The final image was a single tear streaking down his face.

If you look around while traveling Oglethorpe County's roads and highways, you'll see what Iron Eyes Cody saw. You may not cry, but you'll surely shake your head and ask, "What were people thinking?"

The answer must be that they weren't thinking when they tossed trash out of their vehicle or failed to properly cover their hauled garbage or waste.

In fact, there are clear rules and stiff penalties for violations of Oglethorpe County ordinances. Here are excerpts from Section 26-6/7, Violations/penalties:

a. Any person, firm, or corporation violating any portion of this chapter shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, in the Magistrate Court of Oglethorpe County, shall be punished as follows:

1. By fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$1,000, or up to 60 days imprisonment, or both ... it being the intent of the county to have both the civil and criminal

rights of prosecution in this area ...

Section 26-7 Enforcement states, "Enforcement of this chapter shall be the responsibility of the Oglethorpe County Code Enforcement Officer of his/her designee or the Oglethorpe County Sheriff or his/her designee ... The Magistrate Court of Oglethorpe County shall be authorized to issue summons for hearing on alleged violation ...

The ordinance is filled with legal language, but the message is simple: If you litter — tossing a soft-drink can out the window or hauling litter without proper covering — you could wind up facing charges before the magistrate judge.

If you are found guilty, you would be fined and/or jailed.

Take a look at the photo above. Someone hauling a large cardboard box, stuffed with trash, didn't have it properly secured in the back of their truck. A volunteer took the photo before cleaning up the unsightly mess.

If Iron Eyes Cody had seen the litter, he would have shed a tear. And it should give you pause, too.

Oglethorpe's landscape is one of our points of pride. Know the rules aimed at preventing littering and improper hauling of waste. Ignorance of the law isn't a defense.

As we kick off 2025, let's make a unified resolution to do our part to keep Oglethorpe County beautiful.



Jimmy Carter leaves 100-year legacy of making world better

In 2017, three black SUVs streaked by our older son's truck on South Georgia's Corridor Z. His wife, Heather, turned and said, "Alan, there goes President and Mrs. Carter. I bet they are headed to the island."

When the SUVs turned into the Friendly Express in Waynesville, Alan pulled in, too. Sure enough, it was the Carters. They were taking a rest stop.

As Alan walked toward the Carters, Secret Service agents signaled him to stop. That's when Alan called out, "President Carter, I'm Alan NeSmith. We appreciate your help in the coal-ash fight."

The 39th president of the United States — sporting his famous grin — walked past his guards. Shaking Alan's hand, he said, "Tell your daddy hey."

The Nobel Peace Prize winner didn't have to do that. But Jimmy Carter was just being, well, Jimmy Carter.

The peanut farmer and I met on the University of Georgia campus in the spring of 1970. I was chairing the Interfraternity Council's political forum for gubernatorial candidates. There were seven Democrats in the race, but the real battle was between former Gov. Carl Sanders and Carter, a former state senator from Plains.

When Carter arrived in Athens that May, he said, "I want to meet some students and find out what's important to them." I suggested that we climb on a UGA bus. He talked to every student, front to back.

In November, Carter beat his opponent — whom he dubbed Cufflinks Carl — to become Georgia's 76th governor.

Even though we met 55 years ago and stayed in touch, our friendship never reached fishing-buddy status. Nonetheless, he always listened and responded.

Among my keepsakes are Jimmy Carter letters and handwritten notes, stretching back to 1970.

Another special memory was during the 1996 Olympics. As a presidential ambassador for chairman Billy Payne, I hosted Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter at a rhythmic gymnastics event in UGA's Stegeman Coliseum. Cordial as ever, the former president flashed his ear-to-ear smile when we talked about that 1970 bus tour with the UGA students.

While I was serving on the University System of Georgia's Board of Regents, Georgia Southwestern State University hosted some of our meetings.

I was always fortunate to sit at the dinner table with President and Mrs. Carter.

True to his recall, our discussions picked up where we had left off years ago. One time, we talked about the coincidence that my mother and he were students at the Americus college when Pearl Harbor was bombed on Dec. 7, 1941.

If people figure that Jimmy Carter was just another farmer who had fallen off the peanut wagon, they have



Dink NeSmith
dnesmith@
cninewspapers.com

figured wrong. I suggest that you read "The Outlier: The Unfinished Presidency of Jimmy Carter" by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Kai Bird. And if you want to know more about Carter's humble dirt-road upbringing, I recommend the former president's memoir, "An Hour Before Daylight."

Over the holidays, I read "Jimmy Carter, Rivers & Dreams" by Jim Barger Jr. and Dr. Carlton Hicks, St. Simons Island residents, who were fishing buddies of Carter and Rosalynn. Even in their 90s, the Carters were flyfishing globetrotters. Among the book's stories is how Jimmy Carter leveraged a

fishing trip at Camp David to get Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin to agree to peace.

Several times, I thanked Carter for two of his gubernatorial legacies.

He kept his promise to reorganize Georgia's government, creating these new agencies: the Department of Natural Resources and the Environmental Protection Division. Our philosophies on stewardship of natural resources were in sync.

And when Wayne County was on the verge of becoming one of the largest toxic coal-ash dumps in America, Carter stood up for my hometown.

He had one-on-one conversations with the waste company's largest shareholder, Microsoft's Bill Gates. The correspondence and handwritten reports on those meetings are in my fireproof file.

Regardless of your political opinion of Carter, I believe he was the ultimate role model for former presidents. While others profited from their famous status, he used his genius and sweat to make this a better world. The Carter Center's global impact on health and human rights, along with his swinging hammers with Habitat for Humanity, are just two testaments.

And we should always remember that his vision is responsible for doubling America's national parks and saving millions of acres of Alaska's irreplaceable wilderness.

In his 1977 inaugural address, Carter said, "To be true to ourselves, we must be true to others." That short sentence defines his 100-year legacy of servant leadership.

Jimmy Carter could have ignored my 1970 UGA invitation. He could have refused to endorse a book that Wayne Morgan and I produced in 2012 to help protect Georgia's rivers. He could have passed on my plea to join our 2016 toxic coal-ash battle. And he certainly didn't have to wave off his Secret Service agents so that he could shake Alan's hand.

But he did. And that "true to others" devotion is why Jimmy Carter must always be remembered.

A version of this column was first published on Oct. 3, 2024, commemorating President Carter's 100th birthday.



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

In 2012, photographer and friend Wayne Morgan wanted to produce a children's book to encourage better stewardship of Georgia's rivers, especially the Little Satilla near his home in Brantley County. I volunteered to write the story in the voice of his grandson Kase. Knowing that Jimmy Carter, as a boy, loved fishing in the Little Satilla with his father, I asked the 39th president to endorse our book. Below, I presented a copy of the book to President Carter during a dinner visit at Georgia Southwestern State University in Americus.

LETTER TO THE ECHO

Kemp hasn't done anything as governor

Editor,

Let's take a hard look at Brian Kemp as governor and what he's done and hasn't done in his time in office.

Remember, he hasn't made permanent fixes to any of the serious problems in this state. Only temporary fixes.

Now the things he hasn't done.

- Have the Georgia House put

a permanent cap on out-of-control school property taxes.

- He hasn't fixed a broken-down state prison system that is underfunded and undermanned, thanks to big-education bureaucracy hogging all the money.

- He's done nothing about the sky-high car insurance rates.

- His failure to deal with illegal immigration led to the death of Laken Riley.

- He won't rein in Georgia Power, which is charging sky-high electrical rates, leaving Georgians

freezing in their homes.

- He has done nothing to address the deterioration of cities and counties.

- He won't downsize the massive bureaucracy, which is working against the people of Georgia.

So what has he done as governor?

He gave teachers a pay raise, which shows who controls this little man.

To sum it up, this governor is a puppet to big education.

— **Scott Pettis, Crawford**



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- The Echo's Opinion is a staff editorial expressing the views of The Echo.
- Opinion or guest columns express the views of the writer only.
- We encourage letters to the editor on a wide range of issues and topics.
- Publication of any letter is subject to the discretion of the The Oglethorpe Echo. All views expressed in any letter are those of the writer.
- Letters are subject to editing for style, grammar or libel and should be limited to 350 words.
- All letters must be signed. Please include street address and phone number for the verification of identity. Only names and city of residence will be published.
- Letters are due by the weekly deadline of Monday at 5 p.m., on a week of normal publication schedule. Holiday events often cause an earlier deadline.
- Letters can be mailed to: Editor, P. O. Box 268, Lexington, Georgia 30648 or e-mailed to editor@oglethorpeecho.com
- Letters regarding a candidate or an issue on a ballot will not be published two weeks preceding election day.

