Midway firefighter aids Hurricane Sandy relief efforts

“Unbelievable.” That’s the word Lt. Henry Hulit of Midway Fire Rescue uses to describe the week he spent aiding Hurricane Sandy victims in the Northeast. “You watch it on the news and it’s awful, but it’s impersonal,” Hulit said. “When your feet are actually on the ground there and you’re talking to people who were devastated by the storm, that’s a whole different thing.”

Hulit was in New York Nov. 3-15 as part of South Carolina’s Disaster Medical Assistance Team (SC-1 DMAT). He was stationed for most of that time at Nassau Community College in Garden City, N.Y., where he provided medical assistance in two shelters, including a nursing facility for the displaced elderly and invalid population. There were 80 patients there in need of constant care.

The other shelter he worked in was run by the American Red Cross and had 1,200 beds, of which 843 were occupied. Hulit was tasked with helping people get prescription medications they needed, stitching up injuries and tending patients with ailments such as asthma. But he was also a listening ear for many of those he encountered. He recalls his third night in New York, when he listened to a former Marine who was in tears because his home was destroyed by floodwaters. The man had just returned from two tours in Afghanistan only to find himself homeless, Hulit said. Another couple he talked with had been together 56 years. The storm claimed everything they owned except the clothes on their backs.

Celebrating the season

Looking for fun ways to celebrate the holiday season with your family? Here’s a list of upcoming, local holiday events.

Georgetown parade and tree lighting, 12/1
The annual Georgetown County Christmas Festival, sponsored by the Georgetown Business Association, starts with a holiday parade at 11:30 a.m. on Saturday, Dec. 1. The parade starts at East Bay Park and heads west down Front Street to Wood Street.

Calendar

Dec. 2 – Midway Fire Rescue 50th anniversary party, 2 p.m. The public is welcome.

Dec. 4 – Waccamaw Library “elegant tea” fundraiser, 2-4 p.m. at Carefree Catering. Tickets are $20. Seating is limited. Call 237-9208.

Dec. 8 – Yuletide Home Tour fundraiser for the Georgetown Library, 1-6 p.m. Call 545-3300.

Dec. 11 – County Council meeting, 5:30 p.m. in the old courthouse.

Dec. 24-26 and Jan. 1–County offices are closed.
Holiday
Continued from Page 1

The festivities continue with a tree lighting ceremony at Francis Marion Park on Front Street from 5-7 p.m. The ceremony will include groups singing Christmas carols and, of course, Santa will be on hand.

For more information or to join in the parade, call Prince George Framing, 527-8413.

Murrells Inlet parade, 12/2

The annual Murrells Inlet Christmas parade returns on Sunday, Dec. 2, at 3 p.m. As usual, this parade will feature floats and boats, and it’s all about the kids. After all, it’s kids who will be acting as judges and handing out prizes to entrants.

The parade starts at Booty’s on Willcox Avenue and travels south down Business 17, ending at the Brookwood Inn at Pendergrass Avenue. Spectators are asked to bring a canned food item for the Murrells Inlet Church of God Food Bank. Members of Girl Scout Troop 734 will walk the parade route to collect the canned goods.

Those participating in the parade are asked to bring an unwrapped toy for the Toys for Tots campaign. All toys collected will be distributed in Georgetown County.

For more information, call 357-2007.

Garden City tree lighting, 12/3

Garden City Beach will have its annual tree lighting at 5:30 p.m. on Dec. 3. The event has moved this year to the new parking lot across from the pier.

Lending a coastal flare to the festivities, a specially designated palmetto will serve as the community’s Christmas tree.

Santa will be on hand for the tree lighting and will be escorted in by members of the Garden City/Murrells Inlet Fire Department. Entertainment will be provided by Seaside Elementary School students.

Yuletide Tour of Homes, 12/8

The annual Yuletide Tour of Homes, a fundraiser for the Georgetown Library, is set for 1-6 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 8.

This year’s tour will feature six homes, five church sanctuaries and a recently refurbished house museum.

Tickets are $15 for Friends of the Library and $20 for all others. For more information, call 545-3303.

Andrews parade and tree lighting, 12/9

The Town of Andrews will have its annual tree lighting at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 6, at Town Hall. Its annual Christmas parade follows on Sunday, Dec. 9, at 3 p.m. Anyone interested in participating should call 264-8666 to sign up before Dec. 3. There is a $5 entry fee.

