

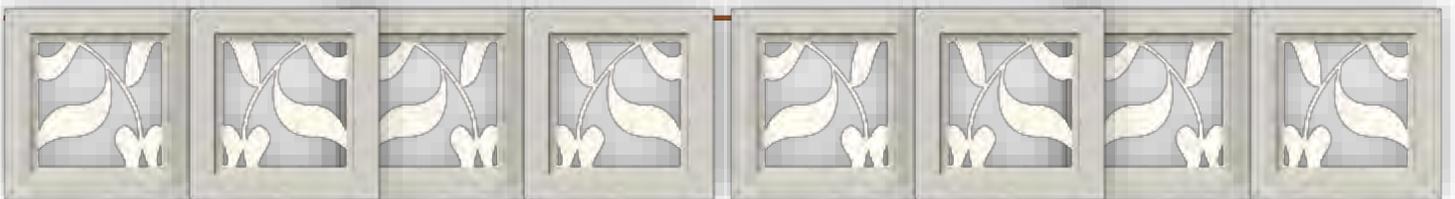
IN THE NEWS

March 2019

Parks & Recreation Programs
Frances Meadows Aquatic and Community Center
Gainesville Civic Center
Lake Lanier Olympic Center
City / County Issues
Miscellaneous



Gainesville Parks and Recreation Agency
830 Green Street
Gainesville, GA 30501



Ohioan named as parks and rec director finalist

BY MEGAN REED
mreed@gainesvilletimes.com

Gainesville's search for a new parks director to replace longtime retiring director Melvin Cooper has been narrowed down to one candidate.

Kate Mattison, recreation services administrator with the city of Dublin, Ohio's parks and recreation department, is the sole finalist to be the new director of Gainesville Parks and Recreation.

She has worked in Dublin for five years and previously worked in Gahanna, Ohio, for four years. Both cities are suburbs of Columbus.

"I have always been a crazy lover of the outdoors and parks," Mattison said.



Mattison

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3-1-19

PARKS

■ Continued from 1A

Mattison will be visiting Gainesville next week. She is the only candidate who will be brought in for a final interview with the Gainesville Parks and Recreation Board's executive committee, and an announcement will be made in the coming month about whether the position has been filled. The nationwide search began in November, and the city received 63 applications.

In her current role in Ohio, Mattison oversees aquatics, some programming and the Dublin Community Recreation Center, a 110,000-square-foot

facility with gyms, fitness equipment, swimming pools and a community theater.

Dublin has a slightly larger population than Gainesville. According to 2017 census estimates, Dublin has about 47,000 people, while Gainesville has around 40,000.

Mattison has a Bachelor of Science in sports management from Ohio University and a Master of Science in recreation, sport and tourism from the University of Illinois.

She first worked in sports marketing and sales but said she wanted more personal connections in her job, so she decided to enter the field of parks and recreation, she said.

While Mattison is an Ohio native, she has spent time in the Northeast

Georgia mountains and said she likes the area.

"The landscape that's there, and the mountains, and being so close to so many recreational opportunities — when I saw the position open up, and I have been to the area before, I knew it was such a great place," she said.

Cooper will be retiring in May after 47 years with Gainesville Parks and Recreation, and Mattison said she is anticipating meeting with him on her visit to Gainesville.

"It seems like it's already a really amazing department and program, and I look forward to meeting the current director and getting his thoughts before he retires," Mattison said. "He seems like a very well-respected, loved man in the community."

3-1-19

'I'm just humbled and I feel honored'



SCOTT ROGERS | The Times

Lakeview Academy assistant head of school John Simpson is the Gainesville Jaycees Young Man of the Year.

3-2-19

Jaycees Young Man of the Year imparts 'unusual kindness'

BY KELSEY RICHARDSON
krichardson@gainesvilletimes.com

John Simpson, who was born and raised in Gainesville, spends every day striving to impart "unusual kindness" on the community.

"I want to be a person of unusual kindness, and I want to have a church of unusual kindness," he said.

Simpson's positive influence over the citizens of Hall County hasn't gone unnoticed. He was honored as Gainesville's Jaycees Young Man of the Year on Feb. 21.

"I'm just humbled and I feel honored," Simpson said. "I get in my car every day and go to work, and I just do a little extra. That's what makes Gainesville so incredible is that other people do the same thing as I do, I was just the lucky one that got picked."