BOE starts process to opt out of HB 581

By Kendall Kelly
The Oglethorpe Echo

The Oglethorpe County Board of Education plans to opt out of Georgia House Bill 581, which was approved by the state's voters in November.

The BOE will hold three public hearings this month before it can hold an official vote. The first one is scheduled for 6 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 14 at the BOE's office at 735 Athens Road.

In an effort to provide tax relief to Georgians, this bill could lead to major decreases in funding for school districts across the state. For Oglethorpe County schools, it could mean a \$2 million budget cut.

"As the school (system) has noted in recent articles in The Echo on HB 581, the effects on the school budget could be damaging to the education of the kids of our county," commissioner Tracy Norman stated in an email.

HB 581 provides a statewide "floating" homestead exemption that will limit annual assessment increases on a homesteaded property to the rate of inflation.

However, Becky Soto, chair of the Oglethorpe County BOE, said she thinks the law is vague and poorly written. Additionally, she said it benefits Metro Atlanta counties instead of rural counties.

"We believe, and what our attorneys believe, and what has been said to us at trainings that the Board of Education has attended, is that it's going to end up basically transferring the tax liability from homeowners on those small little plots of land to larger landowners and commercial property," Soto said.

The base year assessed value for a home will be initially set at the 2024 value of a home and resets whenever a home is sold or receives a substantial property change. A rate of inflation based on the consumer price index is set annually by the

Georgia Department of Revenue.

"There are people who would initially benefit from this bill that would see their home value capped and would not see it grow higher than it currently is," Soto said. "However, what they don't have in that law is what they will do if they have it set and capped and the economy tanks and home values drop."

This means a homestead could be taxed at a higher rate than its actual value.

The Oconee County Board of Education and the Clarke County Board of Education have both announced they plan to opt out of HB 581.

The school system is required by the state to offer set salaries and state health costs that have increased exponentially in the last 3-5 years. With a major deficit in the budget, the BOE would potentially have to look at cutting employees and programs.

Of the school system's budget, 86% is salary, benefits and retirement.

"They're looking at ways of capping the revenue sources, but they're not looking and exploring ways to help cap the required expenses coming from the state," Soto said.

With the state giving counties the option to opt-out, the BOE hopes to make decisions at a local level that best fit the schools and the community.

Soto said a goal for the BOE in 2025 is to propose a local tax relief bill that would protect senior adults.

"In my discussions with members of the BOC, I believe the county should take the same action and seek ways to provide more relief to seniors and long-term residents of the county," Norman wrote. "Additionally, there is an option for an additional 1 cent sales tax that would be used to reduce the property taxes to all property owners in our county. The BOC and the city councils of Crawford, Lexington, Arnoldsville and Maxeys must all agree and take the same action for this be the path forward in our county."

FIREFLY, FROM PAGE 1

- Improved mobility and community connectivity, including for students who walk and bike to school, as well as users of Bryan Park.
 - New economic development opportunities.
 - Partnership and collaboration among the several communities.
- "Should the grant be awarded and the project go forward, prospects for construction funding in the future will be significantly strengthened," according to the statement.

In other news, the BOC:

- Heard a presentation from Judge Warren Caswell, representing the Northern Judicial Circuit Juvenile Court. Paul said the board had not heard from him before, so it was an opportunity to learn about the court and its responsibilities.
- Unanimously approved Vinh Tran's request to withdraw his rezone request from general agriculture to intensive agriculture to build poultry houses. The Zoning Board had recommended denial.
- Unanimously approved Eric Dove's request to rezone Tax Parcel 007 102 from general agriculture to agriculture residential in order to

subdivide for family.

- Unanimously approved Sherry Smith's request to rezone Tax Parcel 009 153 from general agriculture to agriculture residential in order to subdivide.
- Unanimously re-appointed Mary Frey to the Library Board of Trustees and unanimously appointed Beverly Nation to a vacant seat on the library board.
- Unanimously approved moving forward with pursuing iWorq software, which would streamline public works projects, ease reimbursements for FEMA projects and make it easier to grant permits, county officials said. The funding would come from SPLOST.
- Unanimously approved the Handtevy system for EMS. The app assists with protocols in electronic format and automatically adjusts for weight of the patient. Josh Robinson, the EMS deputy director, said it will be especially useful in high-stress situations, where the app will automatically calculate dosages that need to be administered. The cost is covered by a grant for the first year, with a renewal cost of about \$3,500 after the first year.



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NEW Fleet Feet Five Miler Dudley Park - Athens August 24, 2025
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Academic honors list, graduates

Staff Report

Students from Oglethorpe County and the surrounding area were honored for their academic achievements at colleges and universities this fall. They include:

Berry College

Dean's List: Jake Turner (Lexington)

Georgia Southern

President's List: Brock Dove (Winterville), Abby Jones (Carlton), Kirkland Ross (Arnoldsville)

Dean's List: Aaliyah Candley (Winterville), Breanna Crowder (Crawford), John Dove (Winterville)

Piedmont University

Graduates: Stephanie Fekete (Stephens), Rebecca McDonald (Winterville)

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Headmaster's Corner
By Steve Cummings

FAREWELL, JIMMY CARTER

James Earl Carter, Jr. was born in Plains, Georgia, on Oct. 1, 1924, and passed away in his hometown on Dec. 29.

After graduating from the Naval Academy, he served seven years as a naval officer. He entered politics in 1962 and was elected governor of Georgia in 1970.

He then ran for and was elected as the 39th president of the United States in November, 1976. He served one term during a difficult period of rising energy costs, mounting inflation and internal and external conflicts.

President Carter will be remembered for many things, but his Christian faith always was at the forefront.

His faith motivated him to serve others his entire life. RIP.



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"We love because he first loved us..."

I John 4:19

Antioch Baptist Church
135 Railroad Rd.,
Stephens, GA 30667

Arnold's Grove Baptist Church
625 Wolfskin Rd,
Arnoldsville, GA 30619

Arnoldsville Baptist Church
240 Yancey Rd.,
Arnoldsville, GA 30619

Athens Friends Meeting Quakers
2092 Athens Road
Arnoldsville, GA 30619

Baird's Baptist Church
1031 Community Drive,
(physical address: 42 Bairdstown Loop)
Union Pt, GA 30669

Bethany Baptist Church
3193 Centerville Rd.,
Lexington, Ga 30648

Born Again Church
1180 Athens Road
Crawford, GA 30630

Burts United Methodist Church
77 Veribest - Enterprise Road,
Carlton, GA 30627

Clarke Grove Baptist Church
726 Crawfordville Hwy.,
Stephens, GA 30667

Cloud's Creek Baptist Church
274 Cloud's Creek Rd,
Crawford, GA 30630

Collier Baptist Church
115 Collier Church Rd.,
Comer, GA 30629

Corinth Baptist Church
2040 Belmont Road
Arnoldsville, GA 30619

County Line Baptist Church
3248 Walker Road
Rayle, GA 30660

Crawford Baptist Church
124 Church Street,
Crawford, GA 30630

Crawford Church of Christ
PO Box 76, 979 Athens Rd.,
Crawford, GA 30630

Crawford Pentecostal Church
804 Athens Rd.,
Crawford, GA 30630

Fork Bethel Baptist Church
3003 Centerville Road
Lexington, GA 30648

Friendship Baptist Church
P.O. Box 47,
Lexington, GA 30648

Genesis Church
520 North Street,
Crawford, GA 30630

Gholston Baptist Church
45 Gholston Church Rd.,
Comer, GA 30627

Glade Baptist Church
1742 Lexington - Carlton Rd.,
Carlton, GA 30627

Glade United Methodist Church
1735 Lexington Carlton Rd
Carlton, GA 30627

Grove Chapel Church
136 Grove Chapel Church Rd
Winterville, GA 30638

Harmonia Baptist Church
324 Church Street,
Maxeys GA 30671

Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses
585 Elberton Road
Lexington, GA 30648

Lexington Baptist Church
103 West Church Street,
Lexington, GA 30648

Lighthouse Evangelical Church
Elberton Rd,
Lexington, GA 30648

Living Water Baptist Church
734 Yancey Road
Arnoldsville, GA 30619

Love & Action United Church
1071 Athens Road,
Crawford, GA 30630

Maxeys Christian Church
160 Church Street
Maxeys, GA 30671

Millstone Baptist Church
479 Gene Smith Road
Carlton, GA 30627

Mt. Olive Baptist Church
P.O. Box 42,
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Mt. Pleasant Community Church
1244 Comer Rd.,
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Mt. Zion Baptist Church
388 Stephens Salem Road,
Stephens, GA 30667

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24 Fairgrounds Rd.,
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New Bethlehem Baptist Church
1108 Lexington-Carlton Rd,
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New Hope Baptist Church
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New Springhill Baptist Church
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New Zion Church
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Pleasant Hill Baptist Church
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Rocky Branch Baptist Church
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Delbra Kendrick

Delivering gifts

Bell is a remarkable man with much to give

I'm sure all of you know one of the busiest men in Oglethorpe County, one who's "one call hauls it all," but will get you from point A to point B in a single bound.

