Ackerman named county’s new HR director

Georgetown County’s new director of human resources and administrative services will be a familiar face to many area residents. Clifford Walter “Walt” Ackerman of Andrews, a former assistant director of finance for the City of Georgetown, will officially join Georgetown County’s leadership team on Oct. 17. He was chosen earlier this month as the successor for longtime human resources director Greg Troutman, who will retire this fall after 20 years of service.

“I walked up to see Bertie (Richardson in Human Resources) to fill out my paperwork and one of the county employees sitting there in her office had worked for me 10 or 15 years ago,” Ackerman recounted. “Anybody who has been around the community for any length of time probably already knows me, either through work, Little League, Cub Scouts or Boy Scouts.”

Ackerman was born and raised in Andrews. He went to Andrews schools and left only long enough to attend classes at North Carolina State University. He is currently director of finance and administration for Williamsburg County, a position he has held for the last four years. Prior to that, he was assistant director of finance for the City of Georgetown for six years. He has also worked as an accountant and has experience running a business as well as managing large groups of employees.

During his time with Williamsburg County, his achievements included reducing the workers compensation modification rate, resulting in savings of nearly...
Oct. 17 meeting to focus on inlet dredging

The Georgetown County Public Services Department has scheduled a public meeting in the Murrells Inlet community to present plans for an inlet dredging project expected to begin this fall.

The meeting will take place at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 17, at the Murrells Inlet Community Center, located at 4462 Murrells Inlet Road. County officials and others working on the project, including engineers, will be on hand to review plans for the project and answer questions from the public. There will also be an opportunity for public input.

The project will address the dredging of the Federal navigation channel belonging to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The dredged material will be placed on Garden City Beach and behind the jetties at Huntington Beach State Park, where significant erosion is occurring.

Georgetown County will concurrently dredge the access channels the county is required to maintain. An option was also given to private landowners to partner with Georgetown County in this portion of the dredging effort.

This project is funded through Georgetown County’s Capital Project Sales Tax, which went into effect in May 2015, following a public vote. Several other projects funded through the tax are already under way, including countywide road improvements and construction of fire substations. All members of the public with an interest in the dredging project are encouraged to attend this important meeting.

Georgetown Library to offer free genealogical workshops

October is Family History Month, and the Georgetown Library will celebrate by offering free genealogy workshops that can help folks flesh out their family trees and find clues to family history among tombstones.

The workshops will be taught by Patti Burns, adult services librarian, who has 30 years of local history and genealogical research experience. She is currently working with the Nature Conservancy to identify individuals buried on Sandy Island and with Prince George Winyah Episcopal Church to photograph their cemetery.

The first workshop, titled “Finding Your Family Tree: It Begins With You,” will take place from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Oct. 18 in the Georgetown Library auditorium. The workshop will guide individuals in beginning and researching family trees using online and print resources.

The series continues on Oct. 27 at the same time and place with “Cemeteries: More than Granite and Marble.” This workshop will focus on all that can be learned about local history and genealogy from burial markers.

The library is located at 405 Cleland St. Burns can also provide one-on-one help with genealogy questions through the library’s Book-A-Librarian program. For more information, call (843) 545-3388 or email pburns@gtcounty.org.

Trick-or-Treat event for kids

Elementary school-age children are invited to show off their costumes, collect candy and enjoy a fall festival in front of the Georgetown County Judicial Center.

New this year: Costume contest at 5 p.m.!

Cost: Free! (Sponsored by the Georgetown County Court Offices at the Judicial Center)
When: 4-5:30 p.m. on Oct. 31
Where: 401 Cleland St., Georgetown

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 Facebook page. 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.
County voters urged to prepare for Nov. 8 general election

State and local voter registration and elections officials are encouraging voters to prepare for the Nov. 8 General Election.

