Georgetown County Fire/EMS staff recently spent several days training with new thermal imaging equipment. The county bought seven thermal imaging cameras for Georgetown County Fire/EMS and another four for Midway Fire Rescue. The departments formed a joint committee to select the cameras and both have now put the new equipment in service.

The new cameras will help firefighters better perform their jobs in a safer manner, as the new equipment shows more detailed thermal images than what firefighters have been able to see in the past.

The cameras aid firefighters with a variety of tasks, including locating nonvisible fire in a structure prior to entering and while operating in a structure, and helping find people and animals inside burning buildings.

“The images on these are so detailed that you can actually see facial expressions,” said Lt. Wayne Hardee of Georgetown County Fire/EMS. “It’s like going from a VCR to Blu-Ray.”

The cameras are also easy to handle and can be quickly accessed or put away. Since they’re capable of recording still or video images, the cameras can also be helpful in fire investigations and future training.

“This is a huge leap forward in technology and capabilities that will make a difference to the community,” said Carr Gilmore, Midway battalion chief.

May 6 is opening day for new rec. center at Parkersville Park

A ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new Waccamaw Regional Recreation Center at Parkersville Park took place in April, and residents got an early look at the inside of the 26,000-square foot facility. The center is set to open at 8:30 a.m. Monday, May 6. See page 11 for more information. More photos are at facebook.com/gtcountysc.
New voter ID law will be in effect for elections in June

The Georgetown County Office of Elections and Voter Registration wishes to remind voters of new rules for providing photo ID at the polls.

Under new rules that took effect on Jan. 1 this year, all South Carolina voters will be asked to provide one of the following types of photo ID at their polling place:
- S.C. driver’s license,
- S.C. DMV identification card,
- S.C. voter registration card with a photo,
- Federal military ID, or
- U.S. passport.

Voters who already have one of the forms of ID above are ready to vote, but they need to be sure to bring their ID with them to their polling location. Voters who forget to bring their ID with them to vote may vote a provisional ballot that will count only if they show their photo ID to the county election commission prior to certification of the election.

Voters who don’t have a photo ID can make their voting experience as fast and easy as possible by getting one before voting.

Voters can get a free photo ID from their county voter registration office, located at 303 N. Hazard St., by providing their name, date of birth, and last four digits of their social security number. They may be required to update their voting information if their current information on file is not up-to-date. Office hours are Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Voters who can’t get a photo ID must bring their non-photo voter registration card (old card without photo) with them to the polls. They will be allowed to vote after signing an affidavit stating they have a reasonable impediment to obtaining photo ID.

The reasonable impediment could be a religious objection to being photographed, a disability, illness, work schedule, lack of transportation, family responsibilities, or any other obstacle the voter finds reasonable.

As voters who need photo ID make plans to obtain one, they should keep in mind that there are several elections coming up in Georgetown County this year.

Upcoming elections include:
- June 11, City of Georgetown Democratic Primary
- June 25, City of Georgetown Democratic Runoff (if necessary)
- Nov. 5, General Elections for the Town of Andrews, City of Georgetown and Town of Pawleys Island.

For more information, visit scvotes.org or call (843) 545-3339.

Get the Chronicle

In 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.
Departments to celebrate National EMS Week: ‘One mission. One team’

Georgetown County Fire/EMS and Midway Fire Rescue will celebrate National EMS Week this month by paying tribute to their employees.

National EMS Week is May 19-25 and this year’s theme is “One Mission. One Team.” The week is intended to bring local communities and medical personnel together to honor the dedication of those who provide day-to-day lifesaving services on medicine’s “front line.”

“The people who do these jobs put up with a lot and hardly ever get a thank you for it, and they don’t complain about it,” said Tony Hucks, assistant chief for County Fire/EMS. “They run all hours of the day and night, in all kinds of environments, and put themselves at risk to help the sick and injured. We feel like this is a perfect time to say we appreciate you and what you do.”