Whether you're ever in this area, have had a car accident or worshipping the Lord, nine times out of 10, you'll run across David Bell of Bell's Auto Repair & Towing Service.

Bell has been around the world and back again during his lifetime.

As a teenager, he joined the U.S. Army and is a six-year veteran. He has been a Mason over 50 years (Advance Masonic Lodge of Northeast GA #31 and Hulin Chapter #93), a lifetime member of the Beaverdam Fire Department and has owned Bell's Auto Repair & Towing Service for about 33 years.

He does all of that and still manages to make time to have dinner and share a smile with close family and friends.

Bell is a longtime member of St. Paul Methodist Church.

In 2013, he was called, licensed and ordained to preach and pastor Rocky Branch Baptist Church, after being an interim for about two years.

Rocky Branch has truly been one of his dedicated places to serve. Even before accepting the position, he poured a lot of blood, sweat and tears into the beautification of that sanctuary and building.

That's how deep his heart is in the things and places he loves.

He and his beautiful wife Brenda give honor and glory to the Lord for making all this possible.

Believe it or not, Bell, with all that he does, has been the interim pastor of another church called Palmyra Missionary Baptist Church in Albany, Georgia, for about three years. He said sometimes he wonders at his age, how is it even possible that he can do all of this.

But then, another mind tells him, it has to be God.

Bell and I go way back in the gospel music world and became friends for life.

In fact, I always give reference or credit to him for turning me on to a TV host known as Bobby Hurd.

I later became the co-host of "The Bobby Hurd Show" on WATC TV 57 for about 10 years. And from there, Bell and I were granted the opportunity to travel to various gospel shows.

Also, as a recording artist, I can truly say my feet have graced very distinguished stages with major artists all over the world. During some of our conversations, we are amazed at the ministry we once shared and strongly support each other in the Lord's work today.

Bell is also a great sponsor of the "War Room Show."

He has no boundaries when it comes to lending a hand to help grow a vision in ministry. It does neither one of us any good to say



SUBMITTED PHOTO

David Bell and his wife Brenda are the pastor and first lady at Rocky Branch Baptist Church. They will celebrate their 11th pastoral anniversary at the church on Jan. 12.

get some rest to one another because we speed up when we should be slowing down.

I'm reminded of a time during one of our biggest fundraisers.

Bell, I like to call him, stopped by after doing a towing service call, started helping us sell donuts and then realized he was supposed to be doing volunteer work at his home church. Before leaving, he bought two boxes of donuts and I told him to be careful and safe going to do carpenter work alone.

Well, low and behold, I got a phone call the next day from Bell with some bad news.

I arrived at my church early that Sunday morning and he was concerned whether I knew that he had cut almost half of his index finger off and badly cut the middle finger.

He told me he accidentally fell with the chainsaw in his hand while reaching to cut a plywood board and overextended himself.

Although freak accidents happen, it's hard to keep a good man down. Pain may come and go every now and then, but our God is a healer and makes all things possible. To God be the glory, Bell is able to serve God and his people daily.

I am proud and honored to celebrate the Bells' 11th pastoral anniversary at 2:30 p.m. Jan. 12 at Rocky Branch Baptist Church (58 Millstone Church Road, Carlton). Pastor Abraham Mosley and the Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church will be their special guest.

Of course, Bell won't let me sit down and just enjoy the service. I will be the mistress of ceremony that day.

So there you go, you have a special invitation to beat us there and not just meet us there. Dinner will be served at 1:30 p.m.

Will y'all please say a little prayer for my friend that his steps continue to be ordered and guided by the Lord, because this race wasn't given to the strong but to

those who endure until the end.

I believe wholeheartedly that Pastor David Bell is absolutely one of them.

Community news

Happy 2025 from Deb's Community Outreach, where everybody is somebody and the Big 'O' will be a lot better together.

If your life doesn't amaze you in general, try my God and see what he can do.

Happy January birthday to Jake Howard, Rachel Pritchett, Sharekia Mitchell-Watson, co-pastor Stacey Whitlock, Leela Hallan, Lametrius Appling and Jermaine Cunningham.

The Martin Luther King Jr. parade will be held at 1 p.m. Jan. 11. The lineup is at 11 a.m. behind the Golden Pantry in Crawford. The parade route will go west on Highway 78, turn right on Woodlawn Drive and end on Smokey Road. Everyone is welcome. Please call 706-202-6707 for more information. This is sponsored by the "War Room Show."

Join the "War Room Show" for a new 2025 season and the best in gospel music, inspirational words, love, laugh and encouragement at 7 p.m. every Tuesday.

Big 'O' thought for the week: Brighten someone's smile by making them smile, laugh or feel encouraged. Greatness is yours.

Delbra Kendrick, also known as Delbra Favors & Company, a gospel recording artist, founded the "War Room Show." She is the first lady and minister of music at St. John Church, and is the owner and operator of Styles Unlimited Hair Salon. She is married to Pastor Willie Kendrick, has two daughters, Daindra and Deondra Favors, and three granddogs.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

UPCOMING

Tech Tips will be offered at the Oglethorpe County Library from noon to 2 p.m. Friday, Jan. 10. Get 1-on-1 help in basic computer skills, including using the internet, creating a document in Word and creating a resume.

A Martin Luther King Jr. parade, sponsored by the "War Room Show" will be held at 1 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 11. The lineup is at 11 a.m. behind the Golden Pantry in Crawford. The parade route will go west on Highway 78, turn right on Woodlawn Drive and end on Smokey Road. Everyone is welcome. Please call 706-202-6707 for more information.

New Discoveries Historic Mill Tour with Historic Oglethorpe will be held from 1-2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 11 at Watson Mill Bridge State Park. The cost is \$5 per person and \$5 for parking.

Rocky Branch Baptist Church will celebrate the 11th pastoral anniversary of David and Brenda Bell at 2:30 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 12. Pastor Abraham Mosley and Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church are the special guests. Dinner will be served at 1:30 p.m.

Claire Campbell and Barb Codon will perform as part of the Fester Hagood's Mojo Confessional Songwriters Showcase at 6 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 23 at No. 3 Railroad St. There will be a potluck supper. The suggested donation is \$10.

The Oglethorpe County Republican Party will meet at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 14 (meet and greet at 7 p.m.) at the Oglethorpe County Library. The speaker is Col. Mitch Swan, former candidate for Congress. The discussion will focus on cyber warfare and the progaganda war. Please bring annual membership dues for 2025. Everyone is invited.

Fork Bethel Baptist Church will have a pastoral installation service for Christopher Watson at 2:30 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 19. Pastor Abraham Mosley of Mount Pleasant Baptist Church will deliver the message. Everyone is invited.

The Concerned Men of Oglethorpe County will hold its annual Martin Luther King Jr. program at noon Monday, Jan. 20 at Mount Zion Baptist Church in Stephens. Everyone is welcome.