In advance of Election Day, voters are strongly encouraged to check and update their voter registration, make sure they know their polling location, review a sample ballot and ensure they have the proper ID when they go to vote. Historically, voter turnout in presidential elections has been as high as 76 percent, which is likely to result in lines at polling places. Being prepared can make the process go faster and more smoothly.

S.C. residents can register to vote or check and update their registration information at scVOTES.org. That’s also the place to review your sample ballot, so you know exactly what all you’ll be asked to help decide when you enter the voting booth. For Georgetown County voters that includes national, state and local races, as well as a school bond referendum. Local races include those for Sheriff and treasurer, and for residents in the county’s Council District 4, for a new County Council Member.

It’s also of critical importance that residents bring the correct ID when they go to vote.

Here’s what voters need to know about Photo ID:

- If you are registered to vote and already have a driver’s license, a DMV ID, a passport, or a federal military ID, you are ready to vote. Be sure to bring your Photo ID with you to the polls.
- If you don’t have one of those photo IDs, you can help streamline your voting process by getting one before election day. You can get a free Photo ID from your county elections office or any DMV location.
- If you can’t get a Photo ID before election day, be sure to bring your non-photo voter registration card with you to the polls. This will allow you to sign an affidavit stating you had an impediment to obtaining a Photo ID. You can then vote a provisional ballot that will count, unless your affidavit is proven to be false.

For more information visit www.scvotes.org or Georgetown County’s Voter Registration and Elections Office web page at www.gtcounty.org/elections.

Residents may also stop by the office at 303 N. Hazard St., Georgetown, or call (843) 545-3339. Staff is happy to help answer your questions and make sure you’re ready for the Nov. 8 general election.

For those who aren’t registered to vote, the registration deadline to vote Nov. 8 has passed, but it’s still a good idea to register now for future elections.

"There are approximately 3 million registered voters in South Carolina, however, there are an additional 700,000 citizens who are eligible but not registered," said Marci Andino, executive director of the S.C. State Election Commission.

Any eligible citizen with a driver’s license or DMV ID card can register to vote online at scvotes.org. Voters can also download a mail-in voter registration application or register to vote at their county elections office, or at a number of state and local government agencies. The Georgetown County Elections Office is located at 303 N. Hazard St. in Georgetown.

Fall Scenes photo contest

Cooling temperatures. Changing colors. Football. Morning walks on nearly deserted beaches. Trick-or-treating with the kids. A family Thanksgiving in a beach house or on a farm. There are a million things to love about autumn in Georgetown County, and we want to see your favorite!

Submit your fall photos in our latest contest. Deadline for entries is Dec. 1, 2016. Send entries to jbroach@gtcounty.org.

Details and contest rules at www.gtcounty.org.

LEGGO Free Build is back!

Mondays, 3-5 p.m. at the Georgetown Library
For ages 4-13; Visit the children’s desk for info
Walt Ackerman
Continued from Front Page

$40,000, developing an employee of the month program to boost morale, standardizing a retirement recognition program and completing a $30 million building and renovation program on time and on budget.

Ackerman serves on the board of directors of the Black River United Way, is an assistant scoutmaster for Troop 300 in Georgetown and is a former Little League coach and Cub Master.

Ackerman’s ties to and familiarity with the community played into the decision to hire him for this position, said County Administrator Sel Hemingway.

“His experience in local government, specifically in a variety of departments that match well with the administrative services part of this position, was very appealing, as was his knowledge of the community, its residents and the other county directors,” Hemingway said.

Ackerman said he is excited to be returning to work in his home county. His wife, Lisa, is director of procurement and special projects for Georgetown County School District. They have a 13-year-old son, Andrew, who is a student at Georgetown Middle School.

Debris Pickup
Continued from Front Page

SCDOT’s contractors will prioritize debris removal based on which areas can be accessed safely for debris removal operations. In some areas, floodwaters and blocked roadways still prevent contractors from reaching debris.