He referred to firefighters, paramedics and emergency medical technicians, but also included telecommunicators with 911, emergency physicians and nurses, and those that manage emergency medical services.

About 80 percent of the calls Midway responds to are medical calls, said Michael Morris, a Midway fire inspector.

The departments usually thank employees during this week with a meal, but Morris said it’s also common for members of the public to stop by during National EMS week to say their personal thanks. “Sometimes they’ll drop by the station with a little care package,” he said.

County Council passed a resolution at it’s last meeting in April in honor of National EMS week.

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READY-UP!
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE THE STORM HITS

Georgetown County Emergency Management

Hurricane Preparedness Workshops

June 3-7 • 6-7 p.m.
Free and open to the public

June 3 — Beck Recreation Center • June 4 — Murrells Inlet Community Center • June 5 — Waccamaw Regional Recreation Center • June 6 — N. Santee Community Center • June 7 — Plantersville Community Center

CALL 545-3273 FOR INFORMATION
911 communicator receives statewide award for performance

Adrienne Higgins of Georgetown County’s 911 Emergency Communications Center is EMS Telecommunicator of 2012 for the state of South Carolina.

The award was presented during the S.C. Emergency Medical Services annual symposium in Myrtle Beach.

Higgins, who has worked at the center since August 2010, was selected for the award due to her performance during an emergency call last July.

The call, received at 6:34 p.m. on July 17, 2012, involved an accident between a vehicle and a large passenger bus on Highway 17 in the Pawleys Island area. After an on-scene assessment, the incident was quickly determined to be a mass casualty event requiring the assistance of multiple agencies.

Higgins met the demands of multiple requests from the scene, while the communications center was undergoing a building remodel that meant she was not operating her usual computer-aided dispatching system.

Instead, she used old-fashioned phone lists, paper and pencil, and back-up radios to get her job done. She worked calmly and efficiently, keeping accurate records for each unit on scene, and ensuring there was no delay in transporting the victims to hospitals, according to Brent McClellan, Midway Fire Rescue battalion chief, who nominated Higgins for the award.

By the time the accident was cleaned up, Higgins had successfully communicated with four fire/EMS agencies and two private EMS services transporting 12 victims to three hospitals.

“By her actions on that day, she improved the quality of EMS to all those involved,” McClellan said.

Sheriff Lane Cribb, who oversees the center, was also impressed with Higgins’ actions.

“The 911 center is important to public safety and is the first response to all emergencies. The quality of their response determines the success of ensuring safety to those involved,” he explained. “Adrienne Higgins did an exemplary job and is an asset to the 911 center.”

Willingness to lend helping hand helps Ziegenhorn stand out

Keith Ziegenhorn, a firefighter/EMT with Georgetown County Fire/EMS, was chosen as the Emergency Services Employee of the Quarter for his outstanding service and willingness to go above and beyond in his job.

Ziegenhorn was nominated by his battalion chief, Ryan Allen, and was presented with a plaque on April 16 by County Administrator Sel Hemingway.

In his nomination letter, Allen called Ziegenhorn an asset to Georgetown County Fire/EMS in many ways.

“When new hires are brought on, Keith is always there to lend a helping hand,” Allen wrote. “Keith is always advancing himself with training and education to make him the best he can be for his fellow firefighters and the community.”

Ziegenhorn assisted with the making of several training props that are or will be in use to help with the training of other staff members. He recently applied and was accepted to be on the county technical rescue team. Additionally, Ziegenhorn recently took it upon himself to give back to those affected by burns when he organized a fundraiser to benefit the Medical University of South Carolina’s camp for child burn victims.

April marked Ziegenhorn’s two-year anniversary with County Fire/EMS.

Sheriff’s Office offers free women’s self-defense class

The Georgetown County Sheriff’s Office will offer a free self-defense class for women on Saturday, June 1.

The five-hour course will focus on basic self-defense skills and is an excellent opportunity for women to learn proactive techniques in protecting themselves and how to react should they find themselves in a situation where they’re threatened. Instructors will discuss useful tools for protection such as hand-to-hand self-defense, chemical sprays and the use of a Taser.