Plantersville parade, 12/25

The Plantersville community will have its annual Christmas parade on Christmas Day at 1 p.m. Line-up starts at noon at St. Paul AME Church. The parade ends at St. Paul Park. For information, call 213-8816 or 240-6283.

Nights of a Thousand Candles

Brookgreen Gardens’ annual festival returns. Come out Dec. 7, 8, 14, 15 or 20-22 to see the gardens lit. Tickets are $16 for adults. Call 235-6021.

Delegation to discuss upcoming legislative issues

The Georgetown County Chamber of Commerce will host its annual legislative breakfast from 8-9:30 a.m. on Dec. 7 at Lands End restaurant. Members of the county’s legislative delegation will be on hand to discuss issues to be addressed in the legislative session that begins in January.

The event is sponsored by the Coastal Carolinas Association of Realtors and is an event of the Chamber’s Governmental Affairs Committee. All proceeds go toward funding the Chamber’s Georgetown County Day at the Statehouse trip in February.

Cost to attend the breakfast is $15 for Chamber members and $25 for nonmembers. RSVP to Donna Mims, 546-8436, ext. 28, or register online at georgetowncountychamber.com.

Holiday Closings

Georgetown County offices and facilities will close for the Christmas holiday on Monday, Dec. 24, through Wednesday, Dec. 26. Offices will be open for regular hours on New Year’s Eve, but will be closed for New Year’s Day on Tuesday, Jan. 1.

The public is asked to keep these closings in mind when doing business with the county.

To see a list of future county holidays for the current fiscal year, visit our website, gtcounty.org. Or for more information, call 545-3006.

Get the Chronicle

At Georgetown County, we want our residents and visitors 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.
Holiday card contest winners

Three winners were selected from more than 380 entries in the county’s annual holiday card contest. The first place winning entry, at left, was drawn by Hayli Carlson and will be used as the county’s 2012 holiday card. Carlson is a senior at Waccamaw High School. The second place entry, above left, is by Jerwyane Davis, a sophomore at Carvers Bay High School. The third place entry was submitted by Alex Sanders, an eighth-grader at Waccamaw Middle School. The artists will be recognized by Georgetown County Council at the group’s next meeting, Dec. 11 at 5:30 p.m. in the old courthouse, located on Screven Street.

Join us...

for the Friends of the Waccamaw Library’s annual holiday book sale!

Thursday, Dec. 13
5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Friday, Dec. 14
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
at the Waccamaw Library

Fiction • Cookbooks • Children’s Books • Biographies • and Much More
Since Hurricane Sandy’s devastating landfall near Atlantic City, N.J., all eyes have been glued to the northeast. The nation watched as communities prepared for the storm, as its wrath claimed 185 lives and caused more than $52 billion in damage, and now as recovery efforts are under way. For many, it’s only after such a tragic event that their minds turn to the destruction Mother Nature can wreak and what that means for the people affected.

Yet for Georgetown County Emergency Management officials, that’s something at the forefront of their minds every single day, and they plan and prepare for every eventuality.

“All of our planning takes the all-hazards approach,” explained Sam Hodge, Georgetown County Emergency Manager. “We plan for hurricanes more than anything else, because that presents the greatest possibility for the biggest impact, but our emergency plan covers the full spectrum.”

That means hurricanes, tornadoes, flooding, tsunamis and wildfires, which are actually the county’s No. 1 hazard, and much more, according to Hodge.

“You really have to do it that way, because it’s impossible to plan for specific events,” Hodge said. “Who would have thought five years ago we would have to be worrying about sinkholes?”

The county’s expansive emergency plan covers everything from the details of debris removal after an emergency to the chain of command while emergency operations are in effect. The plan is updated annually and reviewed by the state Emergency Management Division. Earlier this year the plan received a full revision.

Every person who works in the county’s Emergency Operations Center has to pass a series of courses, and additional “refresher” courses are ongoing. An elaborate training exercise in January took about 75 local officials, including county and municipal employees, to Maryland for an integrated emergency management course offered by FEMA. It gave officials a chance to put Georgetown County’s emergency plans into action as they responded to a mock disaster — in that case a devastating hurricane that hit the county.