Residents are asked to place any hurricane-related debris they would like removed in the public right-of-way (the area that extends from the street to the sidewalk, ditch, utility pole or easement). Residents should not place debris on the right-of-way if they have or will receive insurance funding to privately dispose of household debris covered by their insurance policy. SCDOT will only collect hurricane-related debris for which residents are not receiving insurance funding for private disposal.

For debris to be picked up, it must be separated into the categories listed above and must be unbagged (with the exception of waste in the household garbage category, which should be bagged). Other than household garbage, only loose debris will be collected. Residents should not place debris near a water meter vault, fire hydrant or any other above-ground utility, and should avoid placing it directly under power lines.

Contractors will make multiple passes through impacted areas. For more information, call (843) 545-3999.

Georgetown County Farmers Market

Find fresh produce, baked goods and more!

Saturdays
8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

at 122 Screven St.
in historic Georgetown

Ladies Stretching Classes at Beck Recreation Center

Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays
10:30-11:30 a.m.
Classes are $1
Walk-ins Welcome
2030 Church St., Georgetown

Join the party at the Murrells Inlet Community Center!

Tuesdays & Saturdays
10-11 a.m.

Zumba fitness classes customized with lower intensity moves for active older adults.

$3 per class.
Walk-ins welcome!
Eight Days of Hope still on track for mission to aid flood victims, despite approaching storm

Despite Hurricane Matthew, volunteers from around the country gathered in Georgetown and Williamsburg Counties Oct. 8-15 to repair homes damaged by last year’s historic flooding.

The group also took the opportunity to provide immediate response efforts, removing fallen trees and helping clear roadways and yards in addition to work previously scheduled.

Eight Days of Hope announced in July its plans for a relief trip to the Black River area, where more than 1,000 homes were damaged or destroyed during flooding from Hurricane Joaquin last October. The trip was scheduled around the storm’s one-year anniversary. There are still more than 750 flood-damaged homes in need of repair.

As of Oct. 13, Eight Days of Hope had worked in about 65 homes, not counting the dozens at which they removed trees after the hurricane.

“At some of these homes, we had 20-30 volunteers working because of the pre-existing conditions,” said Stephen Tybor III, president of Eight Days of Hope, the faith-based nonprofit behind the effort. “With that being said, our volunteers are having a blast.”

The effort had between 1,100-1,200 volunteers throughout the week. Tybor said he was astonished at the lack of cancellations as Hurricane Matthew loomed in the Atlantic. He said the total number of volunteer hours was 30,000 on Oct. 13. “We are doing all we can to finish as many projects as possible.”

“On behalf of the Winyah Bay Long Term Recovery Group, we can’t thank Eight Days of Hope enough for bringing renewed hope and awareness to our region one year after the disaster,” said Lucy Woodhouse, CEO of the Black River United Way. “We encourage residents from around our community to contribute however they can to this very special Eight Days of Hope.”

Since 2005, more than 16,700 Eight Days of Hope volunteers have helped to rebuild, remodel or refurbish 1,717 homes in six states on 11 different relief trips.

Flood victims receive temporary home

The first night spent in a ‘tiny house’ was the first in 11 months and 3 weeks spent in a safe, sanitary and secure home for one area couple. John and Georgiann Haselden of Hemingway were presented on Sept. 29 with a custom built 180-square foot house approved for temporary use while their home, damaged in last October’s historic flood, is repaired.

The tiny house was built and donated by Ben Kennedy and his company, Brighton Builders, of Bluffton. Building vendors and contractors contributed and donated to the project. The home is valued at about $55,000.

A three-time cancer survivor, Kennedy said he wanted to do something for others as he had benefitted from so much good will during his battles.

See “Donation,” Page 6
Moe’s Original barbecue sales to help deputy battling cancer

Moe’s Original Bar B Que will post its food truck at the Georgetown County Sheriff’s Office every Friday in October as part of a fundraiser for Lt. Denise King.