The lead instructor for the course will be Sgt. Chuck Weaver, who has extensive knowledge and more than 10 years of experience in self-defense tactics. There will also be at least two guest instructors.

An information packet offering detailed safety tips will be provided. There will be a five-question test at the end of the class and a certificate of completion will be issued.

Anyone interested in attending the class should call Donna Moeller at 436-6066 to reserve a space. The class starts at 9 a.m., with registration at 8:30 a.m. Lunch will be provided.
Make smart choices when installing smoke alarms

In an effort to reduce the number of fatalities in home fires, Midway Fire Rescue is recommending that homeowners make sure they have the appropriate number of working smoke alarms in their homes and that the alarms are properly installed for maximum efficiency.

“Smoke alarms have been proven to increase the chances of survival by giving residents additional time to get out of the house,” said Midway Chief Doug Eggiman. “However, many residents do not have the appropriate number of working smoke alarms in their home which leaves them unprotected. This is a major issue as the home is the place you are most likely to die in a fire as 85 percent of all fatal fires occur in a residence.”

Additionally, installing dual sensor ten-year lithium smoke alarms strategically enables residents to maximize the benefits of different alarm features and reduce nuisance alarms that can lead people to forgo protection.

“The most important thing is to ensure that there are working UL-listed smoke alarms on every floor of the home, in hallways, in living areas, inside bedrooms and outside of sleeping areas,” Eggiman said. UL (Underwriters Laboratories) is a safety consulting and certification company.

“It is also important to remember that smoke alarms do not last forever,” Eggiman said. “Smoke alarms should be replaced every 10 years and tested monthly.”

Midway Fire Rescue recommends replacing older battery-operated smoke alarms with 10-year lithium battery smoke alarms. Midway Fire Marshal Todd Blomdahl replaced the smoke alarms in his home a few years ago with this type of alarm.

“Almost every smoke alarm manufacturer recommends that you replace your smoke alarms every 10 years and when our smoke alarms were due for replacement, I took advantage of the new technology,” he said. “When you factor in the cost of annually replacing the batteries in your older alarms and combine that with the time and effort involved; installing 10-year lithium battery smoke alarms was a smart choice.”

For further assistance or guidance in installing or selecting a smoke alarm, contact Midway’s division of fire and life safety, (843) 545-3610.

Start of season presents safety challenges

By Brent McClellan

Tis the season.

Normally that’s an expression heard at Christmas time, but I thought I would use it in this article to remind everyone that the summer season is upon us.

It’s time for traffic to increase, hotels to fill up and restaurants to overflow; time for people to visit our beautiful beaches and walk the streets of Georgetown.

While this is great for the economy, we all know that this also brings stress and changed routines for our area.

For emergency services, the call volume increases and the types of calls tend to change. We find ourselves on the sand, in the water, or off the beaten path on a huge plantation providing the best care possible for our visitors.

For locals, our favorite beach spot may be more crowded than normal and even the back roads may be congested altering our travels.

With this increase and the changes involved, we must continue to act with safety in mind. Don’t get overwhelmed with the increased needs and place your safety in the backseat.

When you’re on the highway, protect yourself and those around you by being alert for others. When you’re on the beach, be extra cautious to your surroundings and keep an eye out for our visitors who may not be aware of rip currents or approaching storms. When you’re walking along a busy summer street, keep an eye out for traffic as visitors sometimes forget which way they should be going.

Tis the season for our area to flourish so be ready by keeping safety paramount.

Brent McClellan is a Midway Fire Rescue battalion chief.
When Georgetown County Council members implemented a long-range Capital Improvement Plan back in 2008, they promised to keep a close watch on the plan to ensure it would be flexible enough to meet changing needs of the community, as well as changes in revenue sources.

Council members performed their most recent review of the plan in February, and reflected on it further during a day-long goal setting workshop, in which they discussed their hopes for the county. As the plan was revisited, the process gave rise to concerns that some residents may have forgotten the origins of the plan, or perhaps in the case of recent additions to the county’s population, were never made aware of those origins.