The exercise showed the county plan is a sound one, but Hodge and his staff are always looking to improve it. Part of that comes from observing real life disasters, such as Hurricane Sandy, and how communities deal with them.

“We always pay close attention to disasters in other places. We want to see what happens and how they handle it, so we can see what goes wrong and what goes right, and use it to improve our plan,” Hodge said.

Though hurricane season is done, Hodge reminds families that shouldn’t mean a lapse in preparedness at home. Families should always have an emergency supply kit ready and a family emergency plan that includes pets.

For more information, visit gtcounty.org/emergencyprep.
Hulit
Continued from Page 1

Georgetown County employees are raising money for the American Red Cross’ Hurricane Sandy Relief Fund. Donations can be made online to: http://american.redcross.org/georgetownpublic-emp.

and some prescription medication.

“It was nonstop like that for seven days,” Hulit said. “These people’s whole lives have been changed. Before, they got up, went to work and came home. Now, they wake up in a shelter, figure out which bus to take to get back to their house and how much time they have before the 5 o’clock curfew. They have to decide whether to get more groceries to bring back to the shelter or figure out how to wash their clothes in the time they have. Their lives are completely turned upside down.”

It was impossible for Hulit not to think about how easily his friends and neighbors back home could find themselves in a very similar position with the next hurricane season.

“It really hit home, the fact that it could happen to us,” Hulit said.

Hulit has been notified he may be recalled to New York with the S.C. Disaster Medical Assistance Team, but hasn’t received confirmation.

Community receives StormReady, TsunamiReady recognition

DeBordieu Colony, a gated community in Georgetown County, has been formally recognized as StormReady and TsunamiReady.

The distinction is due to the efforts of Georgetown County Emergency Management, community leadership and a strong partnership with the National Weather Service, said Sam Hodge, the county’s emergency manager.

Hodge, along with Steve Pfaff, warning coordination meteorologist with the National Weather Service, presented DeBordieu Colony board members with a recognition certificate and letter earlier this month. In addition, the community will be included in the growing StormReady and TsunamiReady national database. The recognition acknowledges the successful completion of multiple program guidelines, as well as the future planning and education initiatives that will continue as a result of these strong partnerships.

The StormReady and TsunamiReady programs were developed to help community leaders and emergency managers strengthen their local operations in regard to hazardous weather events and tsunamis. Although significant weather and tsunami threats are low for the area, when they do occur, potentially high impacts would result given the vulnerability of coastal communities. To better mitigate problems associated with hazardous weather and tsunamis, communities need to become better prepared and aware of potential threats.

The StormReady and TsunamiReady programs help communities become better prepared to save lives and property through enhanced planning, education, and awareness. Communities have fewer fatalities and property damage if they plan before a hazard arrives.

As of Nov. 16, there were 1,987 StormReady sites in 49 states across the nation. In addition, there were 123 TsunamiReady-recognized sites in 10 states.

Want to be a StormReady/TsunamiReady community?

Any community, school or business can participate in the StormReady and TsunamiReady programs. For more information about becoming StormReady and/or TsunamiReady, please contact Pfaff, steven.pfaff@noaa.gov, or Hodge, shodge@gtcounty.org.
Midway releases tips to avoid fires caused by Christmas trees

Each year, fire departments respond to an average of 210 structure fires caused by Christmas trees, according to Bob Beebe, spokesman for Midway Fire Rescue. Carefully decorating Christmas trees can help make the holidays safer, he added. Midway offers the following tips for avoiding fires caused by Christmas trees:

- Make sure the tree is at least three feet away from any heat source, including fireplaces, radiators, candles, heat vents or lights.
- Make sure the tree is not blocking an exit.
- Add water to the tree stand. Be sure to add water daily.
- Use lights that have the label of an independent testing laboratory. Some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use, but not both.
- Replace any string of lights that has worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Connect no more than three strands of mini string sets and a maximum of 50 bulbs for screw-in bulbs. Read manufacturer's instructions for number of LED strands to connect.
- Never use lit candles to decorate the tree.
- Always turn off Christmas tree lights before leaving home or going to bed.
- Get rid of the tree when it begins dropping needles. Dried-out trees are a fire danger and should not be left in the home or garage, or placed outside against the home.
- Bring outdoor electrical lights inside after the holidays to prevent hazards and make them last longer.