Historic Oglethorpe County will meet at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 28 at the Oglethorpe County Library. HOC members Jean and Richard Westmacott will share the history of their home, Sugaryoung Farm, named in honor of "Shug" Young, who lived on the farm until she died in 1946, at about age 90. Other dates include:

- Feb. 28: Annual HOC dinner and award ceremony
- March 25: TBA
- April 22: TBA
- May 27: Spring picnic

The Oglethorpe County Republican Party will host a chili challenge from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 8 at the Pleasant Hill Volunteer Fire Department's social building. Judging begins at 1 p.m. The entry fee is \$10 and it's \$5 for a wristband to judge. Call 706-614-0633 or send a message to the Official Oglethorpe County Republican GOP on Facebook for more information.

REGULAR MEETINGS

The Rotary Club of Oglethorpe County will feature the January student of the month at its meeting at 7:15 a.m. Friday at the Farm Bureau in Crawford. The Jan. 17 meet-

ing will feature Jessica Brooks, a nurse at Piedmont Athens Regional, who will present information on healthy kidneys. Oglethorpe County residents are invited to every Rotary meeting. The Rotary Club will make a schedule change in February, going from weekly meetings to meeting twice a month. The club will meet the second and fourth Friday of the month. The start time will move to 7:30 a.m. If you would like Rotary to provide a program on a particular topic, contact Jeff Welch at jewelch@windstream.net.

The Oglethorpe County Chamber of Commerce holds an after-hours networking event at 5:30 p.m. on the third Thursday of every month.

The Oglethorpe County Library holds story time with Miss Jessica for toddlers and pre-K children from 10:30-11:30 a.m. every Wednesday. Stories, rhymes and take-home crafts are provided.

Sophia York teaches an East/West fusion exercise class from 7-8 p.m. Monday nights. All ages and fitness levels are welcome. Payment by donation. The location is 115 Raymond Mathews Road in Crawford (the yellow building behind White Oak Realty).

The Oglethorpe County Senior Center provides meals and activities for anyone 60 years old and older. The center is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday-Friday.

Here's the schedule:

Thursday, Jan. 9: Exercises with Sarah Baker; lunch: English muffin, cheesy scrambled eggs, turkey sausage patty, glazed mixed fruit or Italian braised beef, brown rice and red quinoa, and roasted brussels sprouts halves.

Friday, Jan. 10: Penny pitching; lunch: Louisiana shrimp and chicken, red beans, white rice, okra and tomatoes, and a corn muffin or deli sliced turkey, wheat bread, Swiss cheese, green leaf lettuce, light mayonnaise, yellow mustard, carrot and pineapple salad.

Monday, Jan. 13: The War Room with Delbra; lunch: chicken tenders, mashed cauliflower, and pickled peaches or charbroiled beef patty with beef gravy, mashed cauliflower, five-way vegetable blend, and a wheat roll.

Tuesday, Jan. 14: Bingo; lunch: beef sloppy Joe sliders on wheat rolls with creamed collards or creamy chicken Alfredo over egg noodles with roasted brussels sprouts halves.

Wednesday, Jan. 15: Arts and crafts; lunch: beef taco filling, shredded Monterey jack cheese, cherry tomatoes, iceberg lettuce, southwest Ranch dressing, salsa, sour cream, and baked tortilla chips.

Thursday, Jan. 16: Movie Day; lunch: Provençal chicken breast over asparagus risotto with side of cinnamon spiced peaches or deli sliced turkey, wheat bread, swiss cheese, green leaf lettuce, light mayonnaise, yellow mustard, carrot and pineapple salad.

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Oglethorpe County Rainfall Reporting Network

Name (CoCoRaHS Number)	Location	Dec. 28 - Jan. 6
Pat Kelly (OG-2)	Palmetto	0.71
Kevin Hartley (OG-4)	Arnoldsville	1.23
Danny Morcom (OG-5)	Arnoldsville	1.17
Pete Kalla (OG-7)	Sandy Cross	0.87
Paul Webb (OG-10)	Lexington	1.16
Wayne Hughes (OG-12)	Wolfskin	1.13
Gwen Hirsch (OG-15)	Smithonia	1.09
Michael Moody (OG-21)	Glade	0.60

Oglethorpe County average rainfall for the week: 1.11 inches.
Athens rainfall for the week: 1.10 inches (typical weekly 0.92).
Measurements reported at 7 a.m. Monday.

COMMUNITY NEWS

UPDATE FROM ARNOLDSVILLE

One thing no one ever talks about when it comes to being an adult is how much we debate keeping a cardboard box because, you know, "It's a really good box."

Hope everyone had a good Christmas and a Happy New Year. I spent my Christmas and new year sitting at home sneezing, coughing and blowing my nose.

A lot of people have had this crud, which isn't fun.

I'm beginning to feel better, but I sure missed being with my family for all the get-togethers.

Beverly and I worked last Thursday at church cleaning up Christmas. We took the dirty table cloths to Crawford Laundry — thanks for a great job! While we were at the laundry, the Wing King food truck was there, so we enjoyed a great meal from them. The wings were really good!

If you have not had the sweet potatoes from Stickland Pride Produce in Crawford, you should go by and get some. They are really great.

Thanks to Strickland for all the great fresh produce.

My great grandson Bennett celebrated his eighth birthday on Sunday. They had a great time bowling with family and friends.

We will remember Lee Norman, who passed away last week. His wife Claudette lives in a nursing home in Athens.

Lee and Claudette had two sons — Adam and Kenny. Lee was the brother of the late Jack Norman and had two sisters, Jenny and Gertrude. Sending our love to this family.

— Jean Fleming

The Rowdy Rooster

123 E. Main Street, Lexington, GA 30648
Friday 11-2 and Saturday 9-3

Bakery, deli, local art, wine & beer, GA products

SHERIFF'S REPORT

Staff Report

All information is from the Oglethorpe County Sheriff's Office arrest/booking reports and miscellaneous incident reports. All defendants are presumed innocent.

ARRESTS

Tyara Aoki Allen, Coleridge Court, Athens, was arrested Dec. 27 and charged with driving while license suspended or revoked — misdemeanor.

Jeffrey Scott Mazanec, Sandy Cross Road, Lexington, was arrested Dec. 27 and charged with seatbelt violation, and willful obstruction of law enforcement officers — misdemeanor.

Rony DeJesus Ocampo-Santos, Sturgeon Road, Buford, was arrested Dec. 27 and charged with driving without a valid license — misdemeanor.

Israel Solorzano Mondragan, Sandy Cross Road, Lexington, was arrested Dec. 27 and charged with failure to appear for fingerprintable charge — misdemeanor, and driving without a valid license- misdemeanor.

Blair Christophe Davis, Brookside Drive, Elberton, was arrested Dec. 28 and charged with no proof of insurance/motor vehicles, marijuana — possess less than 1 ounce, and speeding.

Jesus Richardo Alvarez-Estala, Athens Road, Lexington, was arrested Dec. 29 and charged with speeding, and driving without a valid license — misdemeanor.

Corinthian Craig, Harris Drive, Lexington was arrested Dec. 29 and charged with probation violation — misdemeanor.

Juneeri Dayami Saucedo-Za-

leta, Oak Park Court, Athens was arrested Dec. 29 and charged with marijuana — possess less than 1 ounce, and permitting unlicensed person to drive.

Edward Gene Christopher, Hearthstone Drive, Carlton, was arrested Dec. 30 and charged with probation violation — misdemeanor.

Susan Ashley Lavender, Shoemaker Court, Athens, was arrested Dec. 30 and charged with probation violation — felony.

Deion Reid, Sunnyland Drive, Eatonton, was arrested Dec. 30 and charged with willful obstruction of law enforcement officers — misdemeanor, and giving false name, address, or birthdate to law enforcement officer.

Timothy Marc Waller, Wesley Chapel Road, Lexington, was arrested Dec. 30 and charged with three counts of probation violation — felony.

Kelton Bryan Christian, Watson Mill Road, Comer, was arrested Dec. 31 and charged with failure to appear for fingerprintable charge — felony.

Daisha Shanique Sturgis, Hickman Drive, Athens, was arrested Dec. 31 and charged with seatbelt violation, and driving while license is suspended or revoked — misdemeanor.

Alexander-Yovanny Godoy-Segovia, Cliff Colony Drive, Gainesville, was arrested Dec. 31 and charged with speeding, driving without a valid license — misdemeanor, no proof of insurance/motor vehicles, and knowingly driving motor vehicle on suspended, canceled or revoked registration.

Ti-Kyerra Lashabrien Johnson, Collins Avenue, Lexington, was arrested Jan. 3 and charged with violation of bond conditions.