Though the plan itself is still fairly new, the idea stretches back more than a decade to Visions, a countywide, citizen-driven effort launched in 2001 to address problems created by rapid and uneven growth in the county.

More than 350 county residents dedicated significant time and effort into crafting a vision for what the future of the county should look like. That vision included an improved road system, parks in all regions of the county where children could play and participate in sporting activities without an onerous commute, and projects that would generally improve the quality of life in all areas of the county.

In short, the county’s Capital Improvement Plan started with the public, and it’s to the public that the plan still belongs today.

There’s no question there are those in the county who will argue that statement. County officials heard from individual residents who take issue with this project or that one.

Libraries are relics to be consigned to antiquity, some have told us, while others claim parks will sit unused. Full parking lots during ball games and circulation numbers at our existing library branches prove otherwise.

There’s a significant component of our community that values these projects. Some of those folks are the same people who cried out for these improvements during the Visions process.

Others were not part of the process, but have embraced the projects, and more to come will likely be brought to our area, at least in part, because of what has been accomplished under the plan.

County officials have also heard from residents who see the value in libraries and parks, along with community enhancements, but all the same would prefer to see funds directed elsewhere. Projects in the plan are “wants” rather than “needs,” they’ve said.

One thing many don’t understand is it’s often simply not possible for funds designated for one project to be transferred to a project in another category or department. Take for example a recent suggestion that funds spent on a segment of Bike the Neck, a bicycle trail on Waccamaw Neck, would be better spent on salaries for law enforcement. Repurposing those funds isn’t an option for several reasons. First and foremost, Bike the Neck monies don’t really belong to the county. The Bike the Neck fund is maintained by the county on behalf of a nonprofit group that conducts fundraising activities specifically for the construction of bike paths on the Waccamaw Neck, along with grant funds obtained specifically for the project. The county can’t use dollars in the Bike the Neck fund for anything other than Bike the Neck, no matter how important that other project might be.

Similarly, a resident recently suggested using money designated for landscaping the median on Highway 17 in Litchfield to provide pay raises for firefighters. Those funds, too, come from private donations and other monies designated specifically for landscaping that section of roadway. The funds simply can’t be used for any other purpose.

Some restrictions are more stringent than others, but monies in the county budget are often restricted, especially in the case of grant funds or other special funds. If funds aren’t tied to a particular project, they may be reserved for a certain category of use, such as public education or parks.

If the county doesn’t use the funds in the specified manner, those funds are lost and/or there may be penalties.

Additionally, the county must be careful about how recurring costs are funded. Attempting to fund recurring costs with nonrecurring funds would create significant problems.

County officials are very aware that continuing to move ahead with the Capital Improvement Plan after the start of the recession was a controversial decision.

However, the county believes unequivocally that decision was the right one.

Forging ahead allowed the county to complete projects with maximum efficiency and return on investment by taking advantage of low land purchase and building costs, as well as the lowest interest rates seen in recent memory. At the same time those projects allowed the county to provide work for local contractors, engineers, architects and more during a difficult time.

The end result was that communities got the facilities residents had cried out for, and it was done for the lowest possible cost.

Had the Capital Improvement Plan been put on hold,
Library teens win national video contest—again!

With the help of the Georgetown Library, two local teens turned their favorite books into a riveting mini-movie, and won a national prize for the second time.

Wyatt Hester and Sean England Morris shot an action-packed, two-minute video called “Day of the Living Books,” which brought scenes from bestselling teen novels to life. The video was made for the Summer Collaborative Library Program, whose contest, “Beneath the Surface,” urged teens to make a video celebrating summer reading.

“Last year, we did ‘Night of the Living Library,’ and had so much fun, we thought we should do the prequel, ‘Day of the Living Books,’” said Hester. “We really enjoyed shooting on location around the county, especially at Hampton Plantation.”