Midway Fire Rescue

50 Years of Outstanding Service

Come celebrate with us!

Midway Fire Rescue is turning 50 this year and the public is invited to join in the celebration. Hear stories about the department’s early days, look at pictures that show the department’s progress and reminisce with current and former staff and volunteers.

Date: Dec. 2, 2012
Time: 2 p.m.
Where: Midway Headquarters, 67 St. Pauls Plaza, Pawleys Island, SC 29585

Past and present staff and volunteers are asked to RSVP so they can be recognized. Call (843) 545-3620.
DeLuca receives state honor for mosquito control work

Eric DeLuca, an employee with Georgetown County Mosquito Control, was named state Technician of the Year at the annual S.C. Mosquito Control Association meeting last month.

The award is given based on consistent excellence in job performance, with efforts that go beyond expected duties; knowledge of mosquito biology; community service; positive attitude, enthusiasm and pride in work; and working well as part of a team on the job.

DeLuca, who has worked for the county since March 2010, was nominated for the award by his supervisor, Tim Chatman.

“He takes great pride in this work and takes responsibility in learning all that he can to help the citizens who rely on our service,” Chatman said of DeLuca. “His interaction with county residents is always done with a smile and useful information.”

He also called DeLuca a well-organized and reliable employee who completes all tasks assigned to him “in the most timely manner.”

In addition to performing inspections and scheduling truck sprays to keep the mosquito population under control, DeLuca visits elementary schools throughout the county, giving presentations on mosquitoes and the methods used to reduce their numbers, including gambusia fish. He is currently researching the effects of spring tides and their impact on salt marsh mosquitoes.

DeLuca has an associate’s degree in agriculture technology and a wildlife and resource conservation certificate. In addition to being licensed for commercial and non-commercial pesticides, he recently obtained certification as a S.C. erosion prevention and sediment control inspector as a result of the relationship between Georgetown County’s mosquito control

Public services employees recognized for excellence

Three employees in the Georgetown County Public Services department were recognized for outstanding performance this month.

Gary Davis, Harold West and Monroe Githens all received awards at a department function on Nov. 14.

Davis, facilities services supervisor, was named Public Services Employee of the Year. He is instrumental in the everyday operations of the Facility Services Division, said David Gantt, a manager Davis assisted on a special project. Davis can be relied on for efficient workflow, even during times when resources are thin or timeframes for completion are short.

“Gary is able to pull together materials and manpower, and knows how to get things done for the county,” Gantt said. “He is responsive while balancing the many needs. He also looks for ways for improvement, especially when it comes to use of tools and equipment.”

Harold West, an infrastructure inspector, received the Professional Achievement Award. His colleagues say he continually seeks to improve his skills and is known for persistence and hard work.

“Harold is a terrific employee that is always willing to take on a challenge,” said his supervisor, Malcolm Baldwin. “Harold took it on himself to pursue educational and training opportunities to prepare himself for advancement.”

That contributed to West’s recent promotion to his current position. He obtained certification from the state and completed numerous courses related to construction inspection and project management on his own time.

Since being promoted, he continues to accept new challenges and learn more about construction inspection and management, Baldwin said.

Monroe Githens, an area supervisor for Public Works, received the Customer Service Award.

“Monroe is the supervisor of one of the most challenging areas in the county. His area requires a considerable amount of face-to-face time with citizens,” Baldwin said. “Monroe meets this challenge in a timely and professional manner, treating with respect and courtesy all of the citizens he interacts with. He has a great spirit and represents the County well.”
Employee Updates

Nancy Silver of Wedgefield Plantation is Georgetown County’s new accounts payable supervisor. Her first day on the job was Nov. 5.

Prior to coming to work for the county, Silver worked at the Jamison Inn in Georgetown as assistant general manager. Before that, she worked in accounts receivable and payroll for NETA in Columbia.

Silver and her husband, Taylor, moved to Georgetown County three years ago, when Taylor, an attorney, took a job in Andrews.

Silver replaces Glenda Long of Andrews, who was recently promoted to grants and projects accountant.

Justin Blomdahl of Murrells Inlet recently joined Georgetown County Parks and Recreation as a community specialist.

Blomdahl is a recent graduate of Newberry College, where he earned a bachelors in physical education and leisure services. He was also a member of the Newberry College men’s soccer team for four years and team captain for two years.

