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Calendar

May 10, noon – Deadline to register online to vote in the June 9 Primary Election. Register at scvotes.org.

May 11 – Capital Project Sales Tax Commission Meeting, 6 p.m. (virtual).

May 12 – Georgetown County Council budget workshop, 4 p.m. Regular Council meeting follows at 5:30 p.m. (both virtual).

May 18 – Capital Project Sales Tax Commission Meeting, 6 p.m. (virtual).

May 21 – Georgetown County Planning Commission Meeting, 5:30 p.m. (virtual).

May 25 – Georgetown County offices and facilities are closed for Memorial Day.

May 26 – Georgetown County Council Meeting, 5:30 p.m. Details to be announced.

Virtual meetings are broadcast live at [facebook.com/gtcounty](https://www.facebook.com/gtcounty).

The Georgetown County Chronicle



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

Volume 8, Issue 8

May 2020

Taking the reigns: New administrator settles into the role

Taking over as the top executive for a county government would be a big endeavor under normal circumstances. Taking over in the middle of a pandemic is nothing short of a monumental challenge – and one not many people alive can say they’ve taken on.



Angela Christian

It’s certainly not what Angela Christian was expecting when she agreed to become Georgetown County’s next Administrator in early March. But she has stepped up to the task with an unwavering spirit and has managed to keep her smile though it all, her new staff says.

Christian’s first day on the job was March 30, just two weeks after Georgetown County declared a State of Emergency due to COVID-19 and took the unprecedented step of closing county facilities indefinitely to the public. Her first month on the job, she said, was definitely a full one. In addition to the ongoing pandemic, Week 3 saw three tornadoes touch down in the county during a severe storm on April 13.

“I’ve never been one to back down from a challenge,” Christian said. It’s one of the things that attracted her to a career in local government that started in Florida and has taken her to Tennessee, Georgia and North Carolina before stopping here.

“I have focused my entire career on local government. It was a deliberate choice and I have found that I particularly like coastal communities and the challenges that go with coastal communities,” she said. “So many of our communities are changing and evolving, and local government – especially county government – is more complicated than it has ever been before. More challenges and responsibilities are constantly being pushed down from the federal and state levels, and we’re involved in so much. We’re having to achieve technical expertise in subjects we’ve never had to deal with before. And unfortunately, we don’t always get the resources to do as much as we think we should. But that’s what brings about the innovation and creativity you see in local government.”

For the majority of her first month on the job, Christian, a Georgia native, said her main task has been “listening.” She has spent most of her time locked in conference rooms or glued to her computer screen for virtual meetings. She has met mostly with County Council members, her executive staff and some other key officials. The conversations have been in-depth

See “Angela Christian,” Page 4

Absentee voting under way for June primary election

Absentee voting for the June 9 primary elections began on May 4 in Georgetown County. It was the first day qualifying voters wanting to vote in person prior to the election could do so at the County Elections Office on Hazard Street in Georgetown.

“The phones have been ringing nonstop,” said Kristie Richardson, the county’s director of elections and voter registration. But only about a dozen people came in to cast their ballots that day. She expects the numbers will increase

significantly as the day of the primary nears.

With ongoing concerns over COVID-19, many voters are thinking about potential health risks that may come with voting in person at their precinct. With a larger than usual turnout expected for 2020 elections, voters with physical limitations may also have serious concerns about waiting in long lines.

Taking these factors into consideration, Georgetown County is



encouraging qualifying voters to take advantage of absentee voting this year, either by voting early in person, or by requesting mail-in ballots.

Dean Smith, chairman of the Georgetown County Board of Elec-

See “Absentee,” Page 2

IN MEMORIAM: County mourns Parks Dept. employee Barbara Keith Bonds

Barbara Ann Keith Bonds of Georgetown passed away at the age of 69 on April 7, 2020. She was a part-time employee of Georgetown County Parks and Recreation since 2016 and also worked part-time as a custodian at CareHere in Georgetown, the health clinic the county runs for its employees.

Mrs. Bonds was born on June 11, 1950, in Georgetown to Virginia Keith and William Green. Her parents, husband, two sisters and three brothers all preceded her in death.

Affectionately known as "Big Mama," Mrs. Bonds received her education in Georgetown, where she graduated from Howard High School. On June 12, 1971, she married William Bonds. Their union was blessed with three daughters.

Mrs. Bonds joined Arnett A.M.E. Church at a young age. She was an active member of the Usher board, Missionary Society, Trustee Board, and Pastor Aide. She was a loving wife, mother, sister and aunt. She always had a caring word of advice and never turned her back on anyone.