LEGALS

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Oglethorpe County Board of Commissioners will hold a public hearing on Monday, February 3rd at 6:00 pm in the Commissioners' Board Room at 105 Union Point St. Lexington, GA. The purpose of the public hearing is to present the following applications to the Board of Commissioners and to offer an opportunity for public input on the application. ITEM 2. RZ141 Margaret Carter has requested a rezone for Tax Parcel 022 056 from AR 103 words(Agriculture Residential) to R1 (Single Family Residential) in order to subdivide for family. ITEM 3. Original Site Plan Revision for Jeff Crump Stackhouse on Tax Parcel 022 051 Jan. 9

personnel for the required amount of filing fees. If any objections are filed, a hearing will be scheduled at a later date. If no objections are filed, the petition may be granted without a hearing. Kayla H. Grier Judge of the Probate Court PO Box 70 Lexington, GA 30648 Jan. 9-30

NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS

All creditors of the estate of Hubert Howard late of Oglethorpe County, Georgia, deceased, are hereby notified to render their demand to the undersigned according to the law, and all persons indebted to said estate are required to make immediate payment. This the 16th day of December, 2024 Gladys Howard-Moon 222 Piney Grove Road Comer, Georgia 30629 Dec. 19-Jan. 9

NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS

All creditors of the estate of Fred Howard Lindsay, Sr., late of Oglethorpe County, Georgia, deceased, are hereby notified to render their demand to the undersigned according to the law, and all persons indebted to said estate are required to make immediate payment. This the 30 day of December, 2024. Edwin (Ed) Lindsay 1544 Radstone Drive Lawrenceville, Georgia 30044 Jan. 9-30

NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS

All creditors of the estate of John D. Mitchell, late of Oglethorpe County, Georgia, deceased, and hereby notified to render their demand to the undersigned according to the law, and all persons indebted to said estate are required to make immediate payment. This the 6 day of January, 2025 Daron Lenette Mitchell 390 River Chase Drive Athens Georgia 30605 Jan. 9-30

NOTICE OF PETITION TO CHANGE NAME OF ADULT

Georgia, Oglethorpe County Aaron Dale Tucker filed a petition in the Superior Court of Oglethorpe County on January 3, 2025, to change the name from Aaron Dale Tucker to Aaron Tucker Sanders. Any interested party has the right to appear in this case and file objections within 30 days after the Petition was filed. This 3rd day of January, 2025. Kelli Paradise Smith Clerk of Superior Court Oglethorpe County, Georgia. Jan. 9-30

SCHOOL, FROM PAGE 1

"I would have to walk all the way across the school to get to any of the students' classes that I teach, and now they're all right here."

The school will be home to pre-K through fifth-grade students, with each grade having its own hallway. Pre-K students will be in a wing of the multi-purpose building, a school spokeswoman said in a text.

"We've been gifted with so many resources and so much supplies, and it's going to make the kids have a really good experience in their music class over the next three years," Poss said.



SARAH COYNE/THE OGLETHORPE ECHO Parents and students walk through the cafeteria at the new Oglethorpe County Elementary School. The first open house was held on Tuesday.

SNOW, FROM PAGE 1

"This is evolving into a complicated, messy, and for some of us, an icy scenario," WSB-TV chief meteorologist Brad Nitz said in a Facebook post on Tuesday.

Georgia Power customers can go to georgiapower.com/storm to report and check the status of outages, and access safety tips and information, according to a release.

Rayle EMC's outage map can be found at outage.rayle emc.com. Outages can be reported to Rayle EMC by calling 706-678-2116.

LOVE, FROM PAGE 1

Argueta said Moore has a positive attitude that is contagious, which helps the team when it faces obstacles.

"It makes us positive too, like we can do whatever obstacle we're facing. We can overcome it," Argueta said.

Being a mother to two kids who were a part of the school system when they were younger helped Moore to get involved with the Parent Teacher Organization. Her children are now 19 and 18 years old.

"You get involved, you get to know individuals personally and their situations and the children, and you just want to do more," Moore said.

Through the PTO, Moore helped with fundraising and special events as a way to give back to the community. She eventually became president of the organization.

Even though she worked full-time and a couple part-time jobs, she decided to go back to school to earn her bachelor's degree in elementary education from Liberty University.

"I felt really old and really tired, but I was like, 'I've gotta, you know, gotta do more,'" Moore said.

As coordinator, Moore gets to know people of all ages, from kids to seniors, and learn their needs and personal situations. She helps lead outreach programs, such as Meals

on Wheels for senior adults, every week.

"It's just a very, very kind and loving environment that has been created," Argueta said.

Family Connection partners with many different organizations, which help with the goals it's trying to achieve.

"We have so many of us that help in the community," Moore said.

Moore tries her best to connect with those who need help and when she can't, she tries to be there for them.

"This work allows you to know your community better, and it makes you love your community more," she said.

Advertisement for D&D Heating & Air Conditioning, Inc. Celebrating 40 years of serving communities. Office 706-546-1810, website ddheatingaircond.net.

Advertisement for EDT Construction & Remodeling. Serving Oglethorpe County and surrounding areas for over 20 years. Services include Rotten Wood Repair, Carports & Garages, Additions, Renovations, Roofing Repairs, Sun Rooms, Decks & Patios, Ceramic Tile, Home Maintenance, Painting, Kitchen & Bath Renovations, Window & Door Replacements. Call 706-202-6066.

Large advertisement for 'NEW YEAR NEW YOU' featuring 'Get new news every week with a subscription to the Oglethorpe Echo!' and 'News at your fingertips!' with a call to subscribe at www.theoglethorpeecho.com.

Large advertisement for 'SUBSCRIBE' with pricing: In-County: 1 year \$29.00 (incl tax), Adjoining County: 1 year \$37.00 (incl tax), Elsewhere in GA: 1 year \$45.00 (incl tax), Out of State: 1 year \$48.00 (no tax). Includes contact info for P.O. Box 268, Lexington, GA 30648.

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DAKOTA MEEKS/THE OGLETHORPE ECHO

Folks snap photos of each other at Watson Mill Bridge State Park on New Year's Day. About 92 people showed up for the park's annual First Day Hike, three times more than last year. The hike, which was led by park naturalist Sarah Ratcliffe, was scheduled to go a mile, but several people walked farther.

New Year's Day hike draws crowd to Watson Mill park

By Dakota Meeks
The Oglethorpe Echo

Kicking off the new year outside, Watson Mill Bridge State Park welcomed visitors for its annual First Day Hike, joining state parks in a nationwide tradition on Jan. 1.

About 92 people of all ages, including several with their kids and pets, came out to hike the trails in the park. The turnout tripled last year's total.

"We weren't expecting that many people," said John Mark Shelnett, the park's manager. "We had lots of family, kids, people. Some people came from further than an hour away."

Danielle Cheek, along with several friends, participated in the hike with her dog, Ratchet. Inspired by social media and the park's proximity to her home in Hull, she enjoyed the diverse group of participants, including families and solo hikers.

"I think that was the neatest part to me, was just seeing the variety of folks that were there and that came out to do something like this," Cheek said.

Cheek discovered new trails and appreciated the park's beauty since it was her first time participating in the hike.

"I've only kind of been out to

the waterfalls before, so just seeing the trails that are out there and that there's so much more than just the bridge and the picnic shelters, and the rocks, it's a much bigger park than I thought, and so that was really cool," Cheek said.

Sarah Ratcliffe, the park's naturalist, led the group of hikers on the trail.

"I met people who live very locally near the park and people who live further away," she said. "And we talked nature, we talked history. It was an awesome hike."

The planned hike was about a mile, but those who attended were given the opportunity to continue hiking with Ratcliffe. They hiked through the pioneer camps and past one of the newest discoveries at the park.

Shelnett and historians found remnants of an early mill located near those camps.

With this new discovery, the park planned a "New Discoveries: Historic Oglethorpe Society Mill History Tour" that will take place at 1 p.m. Jan. 11.

That's one of several events, which are planned with Ratcliffe's help. Several are monthly, including "Art in the Park," led by Ratcliffe, which will be held from 1-2 p.m. Jan. 26.

"Art is a passion of mine, so I try to do an Art in the Park once a month," Ratcliffe said.