The teens won a cash prize for themselves and $150 for the library’s summer reading program. Shelia Sullivan, children’s librarian, couldn’t be more pleased.

“Our summer reading program has events for kids and teens,” she said. “So our talented directors – and the scores of young actors – were helping to enhance their own summer events!”

Morris and Hester both acted in the film when they weren’t directing, and they are grateful to the parents, teachers and library staff who helped with makeup and scripting, especially Mrs. Caponiti at Georgetown Middle School, who had a great special effects idea.

“This was a team effort for sure,” said Morris. “Thanks to our actors: Dylan Visbaras, Gabriel Campbell, Darby Ewing, Brynn Jackson, Elizabeth Joyner, Abigail Padgett, Rowan Pelham, Alexander Pelham and Harrison Pelham.”

Watch the video at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jJjwJsz6n9g&feature=youtu.be

At top: Directors Wyatt Hester and Sean England Morris check a shot in between takes. Above: A scene from “Lord of the Rings” is shot.
Final part in science series explores cavemen and culinary bounty

The final part in the “Pushing the Limits” science series at the Georgetown Library is bound to be a delicious treat.

Like its predecessors, the program offers two mini-movies and a great discussion on mind-teasing science topics. But this one also has some amazing culinary delights to sample.

“We’re talking about Neanderthal peoples, as described in Jean Auel’s famous book series, and we’re also talking about young Charleston chef Sean Brock, who loves to cook with sustainable and hyper-local food sources,” said Heather Pelham, program organizer. “In honor of Chef Brock, we’re trying our hand at making great dishes using local heirloom produce.”

The hour-long program will be Friday, May 3, at 5:30 p.m. in the library’s auditorium. It is free, and as a gift for coming, attendees receive a book from one of the series’ featured authors.

“These programs have been so entertaining,” said Dwight McInvaill, Georgetown County library director. “We’ve talked about everything from global warming to demolition derbies, historic murder trials and sunken treasure. Now, it’s time to explore cavemen and canapes!”

At the last event, participants investigated the creation of Marconi’s wireless telegraph, a device which in 1910 allowed a ship captain to signal to shore when he discovered accused murderer Hawley Crippen aboard his vessel. The murder case itself has been kept alive through science: although Crippen was accused of burying the torso of his dead wife in their basement in 1909, the torso was exhumed in 2010 and subjected to DNA testing, using descendants of his dead wife’s sister for comparison. Not only did the DNA not match — the torso was determined to be male.

The Georgetown County Library is one of 20 public libraries nationwide chosen as a pilot site for the four-part series, which is sponsored by the National Science Foundation. “Pushing the Limits” brings together books and video featuring authors, scientists and everyday people who thrive on exploring the natural world. For more information, call the library, 545-3300.

Digital library takes center stage

Julie Warren, left, who is in charge of Georgetown County’s Digital Library, was interviewed in April by one of the nation’s best known and respected travel journalists, Peter Greenberg. Greenberg, right, is travel editor for CBS News and appears on “The Early Show.” Warren talked with Greenberg about what the digital library is and its relationship with the area’s history. The interview should air sometime this month. We’ll announce at facebook.com/gtcountysc when we’re notified of an air date.

Waccamaw Library schedules May children’s programs

Local author Tammy Appleton will be the special guest during a pre Mother’s Day story time at the Waccamaw Library on May 8.

Appleton will read her book, “Charlie’s Monster,” and kids will also participate in a Mother’s Day craft. Story times are every Wednesday at 10 a.m. for babies up to age 3 and at 10:30 a.m. for children ages 3-5.

Other story time themes this month include a bird-themed program on May 1, “Brothers and Sisters” on May 15 and “Growing Things” on May 22. The last program of the month, on May 29, will focus on colors.

Kids of all ages are invited to a “Spy Training Academy” at the library from 5-8 p.m. on May 3. Kids will enjoy games, challenges, refreshments and the original “Spy Kids” movie. Reservations are requested.