There are many who remain to cherish her loving memory, including: her beloved daughters, Amanda, Nannette and Miya, of the home; a nephew, Trey of Georgetown, who she helped raise as a son; three sisters, Mary Heyward of Irvington, N.J., Ruby King of Roslyn, Penn., and Rebecca Keith of Georgetown; two sisters-in-law, Joyce White (James) of Augusta, Ga., and Vera Bonds of Georgetown; and a brother-in-law, Johnny Bonds (Pearletha) of Georgetown; along with a host of nieces, nephews and church family that she loved very much.

Family and friends may light a candle as a loving gesture for their loved one, or leave a sympathy message to the family in the guestbook on Mrs. Bonds' memorial page at wildsfh.com.

Visitation was held on April 14 at Wilds Funeral Home. A graveside service was held on April 15 at the Arnett Memorial Gardens Cemetery on Estill Drive. Services were by the Rev. Winston T. Jones.



Barbara Bonds
1950-2020

Absentee Voting

Continued from Front Page

tions and Voter Registration, said he especially wants to encourage voters to take advantage of the mail-in option for the primary.

"A number of poll workers have indicated that they are unwilling to work the election at this time" due to COVID-19, Smith wrote in an open letter in late April. Additionally, some polling locations are unwilling to host the June Primary, meaning polling locations may have to be consolidated, resulting in longer wait times for voters.

"Voting absentee by mail will help the voting process go more smoothly and will benefit both voters and poll workers," Smith wrote.

Although the state has not made concerns about COVID-19 an eligible qualification to vote absentee, there are currently 17 reasons a voter can give to qualify to vote absentee. These include being age 65 or older, having to work on the date of the election, being on vacation or out of town on the date of the election, having to care for someone who is sick or disabled, or having a physical disability.

To learn more about absentee voting, whether you qualify and how to request an absentee ballot, visit gtcounty.org/elections, or call the Georgetown County Elections Office at (843) 545-3339. Voters may also visit scvotes.org for voter information, including viewing and updating registration information and downloading a sample ballot.

Get the Chronicle

At Georgetown County, we want our residents and property owners kept abreast of what's going on inside their local government. That's why we created the Georgetown County Chronicle. It's a vehicle for information about county services and events, important messages from county officials and behind-the-scenes glimpses at how government works.

You can find the Chronicle on our website at www.gtcounty.org or through our social media accounts. If you'd rather have it delivered to your inbox, e-mail jbroach@gtcounty.org with the subject line "send me the Chronicle."

That's also the place to send questions and comments about this newsletter and its content. We welcome your feedback and suggestions.

www.gtcounty.org

Our libraries are temporarily closed, but that doesn't mean your kids have to miss daily

STORY TIME!

Join our Georgetown County children's librarians online every weekday for a new story.

Free for you and your family on the Library's [YouTube page](#)

([YouTube.com/GeorgetownCountyLibr](https://www.youtube.com/GeorgetownCountyLibr))



County plans limited reopening of government offices for May 18

Georgetown County government facilities have been shuttered to the public for nearly two months in the wake of COVID-19. While staff has continued to work and provide services, most have done so from home or inside locked office buildings manned by skeleton crews.

The first week of May, county officials turned their sights to reopening.

"It's going to be a gradual process for us," said County Administrator Angela Christian. "We're heading toward this with small steps, not big leaps. But I believe it is time for us to start moving in a forward direction. It looks like COVID-19 is going to be with us for a while, so we need to start figuring out what our new normal is going to look like and how we're going to get there."

Christian has been working with Georgetown County Emergency Manager Brandon Ellis to map out a plan for reopening and develop guidelines to help directors and elected officials prepare their departments. The plan was first presented to staff

April 29 and includes a goal of having staff return to their regular work sites on Monday, May 18. For the most part, this first phase of reopening will consist of getting staff safely back into a routine onsite. However, very limited public access to facilities is also being phased in. Members of the public will still primarily be asked to handle as much business with the county as possible through virtual means.

"We're by no means ready to just throw open the doors and resume all regular programs," Christian said. "We need to get our staff back in first and get them working toward a new normal. We've been forced to make a lot of changes, and some of those

are likely to become new standard operating procedures going forward."

In the weeks leading up to the limited reopening, directors and elected officials will be working on their department-specific plans for gradual reopening. In a letter to staff on Thursday, Christian assured employees that their safety and that of the residents who rely on their service are of paramount importance. A key component of planning will be employee and public safety, and figuring out how to make work spaces as clean and safe as possible.

The county will release further details about its plans for limited reopening as they become available.