Another recurring event is "A Bridge to the Past — The History of Watson Mill Bridge" that will be held from 11 a.m. to noon Jan. 18.

This is a guided tour that talks about the history of Watson Mill Bridge and includes a hike past the overlooks and power plant ruins.

"Any opportunity that we have to get people just to experience the park in different ways is great for me," Ratcliffe said.

Other events include an afternoon kayak paddle and a beginner's archery class. These events can be found on Watson Mill's website (gastateparks.org/WatsonMill-Bridge) and click Events.

Shelnett hopes to plan educational outreach programs for area schools and create programs that are related to the curriculum that is taught.

Shelnett said he also hopes to produce educational programs that involve the Georgia State Wildlife Action plan that helps conserve natural habitats, plants and animals.

"We want programs to be as hands-on as possible, so that learning is fun and tactile for kids, while making sure not to harm whatever we're studying," he said.

Wrestling win headlines Patriots' holiday break

By Hank Tatum
The Oglethorpe Echo

School was out for winter break at Oglethorpe County, but the athletic teams remained busy.

The OCHS boys wrestling team picked up its 19th dual win in the seventh annual Doug Eberhardt Memorial duals on Dec. 28.

The Patriots defeated Morgan County 53-27 and Chestatee 71-11, improving to 19-4 in duals on the season.

"It was nice to finish our home dual schedule undefeated," coach Steve Mason said.

On Jan. 4, the boys finished fifth out of 22 teams at the West Oak Invitational in South Carolina.

Mason said he feels his team is in a strong spot as it prepares for the state dual meet this weekend.

"I am very proud of the way everyone is contributing to this team. It really is a total team effort," Mason said. "Now we just need to get 100% healthy and in the correct weight classes so we can go qualify for the state dual meet."

The girls wrestling team placed second out of nine teams at the Spartan Slam Invitational, finishing behind Chestatee. However, coach Josh Austin said the Patriots would've won the invitational if the team had all of the weight classes. Akira Owens and Tristin Caldwell secured victories and all girls placed in the top four.

Basketball also was in action over the winter break with the girls winning two consecutive games.

On Dec. 13, the girls added their second win of the season and first Region 8-A Division I victory by defeating Rabun County, followed by a win over Monroe Area on Dec. 17.

"That finish (Rabun County) showed some heart, grit and belief in what we are doing," coach Brianna Dickens said.

The girls team is 3-11 and 1-4 in region play after a loss to Elbert County on Jan. 7.

"We started the year as a group with very little varsity experience since we did not return a single starter from last year, and the first half of the season has given us that experience," Dickens said.

However, she expects her team to be much improved by the region tournament.

"The goal is to get a little better every day and see the big picture," Dickens said. "We want to be significantly better come February when entering the region tournament than we were when we started in October."

The boys basketball team earned its first win of the season on Jan. 4, defeating Athens Academy 49-43. Co-athletic director Mike Holland has no doubts about the team's potential in its first season under coach Carlos Strong.

"I believe they're going to get it figured out," Holland said.

The boys team was 1-9, 1-3 in region, prior to Tuesday night's game against Elbert County.

"The level of competition has increased dramatically, which is good," Holland said.

Despite the schedules being tougher, Holland thinks it will ultimately create winning programs. He explained he'd rather play tougher teams and occasionally lose than cruise through an easy schedule.

"I think the resilience of the kids really shows up in their ability to keep giving great effort game after game, no matter what the sport is," Holland said.

PREP SCHEDULE

Thursday, Jan. 9
■ OCMS basketball at Athens Academy, 4:30/5:30 p.m.

Friday, Jan. 10
■ OCMS wrestling at Commerce Peach League Duals
■ OCHS girls wrestling at area duals
■ OCHS basketball at Commerce, 6/7:30 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 11
■ OCMS basketball at Prince Avenue, 10/11 a.m.
■ OCHS wrestling at area duals

Monday, Jan. 13
■ Athens Christian at OCMS

basketball, 4:30/5:30 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 16
■ OCMS basketball at Loganville Christian, 4:30/5:30 p.m.

Friday, Jan. 17
■ OCHS boys wrestling at state duals
■ OCHS JV basketball at Rabun County, 4/5:15 p.m.
■ OCHS basketball at Rabun County, 6:30/8 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 18
■ OCMS wrestling at Peach League Individual Championship
■ OCHS boys wrestling at state duals

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INTENT TO OPT-OUT OF HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION

The Oglethorpe County Board of Education intends to opt-out of the statewide adjusted base year ad valorem homestead exemption for the Oglethorpe County School District. All concerned citizens are invited to the public hearing on this matter to be held at the Oglethorpe County Board of Education, 735 Athens Road, Lexington, GA 30606, on Tuesday, January 14, 2025, at 6:00 pm. Times and places of additional public hearings on this matter are at Oglethorpe County Board of Education, 735 Athens Road, Lexington, GA 30606, on Tuesday, January 21, 2025, at 6:00 pm and Tuesday, January 28, 2025, at 6:00 pm.

NOW HIRING

DEPARTMENT: Planning & Zoning
POSITION: Administrative Assistant



DATE: January 2025

SUMMARY: Under supervision from the Planning and Development Director, performs planning and development activities for the Department.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS: Essential functions, as defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act, may include any of the following representative duties, knowledge, and skills. Factors such as regular attendance at the job are not routinely listed in job descriptions, but are an essential function. Essential duties and responsibilities may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Works with the general public to provide technical assistance regarding planning, zoning and permitting activities.
- Reviews applicant proposals such as rezonings, site plans and subdivision plats for conformity with the Oglethorpe County Unified Development Code.
- Provides customer assistance; responds to phone calls, walk-ins and e-mail requests for information.
- Maintain accurate records, including Official Zoning Map.
- Performs special projects as assigned.
- Supports the relationship between Oglethorpe County and the general public by demonstrating courteous and cooperative behavior when interacting with citizens, visitors, and County staff; maintains confidentiality of work-related issues and County information; performs other duties as required or assigned.
- Employees may at any time be required to work in order to provide for the safety and well-being of the general public, including the delivery and restoration of vital services, in the event of an emergency.

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS:

Knowledge of:

- County organization, operations, policies, and procedures.
- Principles and practices of planning, zoning and land use.

- Local and state laws governing environmental and land use.
- Local codes and ordinances.
- Site plan review methods
- Georgia Planning Act.
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS).
- Principles and practices of project management.
- Business and personal computers, and spreadsheet software applications.

Skill in:

- Handling situations requiring diplomacy, fairness, firmness and sound judgment.
- Providing efficient customer service.
- Understanding and applying policies and procedures, and applicable federal and state regulations.
- Reading and interpreting codes.
- Organizing and maintaining records and analyzing data.
- Establishing and maintaining cooperative working relationships.
- Communicating effectively verbally and in writing.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS:
High School diploma AND two years' experience in fields of planning, permitting, real estate or Geographic Information Systems

LICENSE AND CERTIFICATION:
Possession of a valid driver's license.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS AND WORKING ENVIRONMENT:
Work is performed primarily in a standard office environment with some exposure to an outdoor work environment. May be required to lift and carry items weighing up to 10 pounds.

COMPENSATION:
DOE

OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND

Educational opportunities abound for Oglethorpe County's residents. Make sure to explore the possibilities at the excellent institutions.



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Quality Education in a Christian Atmosphere

VISIT OUR CAMPUS TO DISCOVER:

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- Innovative Fine Arts Program
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(706)549-7586 | JORDAN.SMITH@ATHENSCHRISTIANSCHOOL.ORG



PRINCE AVENUE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL **OPEN HOUSE**

Information & Campus Tours

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8TH 9:00AM

Prince Avenue Christian School
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Bogart, GA 30622
678-726-2300

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EXCELLENCE WITH HONOR

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22 / 8:30 AM
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19 / 8:30 AM

Now Accepting Applications
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Athens Technical College provides educational programs and services through traditional and online education methods to foster lifelong learning, facilitate workplace success, and promote economic development.

