The
Georgetown County Chronicle

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

Volume 1, Issue 1 September 2012

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Calendar

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

Sept. 20 – Planning Commission meeting, 5:30 p.m. in the Waccamaw High School Auditorium.

Sept. 25 – County Council meeting, 5:30 p.m. in the old courthouse.

If you have questions about this publication or its content, contact Jackie Broach, (843) 545-3164 or jbroach@gtcounty.org.

Mosquito Control staff keeps close eye on pests, health hazard

Rain was still falling at the Georgetown County Airport last week, but Tim Chatman called it "the calm before the storm."

For six years, Chatman has been supervisor of the county's Mosquito Control operation, housed at the airport, and he knows the blood-sucking pests probably better than anyone else in the county. He spends his days studying them and knows well the breeding and feeding habits of each of the 30-35 species found in Georgetown County.

"With all the rain we've had out there, we're anticipating a big increase in mosquito breeding in the next few days, as soon as this rain gets out of here," Chatman said. "But we're prepared. As the numbers increase, we'll have trucks running in certain areas, but we're also anticipating putting up some more planes."

Tim Chatman, Georgetown County Mosquito Control supervisor, works in the lab at his office.

The office normally has spray trucks loaded with pesticides rolling five nights a week during the season. Higher than normal volumes of mosquitos call for aerial spraying, a service for which the county has a contract with an outside vendor. Both are subject to the constraints of the weather. If the wind is too strong, it's raining or it's too hot, the pesticides won't be effective.

To determine which course of action is needed at a given time, Chatman and his small staff use trapping results, landing count rates and information from the public they receive through a service request line.

When the numbers increase over a certain threshold, we'll pull out the big guns," Chatman said. That means aerial spraying, which is reserved for higher population areas.

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Sales tax presentations available

Georgetown County voters will decide on Nov. 6 whether a proposed Capital Project Sales Tax will be implemented to help fund about $40 million worth of capital improvements.

Before they head to the polls, the county wants voters to understand the details of the one-cent sales tax and the projects it would fund. Those projects include dredging at the port, countywide road improvements and libraries.

A list of projects and frequently asked questions about the tax are posted on the county's website, www.gtcounty.org. County officials are also available to give presentations on the sales tax. For information, call 545-3164.

Get the Chronicle in your inbox

In an effort to keep Georgetown County residents and visitors informed about what's going on in their local government, we have introduced *The Georgetown County Chronicle*.

This monthly, online publication will be made available in

See "Chronicle," Page 2

Georgetown County officials accept the J. Mitchell Graham award. From left are County Council Members Austin Beard and Leona Miller, presenter Joseph Dill, Council Chairman Johnny Morant, Council Member Bob Anderson and County Administrator Sel Hemingway.

County takes honors for library project

A Georgetown County Library program garnered the county an honorable mention in the contest for the J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award last month.

The honor was for the library's innovative Powerful Investment Education program, which helped more than 2,000 people learn how to manage money more effectively.

"The primary focus of the program has been on youth and children," said Joseph B. Dill, who presented the award to County Council members Aug. 7 during the annual S.C. Association of Counties conference banquet.

The program had teens in the community digitally record living histories of residents who lived through the Great Depression, and children participated in filming a series of financial literacy public service announcements. Preschoolers learned basic money concepts.

"We're delighted that South Carolina recognizes the value of helping residents manage their money in smart ways during these trying economic times," said Library Director Dwight McInvaill.

Mosquitos

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With landing counts the threshold is 12-15 adult, biting mosquitos per minute. Other districts have much higher thresholds, Chatman said, he likes to take care of the problem before it becomes serious.

Georgetown County has five species of mosquitos that could carry West Nile and Chatman and his staff use traps to catch specimens for testing. The traps are set up in an area identified as a prime breeding ground for the virus.

The Mosquito Control operation in Georgetown County is small, with a staff of just four, but is one of the busiest in the state, falling behind only Charleston and Beaufort counties, Chatman said. The office has a tiny lab where staff uses microscopes to study mosquito specimens, looking for new species coming into the area. The lab is also where specimens of species known to carry West Nile virus are stored before being sent to Columbia for testing. So far, no mosquitos trapped in the county have tested positive, but the county is keeping a vigilant eye on the situation.

"Enemy No. 1" for the program is the Asian tiger mosquito. It's a container-bred variety, which means it's a problem in every area of the county – and probably every backyard.

Education is generally the best tactic for combatting that species.

"It's getting the homeowners to realize they can do a lot in protecting themselves and preventing a lot of the big mosquito problems just by emptying water from containers around their house – any container holding stagnant water. By eliminating these areas, we cut down on the number of mosquitos," he explained.

Chatman's office has also had success using gambusia, more commonly known as mosquitofish. They eat mosquito larvae from ponds and other water bodies, and are common in the county. Chatman keeps a supply in a tank outside his office to be introduced in certain areas if the fish aren't already present.

To request mosquito control service in Georgetown County:

Call 545-3615. Residents can also dial that number to request to be notified before mosquito spraying takes place in their area. For more information, visit www.gtcounty.org/mosquitocontrol

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the news section of our website, www.gtcounty.org, as well as through out Facebook page.

You can also have it sent to your inbox by signing up for our newsletter mailing list.

To sign up, send an e-mail with the subject line "newsletter" to jbroach@gtcounty.org.

The Chronicle will offer readers a behind the scenes look at county departments and offices, notify residents of ongoing and upcoming projects and programs, and include information about upcoming meetings, events and special programs.