Please contact us before visiting

While we continue to deal with issues surrounding COVID-19, we will be severely restricting the number of people in county facilities. Some offices may be accessible by appointment only. Please call or email us before visiting. We may be able to save you a trip by handling your issue via phone or email.

County, community partners team up for Georgetown County Cares video project

The last two months have been tough ones for Georgetown County residents. But we've survived a lot in recent years and – together, as a community – we'll survive this new challenge too and come out stronger for it.

That's the key message of a video Georgetown County released April 29 via its website, gtcounty.org, and social media accounts.

County Administrator Angela Christian wanted to do something that would remind residents that even though our community members are physically apart right now, we're all in this together and we can still find ways to be there for each other and support each other.

"This is a time when it's very easy to feel alone," said Christian, who came on board with the county at the beginning of April, right in the midst of the COVID-19 emergency. "But if there's one thing I've learned about Georgetown County residents as I was researching this community, it's that they are a resilient, caring community that has come together time and again to help their neighbors."

Now, when so many are feeling isolated and anxious, hurting financially and unsure of the future, seemed like a good time to remind people of that. The three-and-a-half-minute video aims to accomplish that, as well as directing residents to the county's website, where they can find resources available to help families and individuals deal with issues related to COVID-19.

The project was led and produced by County staff, but included participation from the City of Georgetown, the Towns of Andrews and Pawleys Island, private businesses and other agencies.

"Once the idea was pitched, people were very enthusiastic about being part of the project," said Jackie Broach, Georgetown County



County staff member Heather Pelham films Brenda Martin of International Paper for the Georgetown County Cares video project. It features 29 people from 23 agencies and is posted at gtcounty.org.

Public Information Officer. "I think it's because we're all feeling a lot of the same things right now. We've had a lot of experience with hurricanes here, and we know how to prepare for and move forward following those kinds of events. But COVID-19 is something brand new for us. We're all feeling off-balance and anxious, and wondering how much longer this will last. I think people really liked the idea of coming together to reassure people and remind them that we live in a community where we look out for each other. We've all got stories of seeing how people have stepped up to take care of each other during this emergency."

In all, a total of 29 people from 23 different agencies and groups are featured in the video.



County Administrator Angela Christian is pictured in Council Chambers in the historic County Courthouse.

Christian receives credential from international association

Georgetown County Administrator Angela Christian has received the Credentialed Manager designation from the International City/County Management Association (ICMA).

Christian is one of just 38 county and city managers in South Carolina to have received this credential through the ICMA Voluntary Credentialing Program. To receive the prestigious ICMA credential, a member must have significant experience as a senior management executive in local government; have earned a degree, preferably in public administration or a related field; and demonstrated a commitment to high standards of integrity and to lifelong learning and professional development.

"Ms. Christian has been on the job for just a short time, but has already demonstrated superb leadership during this unprecedented crisis the county is facing, along with jurisdictions across the globe," said Georgetown County Council Chairman John Thomas. "Her broad experience across the spectrum of operations, budget, finance, emergency management and strategic planning will serve Georgetown County well, and we're very pleased with and proud of her latest accomplishment with ICMA."

ICMA's mission is to advance professional local government through leadership, management, innovation and ethics, and by increasing the proficiency of appointed chief administrative officers, assistant administrators, and other employees who serve local governments and regional entities around the world. The organization's 13,000 members in 27 countries also include educators, students and other local government employees.

Angela Christian

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ones, geared toward helping her identify opportunities and weaknesses within Georgetown County Government, and get a feel for where we are right now.

She's not nearly done.

"I haven't even gotten to the community yet," Christian said.

COVID-19 has created some unusual challenges to meeting members of the community and having those conversations immediately. But it's high on her priority list of what comes next. Meeting county residents and getting their feedback on where the county stands is something she said she's really looking forward to.

Though COVID-19 has limited her interactions, she said she has found the people she has met in the community to be warm and hospitable, despite the circumstances.

"People have really gone out of their way to make me feel at home, and make me feel like they're glad I'm here. I feel like I'm supposed to be here," Christian said.

Asked about her future goals for the county, she said she's still evaluating and much of that will be determined by the conversations she's having. But she already knows she wants to work on strategies for growth, money and jobs. She also wants to find a strategy that works for the whole community, so different segments are not working at cross purposes.

"Some of that will go to having a clear vision of who we are and who we want to be," Christian said.

"Who you are today won't necessarily be who you are 10 years from now. People who have been here 15-20 years have talked to me about how much the community has changed. Some say for the better, and some say for the worse. I do recognize that to have progress in the community, you must have change. It's just 'what does progress mean for us?' We have to have that clear vision to move forward."