Additionally, the Manners Club meets at 10:30 a.m. May 4, when kids will review manners and etiquette and enjoy a pizza party.

For information, call 545-3623.
County helps Waccamaw 2nd graders celebrate Earth Day

Georgetown County Public Services staff helped second-graders at Waccamaw Elementary School celebrate Earth Day on April 22. Above: Tracy Jones, left, and Terri Davis of the county’s Stormwater Division, use a student volunteer and a plastic model of a town to teach about stormwater runoff. At right: Tim Chatman of the county’s Mosquito Control division uses a chart to show the many varieties of mosquitoes. He told kids how standing water affects the mosquito population.

Registration is open for Georgetown County Parks and Recreation Summer Camp!

Located at the Beck Recreation Center in Georgetown and Waccamaw Regional Recreation Center in Pawleys Island

Camps are June 10–Aug. 2, for ages 5-12 only
Cost is $45 per child per week (register and pay for all 8 weeks, get 1 free)
Camp features swimming, field trips, sports, arts and crafts, and more!

For information, call 545-3275 or 545-3532

Employee Updates

Georgetown County is pleased to welcome the following new employees:

Tara S. Causey of Murrells Inlet joined the Assessor’s office as an appraiser on April 1. She previously worked for Strickland Appraisal and Realty, where she was employed for six years. She is the daughter of Ron and Diane Strickland, and her father is a retired appraiser with Horry County. She graduated from Calvary Christian. She and her husband, Frank, have one daughter, Madalyn Grace, 1.

Taylor Bennett, Cory Pagano and Matt Williams have joined the Georgetown County Sheriff’s Office as deputies.

Bennett, a native of Johnsonville, is a graduate of Horry-Georgetown Technical College. She is engaged to be married to Danny Owens.

Pagano, a Georgetown native who lives in Hemingway, is also a graduate of Horry-Georgetown Technical College. He and his wife have a six-month-old son. His father is retired from the Georgetown County Sheriff’s Office.

Williams, a Murrells Inlet resident, is from Virginia. He graduated from St. James High School and shares his home with a great beagle named Oliver.

Please join us in welcoming these new employees.

Want more frequent updates about what's happening in Georgetown County?

Follow us on Twitter and Facebook!
Search for GtCountySC.
Farmers markets are open!

Farmers markets in Georgetown and Pawleys Island are open for the season. Vendors are selling, fresh, local produce and other products from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. on Saturdays at East Bay Park and on Wednesdays at Parkersville Park in front of the new Waccamaw Regional Recreation Center. Call 545-3333 for information.

Georgetown County Parks and Recreation is accepting registration for Co-ed Softball

Ages 18 and up.
Team registration only, no individual sign-up.
Captain’s meeting is June 5, season starts June 10.
Fee is based on the number of teams that sign up.

Call 545-3319 for information

Georgetown County Parks and Recreation is now offering ZUMBA®

Join the party at the Beck Recreation Center!
Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays 4-5 p.m.
For ages 13 and up
Cost is $7 per class

For information, call (843) 545-3275
Ceremonies open new Waccamaw rec. facilities

Clockwise from top: Participants in Georgetown County’s recreational baseball program assist with the ribbon-cutting at Stables Park on April 11; kids and adults check out the gymnasium at the new Waccamaw Regional Recreation Center; and Norman Reid of Parkersville celebrates the opening of the center at Parkersville Park.

Community welcomes park, recreation center

Waccamaw Neck residents had a lot to celebrate on April 11, as they gathered to join county officials and community leaders in opening two new recreation facilities in the area.

Ribbons were cut at the new Waccamaw Regional Recreation Center at Parkersville Park, and at Retreat Park, a baseball complex in Litchfield. Additionally, ground was broken on a new Murrells Inlet Community Center that same day. All three are part of the county’s Capital Improvement Plan.

Adult and children’s games are already being played at Retreat Park. Plans are to open the rec center on May 6. For more information about these facilities and programs, call 545-3275 or visit gtcounty.org.