DID YOU KNOW...

Georgetown County is now on Facebook and Twitter!

Look us up at Facebook.com/GtCountySC and on Twitter @GtCountySC.

Tournaments bring spending to county businesses

Impact is estimated more than $600,000

The end of July is always a busy time at the Jameson Inn in Georgetown, but during a recent softball tournament at Eight Oaks Park, "we turned away so many people it was ridiculous," said Ginger Pushia, the general manager.

The Jameson provided rooms for the Georgia Angels during the Dixie Youth Softball Angels and Darlings World Series. It took place at the park July 28 - Aug. 1 and attracted more than 3,000 spectators each day. Pushia said she has no doubt the tournament was a boon to the local economy.

Preliminary estimates from Georgetown County show she's right.

The World Series was one of two tournaments Georgetown County played host to in July. Visitors brought to Georgetown County by those tournaments contributed at least $600,000 to the local economy, an economic impact report states. The report was generated by the county's Department of Recreation and Community Services based on data collected by staff and a formula from the National Association of Sports Commissions.

The World Series resulted in direct spending of at least $371,340 by about 1,135 people who traveled to the county to watch the event, according to the report. An additional $74,922 was spent by 292 visiting event participants.

The week before, a Dixie Youth Baseball state championship tournament brought in at least $106,150 in revenue to the community through direct spending by event spectators. About 325 people traveled to the county to watch the tournament. There were also 135 visiting event participants who spent a total of $34,619. Collective attendance for the six-day event was more than 2,000.

The figures for the tournaments include about $153,000 in spending on food and beverages, $231,000 for lodgings and $92,200 in retail stores.

The estimates are based on extremely conservative numbers, so the actual economic impact is probably much higher, said Beth Goodale, county recreation director. Cost to the county for hosting the tournaments was covered entirely by sponsorships, admissions and concession stand revenue.

Eight Oaks Park as seen from above during a recent tournament.

Especially during the World Series, players and their families were visible in the community — shopping, buying gas and helping fill hotels and other lodgings in the City of Georgetown and on the Waccamaw Neck. The Quality Inn and Suites near the Georgetown harbor reported it was full during both tournaments. At Georgetown's Harbor House Inn, owner Meg Tarbox said there weren't any teams renting from her, but the inn was still full and she thinks it was probably related to the tournaments.

In addition to hotels, inns and motels, teams and their families rented beach houses and condos. Litchfield Beach Real Estate rented a number of properties as a result of the tournaments that wouldn't have been rented otherwise, said Sharon Abee, marketing and sales coordinator. She said she attributes about 10 percent of sales during that period to the tournaments.

"It helped us on weeks we were very close to being 100 percent to cross over that threshold," she said.

At Pawleys Island Realty, Matt Giltmier said at least five or six rentals were a result of tournaments. It might not sound like a lot, but "you equate that with an average week of $5,000 and you've got some large numbers there," he said.

Eight more softball and baseball tournaments are booked for Eight Oaks. The next is in September. The county also has seven soccer tournaments booked at Stables Park in Litchfield, which is slated to open this month. Those tournaments start in late October. Staff is also working to bring in lacrosse and tennis tournaments at Stables Park.

"I think we can do really well in winter and spring," Goodale said. "We realize lodging would be difficult, so we probably couldn't host tournaments during the busiest part of the season.

Economic benefit from tournaments was exactly what county officials hoped for when they approved building Eight Oaks and other tournament-level facilities throughout the county as part of a capital improvement plan. The facilities are much needed by local residents, but were also promoted as economic development projects.

A number of people brought to the county by the tournaments were first-time visitors. Some liked the area so much they stayed on for days after their team was eliminated. Hopes are their experience in Georgetown County will make it a future vacation or retirement destination for those families, Goodale said.

"The idea is for them to discover it, love it and come back," she said.

Georgetown County, South Carolina

County Government

Numbers to know

Animal Control, 546-0780
Assessor, 545-3014
Auditor, 545-3021
Clerk of Court, 545-3004
County Council, 545-3127
Coroner, 546-3056
Probate Judge, 545-3077
Sheriff, 545-5102
Treasurer, 545-3098

P.O. Box 421270
129 Screven Street
Georgetown, S.C. 29442-1270

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

Find us on the web!
www.gtcounty.org

PROGRESS UPDATE:

Pawleys Island area parks

Clockwise from top: The tennis center at Stables Park in Litchfield is nearly ready to open; fields at Stables park are almost ready for tournaments; and the recreation center at Parkersville Park is still under construction.

County employees recognized for innovation

Holley Causey and Malcolm Baldwin are the most recent recipients of the county's quarterly Innovation Award for county employees.

The award recognizes employees that develop and implement innovative ideas that increase the productivity and/or efficiency of the county's operations.

Causey, the county's risk manager, came up with a business incentive program designed to attract new businesses to the county. The program includes offering incentives to businesses, including free advertising on billboards and fence signs at regional parks, a year of free conference room space at the county's airport, a year of airport hangar space and free safety training for employees.

Baldwin, public works superintendent, devised a new asset management system for roads owned and maintained by the county.

The system was adopted by Public Services this year and includes a database of roads and a scoring system tailored to the unique conditions faced by coastal counties. Those conditions include high water tables and varying soil conditions. Implementation of the system helps the county track road conditions, plan repairs and budget future costs of maintenance.

Holley Causey, top right, and Malcolm Baldwin, above right, with County Administrator Sel Hemingway.