Her most immediate goal, of course, is the fiscal year '20-'21 budget, which is to be presented to County Council in less than a month. An initial presentation to County Council on April 14 indicated this will be a particularly hard budget year, with the extent of revenue losses and spending related to COVID-19 still unclear.

That task in particular is a task Christian is well credentialed to take on. She started her career in government in Lee County, Fla., as a budget analyst before becoming deputy city manager for Bristol, Tenn. She was also finance director for Columbus, Ga., and chief operations officer/deputy county manager for Onslow County, N.C. Her most recent position prior to coming to Georgetown was as town manager for Newport, N.C.

"One of the things I've always liked about local government is you're never bored," Christian said. "You think coming in that you're going to tackle everything on your list that day and get everything done. But as I've progressed up the ladder, I've learned, it's not about today. It's what can you get done in a week, or in a month. It never stops. Even in the best circumstances, you must adapt and overcome. And sometimes you just have to throw it out the window and start again."

"I'm a big believer in thinking big," she added. "Often with thinking big, you may have to change some things you're currently doing for the bigger vision of where we want to be."

Christian currently resides in the Pawleys Island area, though she and her husband Junie haven't found a permanent home in the county yet. She and Junie have been married for 10 years. They have one daughter, Sherry, 21, who is studying carpentry at a technical college in North Carolina. Junie is retired and works part-time in leadership training and coaching. He said he is loving all the options Georgetown County offers for playing golf.

Bikeway connector in North Litchfield finally moves forward



Cyclists exit the designated bikeway in North Litchfield onto Trace Drive, where cyclists have to share the road with vehicle traffic until the trail resumes at the end of North Boyle.

After a decade of delays, a pivotal section of the Waccamaw Bike Trail is finally about to be completed.

Georgetown County was recently notified it has received a \$100,000 grant from S.C. Parks, Recreation and Tourism for the project. Additionally, “all the property and easement issues have finally been settled,” said James Coley, a project manager with the County’s Engineering and Capital Projects Division.

The project has long been considered one of the most important for the bike trail, because it will connect two significant stretches of bikeway that run from Willbrook Blvd. up Business 17 and through Murrells Inlet. Once the planned section of bikeway from Boyle Drive north to Trace Drive in North Litchfield is completed, cyclists can ride safely from Litchfield to the Georgetown/Horry County line on a designated, paved bikeway.

The majority of the trail through Litchfield to Business 17 is well off the road, taking cyclists through a lush wooded path that feels miles away from the heavy traffic on the highway. However, the path’s planned 0.6-mile route from Boyle to Trace runs under Santee Cooper transmission lines. That, along with funding and some other private property easements kept the projects on hold.

That means cyclists have had to come off the trail and travel down residential streets – where many seasonal visitors may not know the bike trail exists in that area and that they need to be on the lookout for cyclists – to access the next section of pathway. Cyclists and residents in that area say it’s a safety hazard.

“I’m really excited to see this project coming together,” said Ray Funnye, Georgetown County Public Services Director. “It’s one of those things we have been working on for what seems like forever and it’s going to be a huge benefit for people who utilize the bikeway in that area. They’ll no longer have to navigate a shared space with vehicle traffic, and the bikeway in North Litchfield will become much safer with this addition.”

“We finally have all the pieces in place and we’re hoping to start construction this summer and be done in the fall,” Coley said.



Pawleys, Andrews getting new compactors

Recycling Convenience Centers in Pawleys Island and Andrews are getting new solid waste compactors next month. Drainage around the compactor area has also been improved to prevent standing water. The foundations for the compactors have been laid and staff is waiting for the concrete to cure. Installation is scheduled for June 3.

Grate Ave. resurfacing still on the way

Resurfacing of Grate Avenue, which handles traffic into the Pawleys Island Community Recycling Convenience Center, hit something of a bump in the road this spring. It was delayed by several months, but County officials are hoping to have it back on the schedule in the next few weeks.

The project, originally slated to be completed in March, had to be put on hold due to an issue with relocating some of the numerous utilities along the right-of-way. Frontier and the Georgetown County Water and Sewer District started marking and moving telephone pedestals and water meters in March. But Santee Cooper utilities have not yet been relocated.

“That’s the holding point right now,” said County Public Works Manager Stephen Williams. “We’ve been in communication with them, and they’ve assured us it’s a priority, but we don’t have a date yet for when they will be able to get this done. They’ve told us it will be before the end of the month, and that’s what we’re hoping for.”

Once that work is complete, the County can move forward with resurfacing and drainage improvements, which should solve a number of issues concerning to residents along Grate Ave.

This resurfacing project will also address drainage in the area, so it should eliminate or significantly alleviate flooding there,” Williams said. “We’re also putting down a thicker asphalt layer, which should accommodate heavier trucks and heavy traffic flow using the road to access the recycling center.”