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- Life Science
- Manufacturing
- Public Safety
- Technology

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(706) 355-5000

800 Hwy 29 N
Athens, GA 30601

BOGO

Buy One, Get One

FREE



16-Oz., Selected
**Oscar Mayer
Meat Wieners.....**

Buy One, Get One

FREE



2.44 To 2.9-Oz.
Selected
**Armour
Lunchmakers.....**

Buy One, Get One

FREE



14-Oz., Selected
**Armour
Meatballs.....**

Buy One, Get One

FREE



11-Oz. American
Blend Or 9-Oz.
**Fresh Express
Italian Salad.....**

Buy One, Get One

FREE



4.6 To 7.2-Oz., Selected
**Pasta Or
Rice-A-Roni.....**

Buy One, Get One

FREE



9-Oz.
**Steak-Umm
Sliced Steaks.....**

Buy One, Get One

FREE



6.3 To 12-Oz., Selected
**Frigo String
Cheese.....**

Buy One, Get One

FREE



9-Oz.
**Philly Gourmet
Beef Steaks.....**

Buy One, Get One

FREE

BOGO

Buy One, Get One

FREE



6-Ct.
**Mayfield
 Ice Cream
 Novelties.....**

Buy One, Get One
FREE



9.31 To 16.5-Oz.
 Selected
**Hostess
 Multipack.....**

Buy One, Get One
FREE



10.2-Oz., Selected
**Food Club
 Toaster Pastries...**

Buy One, Get One
FREE



12-Ct., Selected
**Food Club
 K-Cup Coffee.....**

Buy One, Get One
FREE



100-Ct., Selected
**Melitta
 Coffee Filters.....**

Buy One, Get One
FREE



2 To 3-Ct., Selected
 Scrubbers Or
**Simply Done
 Scour Pads.....**

Buy One, Get One
FREE



13.8 To 15.8-Oz.,
 Selected
**Jack's
 Pizza.....**

Buy One, Get One
FREE



30-Ct.
**Top Care
 All Day Allergy.....**

Buy One, Get One
FREE

CATCH the SAVINGS

USDA Inspected
**Whole Boneless
Pork Loin**
1.68 Lb.

Frozen Or Prev. Frozen
**Boneless Skinless
Chicken Breast**
1.98 Lb.

85% Lean, Family Pack
**Ground
Round**
4.98 Lb.
Ground Round \$5.48-Lb.

USDA Inspected
**Boneless Center
Cut Pork Chops**
2.98 Lb.

Butcher's Best®
**Boneless
Cubed Steaks**
4.98 Lb.

Butcher's Best®
**Boneless
London Broil**
3.98 Lb.

Butcher's Best®
**Boneless Beef
Top Sirloin Steaks**
4.98 Lb.

10-Inch
**Baked
Apple Pie**
7.98

Frozen Or Prev. Frozen
**Pork
Tenderloins**
2.48 Lb.

12 To 16-Oz., Selected
**Oscar Mayer
Sliced Bacon**
4.98

Sold in a 5-Lb. Bag for \$12.40
**Party
Wings**
2.48 Lb.

1-Lb., 41/50-Ct., P&D, Tail-Off Or
**Southern Seas
EZ-Peel Raw Shrimp**
4.98

27-Oz., Hot Or Mild
**Swaggerly's Farm
Sausage Patties**
4.98

1-Pt.
**Sweet Plump
Pint Blueberries**
2/\$5

FARM to TABLE

Farmer Finest
**Tender Zucchini
Or Yellow Squash**
1.28 Lb.

3-Lb. Bag, Gold Delicious,
McIntosh, Gala, Fuji or
**Eastern Grown
Red Delicious Apples**
2/\$6