Simpson has impacted both members of Lanier Christian Church and students at Lakeview Academy in Gainesville for years.

Simpson said his father has served as the minister of Lanier Christian Church for 42 years. Recently becoming an ordained minister himself, Simpson has spent nine years preaching at the church.

He said he has enjoyed watching the

church start with a handful of people, and blossom into a service with more than 90 members.

Despite growing up as a preacher's son, Simpson said his father didn't inspire him to become a minister, but his love for the Lord.

Simpson's heart for others reaches beyond his church and into the school where he has worked at for 14 years.

He started off coaching cross country, football, basketball and baseball at Lakeview Academy for around six years, then took on an administrative role as the dean of students.

He later became the enrollment and external relations director, and is now the assistant head of the academy.

"I love the students, no question there, they're incredible," Simpson said. "I get to work with the greatest students in the world."

Simpson additionally encourages students and school staff through his role in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes of Hall County.

Since high school he has been active with the nonprofit, previously serving as a board member. He now volunteers with local coaches and sports athletes, inspiring them on their journey with Jesus Christ.

He serves as the chairman of the

Gainesville Parks and Recreation Board. Simpson said he is blessed to work with such an amazing group of people and holds the utmost respect for Melvin Cooper, the department's director who is set to retire after 47 years with the city on May 31.

While the Parks and Recreation Board helps launch a range of positive initiatives and projects in Gainesville, Simpson said he is most proud of their recent tribute to Cooper — the J. Melvin Cooper Youth Sports Complex.

The new facility plans to contain six baseball fields, batting cages, a playground and pavilion, trails and two fields usable for football, soccer or lacrosse.

Throughout his time preaching, teaching and volunteering, Simpson said he wouldn't have been as successful without the support of his parents, sister, wife and daughter. He also gives thanks to the citizens of Hall County for fostering a warm and welcoming community.

From Northeast Georgia Medical Center and the police department, to the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce and local restaurants, Simpson said he proud to call Gainesville his home.

"I'm so thankful for what other people do," he said. "The people are what make the city of Gainesville and Hall county what it is today. We're just so blessed."

Fixed Civic Center ballroom to reopen Saturday, March 9

BY KELSEY RICHARDSON
krichardson@gainesvilletimes.com

By Saturday, March 9 the ballroom in the Civic Center will reopen to the public.

"The repair itself is done," Melvin Cooper, Gainesville Parks and Recreation director said. "We're finishing it by replacing lights for the ballroom and putting the curtains back up. By the end of the week, everything will be good."

Gainesville Parks and Recreation originally closed the ballroom after Ron Arro, the department's operations manager, discovered a crack in the ceiling on Feb. 8.

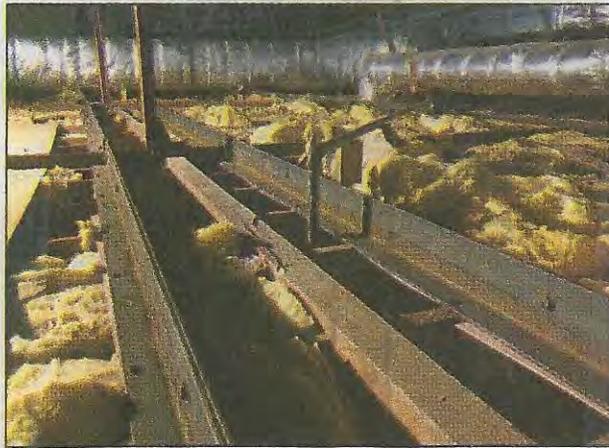
The abnormality was due to a damaged beam in the attic that supports the ceiling.

The issue was isolated to the ballroom, and had not affected the remainder of the Civic Center's operations.

Cooper said Northeast Georgia Consulting Engineers LLC provided the plans for the repair work. Carroll Daniel Construction Company installed two steel reinforcement beams, bringing the ballroom back to a structurally sound state.

Cooper said the repairs were recently examined

■ Please see **CIVIC, 4A**
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KELSEY RICHARDSON | The Times

The once cracked beam at the Civic Center has now been reinforced with two steel beams.

CIVIC

■ Continued from 1A

by the Gainesville Inspection Services Division, and deemed up to code.