Resurfacing will require closure of the recycling center for three days. The county will announce when that closure will take place as soon as dates for resurfacing are confirmed.

“We’re hoping to have this done soon, while people are still staying at home for the most part. This is pretty much the ideal time for a project like this.”

County launches census campaign to improve local participation

Across South Carolina, census participation numbers have been disappointing. Totals reported by the Census Bureau on May 6 show that only 52 percent of households in the Palmetto State have completed the census, and the totals are even lower in Georgetown County.

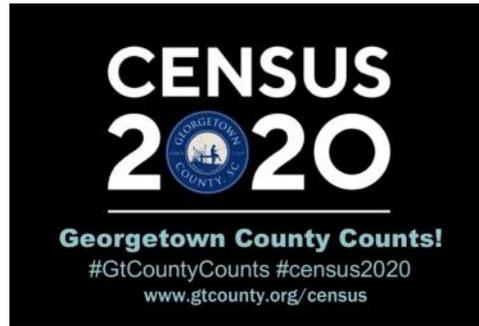
South Carolina ranks 39th in the nation for census participation, and Georgetown County ranks 39th in the state. Figures show less than 42 percent of households have completed the census in Georgetown County. The number is just slightly higher in the City of Georgetown at 43.5 percent, but is only 35 percent in the Town of Andrews.

"Data from the 2020 census can have a huge impact on our community, and communities across the nation," said Angela Christian, Georgetown County Administrator. "For the next decade, these numbers will impact the amount of federal funding we receive, how much representation we have in government at the state and national levels, and even where businesses choose to locate. It is imperative that every resident in Georgetown County be counted."

Recognizing the importance of an accurate census count, Georgetown County launched the "Georgetown County Counts" initiative on May 1. This coincided with a national campaign the Census Bureau had May 1-3 to encourage people to complete the census online. Georgetown County Counts is a campaign to encourage residents to complete the census for their household, and also become census advocates in their community.

Residents are encouraged to take selfies with signs letting friends know they have been counted, and post them on social media with the hashtag GtCountyCounts. Residents can make their own signs or download one at gtcounty.org/census. The county is also asking residents to record a short video explaining why the census is important to them and upload it at gtcounty.org/census for inclusion in a larger countywide video that county's staff plans to create.

As part of the campaign kickoff, county employees posted some of their selfies on the county's social media accounts, and county officials are encouraging local businesses, agencies and residents to start posting on their accounts too.



"The 2020 Census is an opportunity to create a better future for our communities and the next generation by providing an up-to-date count of our population," said Vermelle Simmons, a regional census partnership specialist assigned to Georgetown County. "The data collected will help determine how over \$675 billion in federal funding is distributed each year for things like housing assistance, infrastructure, and public transportation to name just a few. A complete count also determines the number of seats each state will have in the House of Representatives... Whatever number of responses we get in 2020, we only get that portion of our funding and it's locked in for 10 years."

Completing the census only takes a few minutes, Christian added. And while most residents should have received their census form in the mail last month, those who didn't receive the form can still complete the census online or by phone. Learn how at gtcounty.org/census.

Residents are reminded that information provided in the census, including immigration status, is confidential and protected by federal law. This information can only be used to produce statistics, and cannot be shared with law enforcement or immigration enforcement agencies, or to determine eligibility for government benefits. Additionally, the census only asks



Show friends and family you have been counted in the 2020 census by participating in our Census Selfie Challenge. Download a selfie sign at gtcounty.org/census (or make your own), take a photo with the members of your household and post it to social media with a request for others to share their own selfies.

questions about who lives in your home and their age, gender and race.

Census documents – and door-to-door census takers – should NEVER ask for Social Security numbers, bank or credit card numbers, money or donations, or anything related to political parties. For more information, visit gtcounty.org/census or call 1-844-330-2020.



Departments work to continue delivering services during COVID-19 closure

Parks & Recreation

During the COVID-19 pandemic, employees with Georgetown County Parks and Recreation have moved from the basketball court and the soccer field to the computer.

To help keep residents of all ages engaged, @GTCParks staff has been producing what they call the "Virtual Recreation Series," a series of videos designed to teach people about multiple topics, including how to stretch properly, the rules of football, workouts to do at home, how to use art as recreation, and a parent's guide to popular video games. The series has also covered activities staff has been catching up on in the six weeks since facilities closed.

Randy Akers, the staffer in charge of the Virtual Recreation Series, said that the videos have been quite the change from their normal routine. "Certainly we have some staff members who had never been in front of a camera before, at least not for scripted content," Akers said. "But our staff has pretty quickly adapted to this 'new normal' and I think most of them are enjoying being able to provide this content to families during this difficult time."