A long-time employee with the Sheriff’s Office, King was recently diagnosed with lung cancer. Moe’s will donate 50 percent of all proceeds raised by the food truck while it’s at the Sheriff’s Office to help pay for King’s medical expenses.

The Sheriff’s Office is located at 430 N. Fraser Street and the truck will be there from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Fridays. In addition to ordering directly from the Moe’s food truck, customers can call (843) 235-8008 to pre-order lunch or weekend tailgate packages.

Local team wins IFA redfish tournament

A pair of Georgetown men — Lin Fore, left, and Mike McDonald — won a $26,000 boat package, plus nearly $3,000 in prize money in the Inshore Fishing Association’s Redfish Tour, hosted by Georgetown County on Sept. 24. Fore also had the tournament’s biggest fish at 5.16 pounds. The tournament has taken place twice a year, in the spring and fall, at Georgetown County’s Carroll Ashmore Campbell Marine Complex for the last several years. The event attracts anglers from around the Southeast, but the County has also been working hard to encourage local anglers to participate. Fore and McDonald beat out more than 70 other teams for the top prize. The day after the Redfish Tour, the IFA Kayak Tour also took place in Georgetown. Twenty-five anglers were entered in that tournament. Georgetown County hopes to see the IFA Redfish and Kayak Tours back in 2017 for spring and fall tournaments.

Donation
Continued from Page 5

with cancer. He and his wife and their twins know how lucky they are and wanted to share those blessings with others, he said.

The tiny home is on loan to the Winyah Bay Long Term Recovery Group to be used as temporary housing for families displaced during repair work of their flooded home. Once the Haseldens’ home is repaired, the donated house will be used by another family whose home was damaged by the flood.

The first family to receive the home, the Haseldens, have lived in Hemingway for 25 years. John Jr., an army veteran, helped pay off the now damaged property to assist his elderly mother before she passed away. During the flood, the Haseldens’ home quickly soaked from both the ground up and water entering the home from the roof. Standing water was under their home for months. These factors ignited a number of additional issues throughout the property including: holes in the floor, black mold, and roof leaks throughout the home. At one point the floor was so unstable and soft from all of the extra moisture under the home that both their stove and bathtub fell through the property.

Find updates on Georgetown County at www.facebook.com/gtcountysc
Gone were the hulking metal walls and towers left along North Fraser Street when the Georgetown steel mill closed its doors for good a year ago. Instead, passing motorists had a clear view of a bustling waterfront district, featuring a town square, local retailers and restaurants, art galleries and even a university village.

It was certainly an attractive picture painted by the professionals that made up the panel sent last month to study the steel mill site and make a recommendation on how that and surrounding property should be developed.

After a presentation by the panel from the Urban Land Institute that lasted more than two hours, there were few questions from the audience that packed Winyah Auditorium on Sept. 23. There was instead a sense of excitement and an eagerness to begin taking the first steps toward achieving the panel’s vision.

“The real first next step is the formation of some structure, some organized group to start carrying the ball forward, and we started moving toward that immediately after the meeting on Sept. 23,” said Brian Tucker, Georgetown County’s economic development director.

“We have to get some of the stakeholders back together and debrief on what we heard and what we think needs to happen next.”

Efforts were set back by Hurricane Matthew and associated river flooding that occurred afterward. However, Tucker said he hopes to have all investors and stakeholders back together for an initial debriefing and meeting within the next month.

“We’ll start talking about the people who need to be involved, and take the ULI’s blueprint and start putting some definition to it,” Tucker said.

Simultaneously, a conversation with the broker for the steel mill property will begin, explaining the panel’s recommendation and that the City of Georgetown, Georgetown County and residents generally agree that the site is no longer viewed as suitable for industrial use.