He said the cost of the repairs wasn't as much as he anticipated, coming to \$23,209.

The events scheduled

for the time during the construction were either postponed or moved to another location. The 19th annual daddy daughter dances, which were originally set for late February, will take place March 26-29.

"People who registered for the daddy daughter dances have been patient and understanding," Cooper said.

3-6-19

City seeks to annex Olympic Park



The Times file photo

The city of Gainesville is asking Hall County's legislative delegation to approve annexing Lake Lanier Olympic Park in to the city so the city can take over the park's operations.

Gainesville proposes hotel tax increase to pay for improvements if legislative delegation approves deal

BY MEGAN REED
mreed@gainesvilletimes.com

The city of Gainesville is asking Hall County's legislative delegation to approve annexing Lake Lanier Olympic Park in to the city so the city can take over the park's operations.

Currently, the city and Hall County jointly operate the park, which has

hosted events such as the ICF World Dragon Boat Championships and was the site of rowing events for the 1996 Olympics.

Mayor Danny Dunagan said Tuesday that the city is willing to take on a greater role in park operations while the county steps back. The park must be annexed in to the city for the city to take on this role, and the state legis-

lature must approve that annexation, he said.

County spokeswoman Katie Crumley told The Times in an email: "Hall County is working with the City of Gainesville to do what is in the best interest of the future of the Lake Lanier Olympic Rowing venue, which

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■ Please see OLYMPIC, 4A

OLYMPIC

■ Continued from 1A

includes annexing the property into the City of Gainesville.

If the annexation is approved, Lake Lanier Olympic Park would become a city park. Dunagan said the Lake Lanier Olympic Park Foundation has developed a master plan that includes several updates to the park, which was built for the 1996 Olympics. The park is north of the city off Clarks Bridge Road.

To develop a funding source for capital improvements at the park, the city wants to increase the hotel and motel tax

rate from 6 to 8 percent, another change that will need approval from the Georgia General Assembly. Hall County's current rate is 5 percent, according to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. Other cities that have the 8 percent rate include Alpharetta, Atlanta, Dahlonega, Marietta and Cornelia.

The city has made about \$800,000 to \$900,000 from the hotel and motel tax annually for the past few years.

Dunagan said some projects officials hope could be completed at Lake Lanier Olympic Park include remodeling of the restrooms, a new pavilion and renovations of the boathouse. The park's boathouse has flooded this year due to heavy rains and could require other repairs, Dunagan said.

"The hotel motel tax increase would help these capital items happen," Dunagan said.

Plus, the park has a large economic impact that could continue to grow if more events are held there, Dunagan said.

"We're having all these colleges from the North and so visit here," he said. "We have been told many times in the past that it is the best place to row because it is all even ... We've got a lot of activity, and I think if we fix it up it will be the No. 1 rowing park in the nation."

The city is also asking Hall County's delegation to introduce legislation that would allow members of the Gainesville Redevelopment Authority to serve two consecutive terms.

3-6-19

Ballroom at Gainesville Civic Center will reopen Friday

By AccessWDUN Staff

Posted 10:30AM on Wednesday 6th March 2019 (1 hour ago)

After almost a month's worth of repairs, the Gainesville Civic Center ballroom is set to reopen to the public on Friday, March 8.

The Gainesville Parks and Recreation Department announced the closure of the ballroom on Feb. 11 after an inspection revealed the main support beam in the ceiling over the ballroom was damaged. The beam was part of the original 1946 construction of the historic Civic Center.

Construction crews installed two steel reinforcement beams at a cost of \$23,000, according to information from Gainesville Parks and Recreation officials.

The temporary closure of the ballroom did not impact other parts of the Civic Center building.



<http://accesswdun.com/article/2019/3/770415/ballroom-at-gainesville-civic-center-will-reopen-friday>

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Gainesville looks to annex Olympic Venue as Hall County considers stepping away

By [Marc Eggers](#) Anchor / Reporter

Posted 8:30PM on Tuesday 5th March 2019 (13 hours ago)

GAINESVILLE – The City of Gainesville hopes to take over sole management of the Lake Lanier Olympic Park and fund the consequent increased financial obligation with a 33% increase in the city's hotel/motel tax rate.

Gainesville Mayor Danny Dunagan made the announcement Tuesday evening at the city council meeting, explaining that a component of the plan involves annexing the park into the city. Both annexing the site and raising the hotel/motel tax require approval from the Georgia General Assembly.