So far, @GTCParks has produced about 40 videos in the series, with more to come throughout the duration of the facility closures. Akers said his personal favorite was a

series of videos covering non-traditional forms of recreation, including video games.

"Video games are a personal passion of mine. I have always been a big fan of bringing technology into recreation and utilizing video games – which some people see as a 'waste of time' – to teach kids the same kinds of concepts they can learn in team sports," Akers said. "A lot of parents don't realize that modern video games can require immense amounts of positive teamwork to achieve a goal, or can teach real problem-solving skills, and it's my hope that the series covering some of the more popular games will help parents understand that video games can actually be helpful if they're played in moderation and with parental guidance."

Akers said he knows of one local teen who actually learned Spanish so he could better communicate with someone in another country who the teen plays video games with online.

For more information on the Virtual Recreation series, or to watch videos in the series, visit [facebook.com/GTCParks](https://www.facebook.com/GTCParks), or search for GTCParks on YouTube.



Sheila Spinks, a fitness instructor who offers classes through Georgetown County Parks and Recreation, demonstrates exercises that can be done at home during one of the Department's "Virtual Recreation" videos.

Library Services

Since the coronavirus shutdown, Georgetown County Library branches have taken many of their services online, meaning library users can still borrow books, enjoy children's story time, learn crafts, and explore local history.

The library is also offering free, no-password Wi-Fi 24/7 in all library parking lots. Parents of school-age children can reserve free portable Wi-Fi hotspots to take home. Availability is limited. Parents must call ahead to their nearest branch to set up a time to sign out a hotspot.

Online e-books and audio books are available to all library card holders at the [Georgetown Library website](https://www.georgetownlibrary.com). If you don't have a library card, the library is issuing 60-day temporary cards to allow for e-book service use. Call your local branch to get a card.

For those who prefer physical books to virtual books, the Georgetown branch on Cleland St. has a free book table set up from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. every weekday. Just stop by and grab a book at your convenience.

The library has been producing a wide range of video programs, including "Book-ercise" fitness, storytimes, profiles on featured artists, poetry readings and crafts, including how to crochet a bookmark and making a Bee Nice Banner. Watch videos on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com) by searching for GeorgetownCountyLibr. You can also find videos and other information on the [Library's Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/georgetowncountylibrary).

Additionally, all fines and fees are frozen until libraries reopen. For more information, call your local branch between 8:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. M-F.



#KeepItSmallGtCounty

Spend
LOCAL

It's a tough time for all of us right now. If you're shopping, please consider keeping it local & supporting Georgetown County small businesses as they begin reopening following COVID-19.

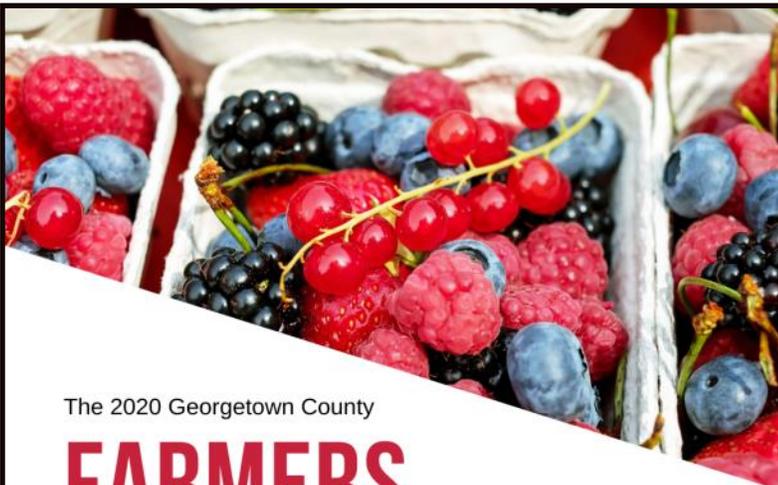
Find information about business reopenings at [VistGeorge.com](https://www.vistageorge.com)



Saint Frances thanks its fosters



Saint Frances Animal Center had some great news to announce on May 7. While there are still plenty of animals in its facility looking for homes, one of its buildings had been emptied thanks to the efforts of foster families and adopters who took dogs and cats into their families during this difficult time. "What a fantastic feeling to not be pushed to maximum capacity," the Center wrote on its Facebook page. "Thank you to everyone who reached out and helped out!" If you want some great company to share your time at home with during COVID-19, contact Saint Frances and ask about their adorable adoptables.