FAMILY FAVORITES

Star of the Week
14.5 To 24-Oz., Selected
**Prego
Pasta Sauce**
2.28

4-Pack, Selected
**Jell-O Temptations,
Gelatin Or Pudding Cups**
2.98

8.5 To 9-Oz., Selected
Hot Pockets
2.48

16-Oz.
**Zesta
Saltine Crackers**
2.98

15.5 To 16-Oz., Selected
**Jif
Peanut Butter**
2.48

10.7 To 12-Oz., Selected
**Kraft
Singles**
2/\$7

4.5 To 5.3-Oz., Selected
**Chobani
Flips Or Yogurt**
5/\$5

9.6 To 12.6-Oz., Selected
**Special K
Cereal**
2/\$6

10.5 To 11.25-Oz., Selected
**Campbell's
Soup**
2/\$3

28.4-Oz.
**Maxwell House
Wake Up Roast**
6.98

15-Oz., Selected
**Wish Bone
Salad Dressing**
2/\$5

7.2 To 9.98-Oz., Selected
**Smucker's
Uncrustables**
2/\$6

19 To 32-Oz., Selected
**Ore-Ida
Frozen Potatoes**
3.48

128-Oz. Canola Or
**Crisco
Vegetable Oil**
11.98

25 To 42-Ct. Pods Or 84-Oz.,
Selected
Tide Liquid Detergent
12.98

6.25 To 10-Oz., Selected
**Cheetos Or
Fritos Snacks**
3/\$10

7.5-Oz., Mini Cans Or 16.9-Oz.,
Bottles
**6-Pack
Pepsi Products**
3/\$12

FLAVOR TAKES FLIGHT

2.89 To 3.42-Oz.
Cup Noodles,
Top Ramen Or
Nissin Ramen Bowls
4/\$5

4.6 To 11-Oz.,
Selected Shells Or
Old El Paso
Flour Tortillas
2.28



2.25-Oz., Selected
Nissin
Cup Noodles.....
4/\$3

1.28

28 Oz. Sauce, Puree Or Selected
Furmano's
Tomatoes.....
2/\$4

2/\$3

12 To 14-Oz., Selected Minute Or
Success
Rice.....
2.18

2/\$4

1-Oz.
Ortega Taco
Seasoning Mix.....
.98

1.98

15-Oz.
Furmano's
Pizza Sauce.....
1.28

4-Oz.
Ortega
Diced Chiles.....
2/\$3

8-Oz., Selected
Ortega
Taco Sauce.....
2/\$4

16-Oz.
Ortega
Refried Beans.....
1.98

FAMILY VALUE SAVINGS



4-Ct., Selected
Kraft
EZ-Mac Cups
4.98



7.25-Oz., Blue Box Original
Kraft
Mac & Cheese
4/\$5



15-Oz.
Van Camp's
Pork And Beans
5/\$5



15 To 16-Oz., Selected
Manwich
Sauce
3/\$5



7.5 To 10-Oz., Dinty Moore Or
Hormel
Compleats
2.28



17.25 To 20-Oz., Selected Jam,
Spread, Marmalade Or
Smucker's Preserves
3.48



20-Oz.
Nature's Own
100% Wheat Bread
2.99



4.13 To 7-Oz., Selected
McCormick
Seasoning
4.48



.85 To 2.12-Oz., Selected
McCormick
Grinders
2/\$5



14-Oz., With Beans Or No Beans
Armour
Chili
2/\$4



60 To 64-Oz., Selected
Ocean Spray
100% Juice
3.98



4.6-Oz., Selected
Armour Vienna
Sausages
.88



5.9-Oz. Original Or White Cheddar
Mac-A-Roni
Pasta
4/\$5



5.6 To 6.98-Oz., Selected
Kellogg's Rice
Krispies Treats
2/\$6



3-Oz., Hot Or
Andy Capp's
Cheddar Fries
5/\$5



8-Oz., Selected
Nabisco
Snak Saks
2/\$6



13.96 To 19.8-Oz., Selected
Orville Redenbacher
Microwave Popcorn
4.48



12-Ct., Selected
Moon Pie
Minis
2/\$6



9.21 To 14.03-Oz., Selected
Oreo
Cookies
4.48



5 To 9-Oz., Selected
Voortman Bakery
Cookies Or Wafers
2.98



18-Ct., Selected
Fritos
Snack Packs
9.99

WAKE UP WINS



12 To 18-Oz., Selected
Food Club
Cereal
2/\$5

9.8 To 15.1-Oz., Selected
Food Club
Instant Oatmeal
2/\$5



18.7-Oz.
Food Club
Raisin Bran Cereal
2.98



8-Oz.
Food Club
Instant Coffee
4.98



16-Oz. Reg. Or Lite
Food Club
Creamer
2.98



HOME & HEALTH

6-Ct., Selected
Sparkle
Paper Towels
7.98



8.8-Oz., Selected
Febreze
Air Mist
3.28



16-Oz. Spray Or 24.3 To 28-Oz.,
Selected
Dawn Dish Liquid
4.98



56-Ct., Plus Or Ultra
Puffs
Facial Tissue
2/\$3



40 To 43-Oz., Selected
Clorox
Liquid Bleach
3.78



12-Oz., Selected
Top Care
Cold & Flu Liquid
4.98



32-Oz. Spray Or
75-Ct., Selected
Clorox Disinfectant
Wipes
4.78



2-Ct. C Or D, 1-Ct. 9V, Or
4-Ct. AA Or AAA
Duracell Batteries
4.78



Bathroom AMENITIES



2.7 To 8.2-Oz., Selected
Crest
Toothpaste.....
2.98

11-Oz., Selected
Dial Liquid
Hand Soap.....
2/\$5

375-Ct.
Top Care
Cotton Swabs.....
2/\$4

12-Ct., Selected
Angel Soft
Bath Tissue.....
8.98

LOVE YOUR PETS



3.5-Lb., Selected
Kibbles 'n Bits
Dog Food
6.98



13.2-Oz., Selected
Gravy Train
Dog Food
4/\$5



12-Lb. Daily Essentials
9Lives Dry
Cat Food
11.98



12-Pk., Selected
Meow Mix
Cat Food
7.98



FRESHEST FLAVORS
Produce

All Purpose Sweet Yellow Onions
1.28 Lb.

6-Oz., Fresh Plump Sweet Blackberries
2/\$6

Texas Rio Star Red Grapefruit
2/\$3

FARMERS FINEST®

1-Lb. Bag, Farmers Finest Tender Brussel Sprouts
2.98



Sweet Seedless California Navel Oranges
.68



Creamy Ripe Hass Avocados
.78



16-Oz., Selected Little Potato Company Seasoned Potatoes
3.98



8-Oz. Southmill Fresh Sliced Baby Bella Mushrooms
2.48



No Waste Fresh Crisp Celery Hearts
2.78



1-Lb. Pkg. Bolthouse Farms Sweet Peeled Baby Carrots
1.48



2-Lb. Bag Tangy Fresh Lemons
3.48



Florist Quality Premium Deluxe Alstroemeria Bouquet
7.98



MEALTIME SUPPORT

8-Oz. Breakstone Sour Cream
3/\$4

32-Oz. Blue Bonnet Margarine Quarters
2/\$5

Tyson
Crispy CHICKEN BREAST STRIPS
FULLY COOKED BREADED CHICKEN BREAST STRIPS WITH NO MEAT

10 To 12-Oz., Selected Food Club Frozen Vegetables
3/\$4

16 To 26.5-Oz., Selected Tyson Frozen Chicken
7.98

COOL SAVINGS

6 To 8-Oz., Selected Sargento Sliced Cheese
2/\$7



24-Oz. Reg. Or Low Fat Food Club Cottage Cheese
2/\$5



9.15 To 10-Oz., Selected Healthy Choice Simply Steamers
2/\$6



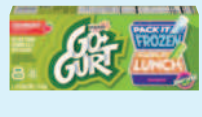
10.5 To 14-Oz., Selected Marie Callender's Entrees
2/\$6



4-Pk. Selected YoCrunch Or Activia Or 6-Pk., Selected Danimals Smoothies
2/\$6



8-Ct., Selected Yoplait Go-Gurt
2/\$6



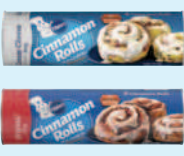
7 To 8.8-Oz., Selected Kid Cuisine Meals
2/\$5



18 To 22-Oz., Selected P.F. Chang's Home Menu
6.98



8-Ct., Selected Pillsbury Cinnamon Rolls
2/\$7



96-Oz., Selected Lactaid Milk
6.48



10 To 11.5-Oz. Selected Evol Or Blake's Frozen Meals
3.98



11.8 To 15.5-Oz., Selected California Kitchen Pizza
6.98



2.25 To 3-Oz., Oscar Mayer Scramblers Or Ore-Ida Just Crack An Egg
2/\$4



36.8-Oz. Quaker Quick Grits
2/\$5



LONG LIVE BREAKFAST

32-Oz. Cold Brew, 11 To 12-Oz. Ground Or 10-Ct. Starbucks K-Cup Coffee.....
8.48

12.7-Oz. French Toast Sticks Or 10.75 To 12.3-Oz., Selected Eggo Frozen Waffles.....
2/\$6

32-Oz., Selected Coffeemate Creamer.....
3.78

16-Oz., Selected Ballard's Farms Sausage Roll.....
3.48

11.7-Oz., Selected Pillsbury Toaster Strudels
2.98



Sold in 5-Lb. Bag Tater Rounds
7.98



12-Oz. John Morrell Sliced Bacon
3.48



30-Oz., Original Or Blueberry Jimmy Dean Pancake & Sausage On A Stick
8.98



12-Oz. Smithfield Sausage Links Or Patties
3.98



2.52-Oz., Fully Cooked Oscar Mayer Sliced Bacon
4.98



MEALTIME

— Score Big With The Family —



Butcher's Best®
Boneless Sirloin
Strip Steak
5.98 lb.



Butcher's Best®
Boneless Filet
Of Sirloin Steak
6.98 lb.



Butcher's Best®
Boneless Beef
Top Round Steaks
4.98 lb.



USDA Inspected, Boneless
Country Style
Pork Ribs
2.48 lb.



USDA Inspected
Heavy Pork Loin
Back Ribs
1.18 lb.



7-Oz. Polish Or
John Morell
Smoked Sausage
2/\$3



26 To 28-Oz., Selected
On-Cor
Entrees
3.98

THE BEST "MEATING" PLACE

9-Oz., Selected
Buddig Premium
Deli Meat
2.98



16-Oz., Selected
Fischer's
Meat Bologna
2.18



16-Oz., Selected Stack Pack
Oscar Mayer
Deli Meat
3.48



6-Oz., Reg. Or Fajita
John Soules Grilled
Chicken Strips
2.98



8 To 10-Oz., Selected
Carolina Pride
Lunch Meat
2.98



14-Oz., Selected
Carolina Pride
Smoked Sausage
3.48



12-Oz., Selected
John Morrell
Franks
1.68



2 To 4.4-Oz., Selected P3 Or
Oscar Mayer
Lunchables
1.98



PLAYOFFS MUNCHIES

18 To 20-Oz., Selected
Land O' Frost
Sub Sandwich Kit.....

6.98

15 To 16-Oz. Cheese Dogs
Or Selected
Oscar Mayer
Beef Franks.....

3.98

25-Oz., Original Or Italian
Armour
Meatballs.....

4.98

6-Lb. Box, 24-Ct., Hollen's
Party Pack
Beef Patties.....

\$24
\$1 PER PATTY!

Sold In a 4-Lb. Box for \$9.92
Flanders
Beef Patties..... lb.

2.48

12-Oz.
Armour
Pepperoni.....

3.98

Sold In 5-Lb. Bag @ \$12.40
Boneless Breaded
Chicken..... lb.

2.48

12-Oz. Chicken Salad Or Selected
Star's
Pimento Cheese.....

3.58



Fresh Atlantic
Salmon
Fillets
8.98 lb.

1-Lb., 41/50-Ct., P&D, Tail-On
Southern Seas
Cooked Shrimp
6.98



2-Lb., Nature's Best
Tilapia
Fillets
8.98



Off The Hook Seafood Savings

35.13-Oz. Clam Bake,
Crawfish, Shrimp Or
Tastee Choice
Seafood Boil
9.98



8-Oz. Lobster Or
Louis Kemp
Crab Delights
2/\$5



6-Oz., Selected
Moji
Sushi Roll
3.98



11-Oz. Cream Of Crab Or
Trout's Maryland
Crab Soup
6.98



BAKERY FRESH



8-In., Reg. Or
No Sugar Added
Baked Apple Pie
5.48



4-In.
Baked
Apple Pie
\$1



48-Oz.
Celebration
Cake
12.98



4.2-Oz.
Artisan
Cheesecake Donut
2/\$3



4-Ct., Selected
Cafe Valley
Muffins
3.98



16-Oz., Selected
Meurer
Danishes
5.98



4-Ct., Selected
Nikola's Bakery
Coffee Cakes
3.98

Guaranteed Fresh All The Time!
Satisfaction Guaranteed Or Your Money Back!
Independently Owned
Food Fresh