"The City of Gainesville is requesting that the Gainesville/Hall County local delegation, along with the Georgia General Assembly, consider passing three separate pieces of local legislation," Dunagan announced.

(The third piece of legislation, not mentioned so far, is unrelated to the plan for the Olympic Park. It involves terms of service by members of the Georgia Redevelopment Authority.)

Dunagan said that Hall County expressed interest in withdrawing from their involvement with the park. "For many years the city and the county have jointly supported the operation."

But that will change if approved by the state. "The county prefers to step away from the park, the yearly operational support of the park, and the city is willing to take on a much greater role," Dunagan said.

Dunagan explained after the meeting that the county felt the park would function best under single leadership rather than having to report to two government agencies.

"However the park property must be annexed into the city for the city to take on this greater role. Because of the park's location the (state) legislature must approve this annexation."

City Manager Bryan Lackey said that talks had been ongoing with not only the county, but with the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, the Lake Lanier Olympic Park Foundation and the rowing clubs that use the facility on a regular basis.

Lackey said regarding the Corp, "They have to approve it as well - it is their property - but they have been agreeable through this process. We've had the lease with them for 25-years...they understand that the lease arrangement will change to just the city."

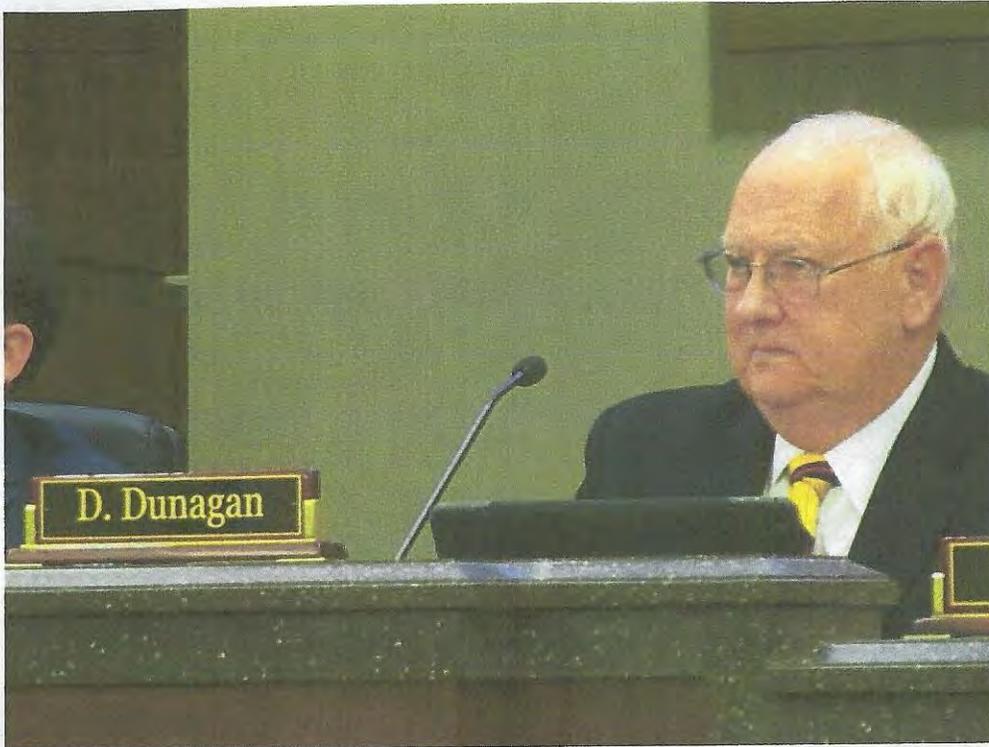
The current intergovernmental agreement between the city and the county has each contributing \$150,000 per year for park operations. If approved in Atlanta, the City of Gainesville will assume the entire obligation.

"Plus a little more," Dunagan would explain later. The Mayor said some improvements to the 23-year old boat house were needed as well as updating for several other areas of the park.

Dunagan said several communities not far from Gainesville had already increased their hotel/motel tax rate to 8-percent, and he felt this was the appropriate time for Gainesville to follow suit.

"Through these two pieces of legislation the city and the Lake Lanier Olympic Park Foundation are partnering to ensure the future of the Olympic legacy."