The 2020 Georgetown County

FARMERS MARKET

will return to Screven Street
this June. The wait is almost over!

DETAILS COMING SOON

Several races for county seats to be decided in June 9 primary

Georgetown County will have a new Auditor and Coroner next year, and could potentially have two new County Council members, a new Treasurer and new Sheriff. Here's the latest on who's seeking county offices in this year's election cycle.

- **Auditor:** Though Brian Shult initially filed for a second term, he later withdrew his name from the ballot. Shult said he was presented with a business opportunity he wants to pursue. That leaves the door open for Ken Baker (R), who currently works in the County Assessor's Office. Baker is now unchallenged on the ballot.

- **Coroner:** After nearly 25 years as Georgetown County Coroner, Kenny Johnson announced last year that he was ready to retire and would not seek re-election. His replacement will be decided during the Republican primary, in which Allen Morris, a criminal investigator, will go up against Chase Ridgeway, who is currently a deputy coroner.

- **County Council:** Council Districts 2 and 3 could potentially have new representatives next year. In District 2, former District 6 Council Member Bob Anderson will challenge longtime District 2 representative Ron Charlton in the Republican Primary. In District 3, former Council Member Leona "Tiger" Miller will challenge current Councilman Everett Carolina in the Democratic Primary. District 4 Council Member Lillie Jean Johnson (D) and District 5 Council Member Raymond Newton (R) are running unopposed.

- **Sheriff:** Having just a few months ago won the unexpired term of Lane Cribb, who passed away in office last summer, Carter Weaver will be on the ballot again this year. A Republican, Weaver will face Democrat Birt Adams in November.

- **Treasurer:** Allison Sippel Peteet, seeking her second term, will face opposition from Miriam Mace, an employee in the Assessor's Office during the Republican Primary. With no Democrat on the ballot, this race will be decided in June.

- **Other local races:** Other county officials running unopposed for office include Probate Judge Leigh Powers Boan (R) and Clerk of Court Alma White (D).

For more information on issues and candidates that will appear on your specific ballot in June — based on your location and which political party's primary you choose to vote in — download your sample ballot at scvotes.org. In South Carolina, voters do not have to register with a political party, so any voter can choose whether they want to vote in the Republican or Democratic primary.

Voters can also register to vote or update voter registration information at scvotes.org. May 10 at noon is the deadline to register online to vote in the June Primary. For information about how to vote absentee, see the article on Page 1.

News from our Veterans Affairs Officer

By David Murphy

Greetings, veterans.

I hope that everyone is doing well and staying safe during this pandemic. Please remember to continue to practice social distancing. Please also wear a mask if you must go to public places.

During the month of May, we set aside a time to honor our mothers. Happy Mother's Day to all the mothers out there! This month, we also celebrate Memorial Day. Let us take time to remember and honor all the men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice while defending our great nation.

I would like to introduce to everyone our new State Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Retired Major Gen. William Grimsley, 62. He was recently confirmed to lead the new S.C. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Grimsley, an Army officer with more than three decades of military experience, was confirmed by the Senate 38-0. It was the ending to a month-long saga over who would lead the newly developed department. Gov. Henry McMaster originally nominated state Rep. Bobby Cox, a former Army Ranger and Greer Republican, but the lawmaker had to remove his application because a state law dating to 1937 says no legislator can be elected or appointed to lead an agency created during his term.

Grimsley has a lot of combat experience. Between March and April of 2003, he took on armed hostiles in Baghdad with the 3rd Infantry Division during five major encounters over the course of three weeks. It was the height of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He earned the respect of his peers and was awarded the Silver Star, one of the nation's highest honors for bravery and courage in combat. In 2008, back in Iraq again, an improvised explosive device detonated, wounding the officer.

He retired in 2013 after 33 years and held assignments in Germany, Korea and Kuwait. His father, Maj. Gen. James A. Grimsley Jr., was president of the the Citadel from 1980 to 1989.

A Note from the DMV:

I recently received some information from S.C. Department of Motor Vehicles that I was asked to share with our veterans and request they push out to their local posts and chapters.

As of April 6, the SCDMV is requiring appointments to complete transactions at its offices. The SCDMV website, scdmvonline.com, has a link for the Appointment Scheduler.

SCDMV will resume administering motorcycle skills testing at branch offices where the service was previously offered. These will be by appointment only. Non-commercial passenger vehicle road tests remain suspended indefinitely.

Also, SCDMV is extending the expirations on driver's licenses, identification cards, handicap parking placards and vehicle registrations for those documents that expire through June 30. These documents will be deemed valid by the DMV until July 1.