He is the son of Todd and Suzan Blomdahl. Todd is fire marshal at Midway Fire Rescue and Suzan owns a perfume shop in Surfside Beach.

“I am very excited to be back in my hometown and looking forward to working with the community that I have grown up with,” Justin said.

Sidney Gray of Murrells Inlet was recently hired by Georgetown County Parks and Recreation as a youth sports and program specialist.

Gray is a graduate of South Carolina State University, where he earned a bachelor’s in physical activity/sports and leisure management. After graduation, he did active duty training and other work for the military. He is a 2nd lieutenant in the Army National Guard.

Gray said he loves sports and looks forward to contributing to the county’s recreation initiatives.

Gray’s family lives in Aiken, where his mother works at Savannah River Site and his dad is a supervisor at Hubbell Power Systems. He has a brother at South Carolina State who is on the baseball team there. Gray said one interesting thing folks might not know about him is he has an uncle who won a silver medal in the Olympics in 1992.

Anthony Maffei of Georgetown was recently hired as tournament and events coordinator for Georgetown County Parks and Recreation.

Maffei is a recent graduate of the University of Maine. Throughout college, he worked at the campus radio station, WMEB 91.9, out of Orono, Maine, where he was the voice of UMaine football and basketball for the 2011-12 seasons.

Maffei has a younger sister, who is a sophomore at Thomas College in Maine, and an older brother in the Air Force. His mom trains narcotics and explosive detection K-9s.

Please join us in welcoming these new employees.

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Waccamaw Regional Tennis Center
AT STABLES PARK

Usage Fees
(Per player, 1.5 maximum court time)

- Daily—$3
- Monthly—$30
- Individual yearly—$250
- Family yearly (2 adults)—$400
- Senior yearly (55 and up)—$200

Call 318-2265 for information.

* Kids 18 and under play for free. RSVP allowed two days in advance with yearly subscription. Yearly rates include USTA League fees.
Lt. Gov. visits Georgetown senior citizens

Lt. Gov. Glenn McConnell spent the morning of Nov. 28 delivering meals to senior citizens who receive senior services through Georgetown County. It was part of a tour he arranged to “put a face on” the needs of S.C. seniors.

The Office on Aging had its budget cut 48 percent in recent years and McConnell hopes to be able to get $5 million more in state funding next year. He got an additional $2 million this year.

It’s better for seniors and more cost efficient to provide services that allow them to stay at home rather than a care facility, he said.

Top: Lt. Gov. Glenn McConnell visits with Anna P. Wright, 91, of Georgetown, in her home on Nov. 28. Above: From left are McConnell, Georgetown County Council Chairman Johnny Morant and Council Members Austin Beard and Lillie Jean Johnson. They greeted McConnell during a visit to the Georgetown Senior Center. At left: McConnell and Lucille Josey, 84, of Georgetown.

Changes to Pawleys Plaza on hold

Second reading on an amendment to the Pawleys Island Plaza planned development has been deferred at the request of the applicant. Second reading is now set for Jan. 8.

First Thursday program hosts flute choir

First Thursday programs have started up again at the Waccamaw Library and this month’s will feature music from the Pawleys Island Flute Choir.

The program is Dec. 6 at 7 p.m. Admission is free and refreshments will be served.

With a holiday theme, the program will also feature a few other entertainers. The event is sponsored by the Friends of Waccamaw Library and presented by Murrells Inlet Community Theatre’s repertory troupe, Second Stage.

Mark your calendars for the Georgetown Friends of the Library Yuletide Home Tour

December 8, 2012
1 pm—6 pm

Explore some of the most elegant homes, churches & buildings in the Historic District, beautifully decorated for the season!

Tickets just $20 $15 for Friends members
Available at Georgetown and Waccamaw libraries.
‘Red Tails’ event a hit!

An event last month that honored original members of the Tuskegee Airmen attracted about 700 people to the Georgetown County Airport. The county was honored to have retired Lt.Cols. George Hardy and Hiram Mann, pictured at left, as the guests of honor. Attendees lined up to meet and get autographs from the original ‘Red Tails,’ as pictured below. At bottom left, Morgan Hinkleman opens the event with the National Anthem. See more photos at Facebook.com