The General Assembly's last scheduled day of the 2019 session is April 2.

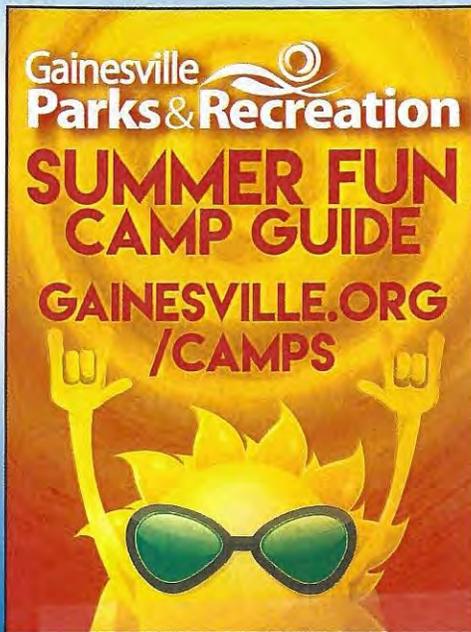


Gainesville Mayor Danny Dunagan makes announcement

<http://accesswdun.com/article/2019/3/770219/gainesville-looks-to-annex-olympic-venue-as-hall-county-considers-stepping-away>

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Summer Camp GUIDE



3-3-19

Job Fair

Wednesday, March 20

10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Gainesville Civic Center

Great opportunity for both employers and job seekers!

The Chamber's **Job Fair** on **Wednesday, March 20** from **10 am-2pm** is **Open to the Public** with **NO Entry Fee!** Employers meet hundreds of job candidates face-to-face during a short period of time. Job Seekers will spend coveted face-time with dozens of hiring managers. Presented by **Express Employment Professionals**, this community event features 60+ employer exhibitors. Complete job applications on site while making great business contacts and networking with companies that are hiring. **Limited Employer Booths available.** Promote your company while recruiting qualified employees. Meet hundreds of job seekers in one day. Exhibit information: Amanda Lewis, Project Manager, Economic Development, 770-532-6206 x 111. Email: alewis@ghcc.com. Exhibit Registration Online: GreaterHallChamber.com/events

No Entry Fee to the Job Fair!
- Open to the Public -

3-7-19

Upcoming Chamber Events

Tuesday, March 12
Small Business Seminar
7:45 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. | Chamber

Tuesday, March 12
Business After Hours
McGarity's Business Products
5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
870 Grove Street | Gainesville

Wednesday, March 13
Network Over Coffee
8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.
Kroger Market Place | Gainesville

Tuesday, March 19
South Hall Business Coalition
8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.
Oakwood City Hall

★ Wednesday, March 20
Job Fair & Career Fair
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Gainesville Civic Center

Thursday, March 21
Lunch 'n Learn
12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Milton Martin Toyota

Wednesday, March 27
Network Over Coffee
8:30 a.m. - 9:30 p.m.
McDonald's | Oakwood

★ Thursday, March 28
Chamber Board of Directors
12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. |
Gainesville Civic Center

Thursday, March 28
Chamber Chase 2019
6:00 p.m.
Riverside Military Academy

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March 2019

Thursday, March 7
Annual Transportation Forum
 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
 University of North Georgia

Friday, March 8
Economic Development Council
 7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. | Chamber

Tuesday, March 12
Small Business Seminar
 "Lean Principles for Business"
 Presented by **Bill Nusbaum, GT**
Enterprise Innovation Institute & Georgia
Manufacturing Extension Partnership
 7:45 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. | Chamber

Tuesday, March 12
Ambassadors Council
 3:45 p.m. - 4:45 p.m.
 2 Dog Cafe | Gainesville

Tuesday, March 12
Business After Hours
 Sponsor: **McGarity's Business Products**
 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
 870 Grove Street | Gainesville

Wednesday, March 13
Network Over Coffee
 8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.
 Kroger Market Place
 1931 Jesse Jewell Pkwy | Gainesville

Wednesday, March 13
Human Resources Council
 11:45 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
 Luna's Restaurant | Gainesville

Thursday, March 14
Career Path Fair
 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
 University of North Georgia Gainesville

Tuesday, March 19
South Hall Business Coalition
 Presented by **Stan Brown, City Manager,**
City of Oakwood
 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.
 Oakwood City Hall
 4035 Walnut Circle | Oakwood