While job creation in the county is still a priority, the ULI presentation confirmed the position of economic development officials — that there are numerous locations in the county that are much better
Waccamaw recreation center adds youth dance classes

The Waccamaw Regional Recreation Center is partnering with EMPressions Dance Studio to offer a variety of dance classes for youth ages 2-12 on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Classes offered include ballet and jazz technique, hip hop/jazz funk/tap combo, ballet/creative movement and musical theatre. For more information, contact Meghan Parker at empressionsdance@yahoo.com or (843) 997-1729.

Sign up for emergency alerts!

Don’t miss out on important information that could keep you and your family safe. Sign up to receive emergency alerts specific to your address from Georgetown County Emergency Management Division via email or phone. Sign up for this free service at www.gtcounty.org (look for the link near the top of our home page) or call (843) 545-3213.
Sanda Carter has called Georgetown County home for more than 30 years and, for the whole of that time, she has been an integral part of the county’s staff.

She joined the county staff in October of 1984 and has been an administrative assistant in the Building Department since 1994. When she started, she was the only administrative staff member in the building department, and later became the administrative supervisor when the staff started to grow.

As part of her job, Carter oversees all administrative functions of the department. This includes records, permitting and assisting the Building Official.

Boyd Johnson, director of the Planning and Building departments, described Carter as the department’s “go-to person.”

“She has tremendous knowledge of project statuses, permitting, and also has historical knowledge of projects and departmental processes not possessed by any other employee,” Johnson said.

Carter was born in Laurinburg, N.C. Her husband Edward is the manager of Silver Hill Plantation, which is part of old Friendfield Plantation. Her son Brian is currently studying computer technology. Outside of work, Carter said her hobbies include antique cars and fishing.
Steel mill
Continued from Page 7

suited to industrial use. The location of the steel mill site presents a unique opportunity to bring other types of employment opportunities to the county, including tech and education-focused jobs.

The panel made its recommendation after hearing from more than 850 members of the community. A final written report is expected in two to three months. Redevelopment of the site could serve as a “catalyst to restore multi-generational economic opportunities,” the panel said in its presentation. They said their vision for the site can “help recast Georgetown as a destination and provide elements that attract young professionals and the creative class.” They also said the No. 1 goal of the project vision is to generate high quality jobs by recasting an obsolete facility for the “new economy.” The plan additionally includes maintaining a working waterfront.

Actually owning the property isn’t necessary to control its future, the panel said definitively, reviewing a number of possibilities for consideration, including zoning changes. However, “the public sector must place the first stake in the ground,” according to the presentation.

While the whole of the panel’s vision is anticipated to take at least two decades to achieve, panel members were clear that there are important components of the overall vision that can be completed much sooner. Tucker said he has no doubt the City, County and other stakeholders are and will remain committed to the vision and seeing it through.

The primary difference between this plan and other plans created in the past is that “something is going to happen with this site regardless,” Tucker said. “It’s too good of a site in too good of a spot for it to just sit there, so we understand — the City, the County, Bunnelle, COG — all of those investors and stakeholders understand if we’re not proactive and if we don’t continue the pace and path we have now started, something is going to happen there anyway and it might be something we don’t like. We fully understand we can’t let that happen; we have to be a part of it. We can’t maintain the status quo in this instance.

“The tricky part,” he added, “will be getting into the details and minutiae of how things happen and the prioritization of resources. It’s not as if we have a lot of money laying around and not spoken for. The real test will be when it comes to deciding between allocating resources for this or other important items, like roads. That’s one reason why it’s important to have this group of stakeholders — this organizational structure — in place. They can help make sure those hard decisions get made when the time comes, because there will be representation from not one group, but all groups of stakeholders. We’ll all be joined at the hip to make the hard decisions together.”

Tucker said one of the next steps to be addressed will be environmental cleanup of the site. An application for a Brownfields grant was previously denied. The reasoning was that the project wasn’t far enough along. Tucker said leaders are in the process of reapplying. It is still unknown how extensive pollution at the site may be and what all will have to happen to make the site usable for other purposes.

View the complete ULI presentation at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b9_0mD_dfpA&app=desktop