I want to remind everyone that even though our office remains closed to the public, I'm still doing claims, appeals and other veter-



Murphy



Grimsley



During the first week of May, the Georgetown County Veterans Affairs office sent out certificates of appreciation to healthcare workers and first responders at agencies across the county to thank them for their dedication and service during COVID-19. Individuals working in those fields always have a tough job. But the last few months have been especially hard on all essential workers, with this added threat to their health. "We wanted to make sure they know how much they are appreciated for the work they're doing on the frontlines," said David Murphy, manager of the County Veterans Affairs Office. Staff from Midway Fire Rescue is pictured with their certificate.

ans affairs processes via email, fax and telephone. If you have a smart phone, I'm able to do your claims and appeals over the telephone. Our office number is (843) 545-3330, and our fax number is (843) 545-3312. You may also email me at dmurphy@gtcounty.org. Please don't hesitate to reach out if I may be of assistance. Stay Safe!

David Murphy, *Manager,*
Georgetown County Office of Veterans Affairs

Donation benefits senior meals program



Sel Hemingway, project field director with Congressman Tom Rice's office, dropped off a \$4,000 check for Georgetown County's mobile meals for senior citizens program last month on the Congressman's behalf. The funds are much needed, said Beth Goodale, department director for the Georgetown County Bureau of Aging Services (BOAS). In the weeks since the County declared a State of Emergency due to COVID-19, demand for BOAS' home-delivered meals program has grown significantly. BOAS currently has a waiting list of about 40 and continues to receive new requests. "We'll definitely be able to put these funds to good use," Goodale said. "We thank the Congressman for his generous contribution, and we also thank our BOAS staff members who are making the home-delivered meals program possible during this difficult time. Pictured from left are Jackie Elliott, BOAS manager, Goodale and Hemingway.

**Georgetown
County,
South Carolina
County Government**

Numbers to know

(All begin with area code 843)

Animal Control, 546-5101

Assessor, 545-3014

Auditor, 545-3021

Clerk of Court, 545-3004

County Council, 545-3058

Coroner, 546-3056

Elections, 545-3339

Finance, 545-3002

Planning and Zoning, 545-3116

Probate Judge, 545-3077

Register of Deeds, 545-3088

Sheriff, 546-5102

Treasurer, 545-3098

P.O. Box 421270
129 Screven Street
Georgetown, S.C. 29440-4200

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



County begins planning for hurricane season

While our community continues to endure the uncertainty presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, we can't forget there's another threat on the horizon.

Like always, the Atlantic hurricane season will begin on June 1, and residents will need to begin making preparations for their families, pets, homes and businesses.

"Unfortunately, hurricane season doesn't stop because we're all dealing with another disaster situation right now," said Brandon Ellis, head of the Georgetown County Emergency Management Division.

The season runs through Nov. 30, and while the peak usually doesn't start until around September for our area, anything can happen — as previous hurricane seasons have proven.

"GCEMD wants to ensure that the COVID-19 Pandemic does not overshadow the fact that hurricane season is only weeks away," Ellis said. "I know everybody has other things on their minds right now, but this is really the time when you want to prepare. Hurricane preparations are definitely not something you want to put off until the last minute."

While urging residents to get ready, the county is following its own advice.

"We have initiated our preseason planning process, and we are utilizing the unique planning assumptions that COVID-19 has presented," Ellis said.

GCEMD has been in coordination with state and regional partners in an effort to ensure that



appropriate considerations are given to any necessary modifications concerning evacuation and sheltering procedures for the upcoming season.

Early forecasts for the 2020 Atlantic Hurricane Season predict above average hurricane activity. The forecast says the season could yield a total of 16 named storms, eight hurricanes and four major hurricanes of Category 3 or higher (115 plus mph winds) on the Saffair-Simpson Scale. Given this forecast, emergency management officials are preparing for another challenging season and also encouraging the public to prepare now.

"In a worst case scenario, we face a major hurricane during a worldwide pandemic," Ellis said. "This is what we are planning for, with hopes that we do not have to activate any of our plans."

Ellis also encourages the public to begin planning now so that if a storm were to develop early in the season residents would be ready.

COVID-19 HELP

*Have you been impacted
by COVID-19?*

From incredible emotional stress to financial impacts on businesses and families due to shutdowns, the last two months have been hard on all of us. If you need help, resources are available. Of course, figuring out where to turn can be another stressor in and of itself.

For those looking for assistance, we have added a [Resources Guide](#) to the Emergency Alerts section on our website, gtcounty.org. We hope this makes your search and vetting process easier. The Georgetown County Chamber of Commerce also has an excellent nightly update that includes coronavirus information and resources. Go to visitgeorge.com for details.