Tuesday, March 19
Vision 2030 Board of Directors
 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. | Chamber

Wednesday, March 20
Issues Committee
 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. | Chamber

Wednesday, March 20
 ✦ **Job Fair & Career Fair**
 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
 Gainesville Civic Center

Thursday, March 21
Lunch 'n Learn
 Presentation by **Southern View Energy**
 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.
 Milton Martin Toyota

Thursday, March 21
Chamber Executive Committee
 12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. | Chamber

Friday, March 22
New Member Breakfast & Orientation
 Presented by **CHASE for Business**
 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.
 Lanier College & Career Academy
 2719 Tumbling Creek Road | Gainesville

Wednesday, March 27
Network Over Coffee
 8:30 a.m. - 9:30 p.m.
 McDonald's | Oakwood

Thursday, March 28
 ✦ **Chamber Board of Directors**
 12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.
 Gainesville Civic Center

Thursday, March 28
Chamber Chase & 2 Mile Wellness Walk
 6:00 p.m. - 5K Run
 6:10 p.m. - 2 Mile Wellness Walk
 7:00 p.m. - Award Presentations
 Riverside Military Academy

APRIL 2019

Tuesday, April 9
Small Business Seminar
 7:45 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. | Chamber

Tuesday, April 23
Marketing Workshop
 8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
 Brenau Downtown Center

Friday, April 26
40th Annual Hackers Holiday
 10:00 a.m. Shotgun Start
 Legacy on Lanier at Lanier Islands

Tuesday, April 30
South Hall Business Coalition
 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.
 Chicopee Woods Golf Course 3-7-19

Newton Florist Club hosting meeting on voter engagement, 2020 census prep

BY JOSHUA SILAVENT
 jsilavent@gainesvilletimes.com

Gainesville's Newtown Florist Club is hosting a dinner and conversation Thursday, March 7, to address multiracial coalition building.

It's part of the civil rights group's theme this year to encourage Gainesville and Hall County residents to "stand up, speak out, be active and participate in community life."

The public is invited to a discussion on voter engagement activities and preparations for the 2020 census, and the Florist Club is sponsoring the event in partnership with the Georgia Association of Latino Elected Officials and Georgia Mountain Unitarian Universalist Church Faith in Action.

This meeting comes on the heels of a Florist Club event on Monday, March 4, with members of the Gainesville Police Department about increased patrols along Park Hill Drive following a string of crimes in the area this year, including the shooting of a prominent businessman outside a CVS Pharmacy and an armed robbery at a Texaco gas station.

Voter engagement and the 2020 census

What: Meeting on multiracial community coalition building

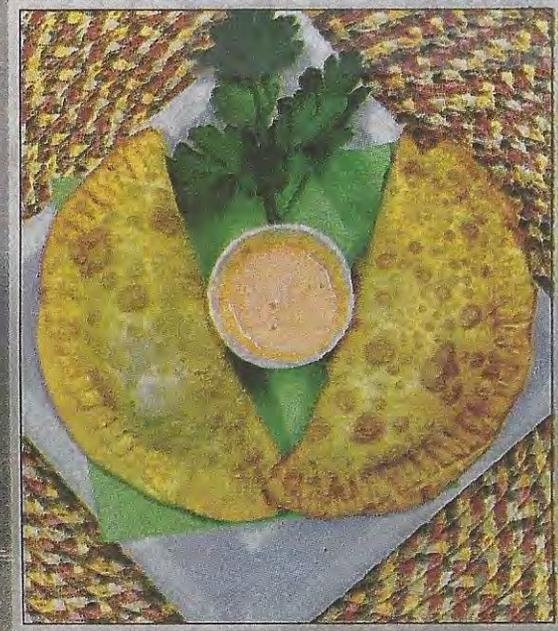
When: 5:30-6 p.m. dinner, 6-8 p.m. discussion, today.

Where: Fair Street Neighborhood Center, 715 Fair St., Gainesville

More Info: Newtown Florist Club, 770-718-1343 or newtown193@gmail.com

3-7-19

Food Truck Fridays are returning to Lake Lanier



March 15 marks beginning of 2019 season

BY LAYNE SALIBA
lsaliba@gainesvilletimes.com

Food Truck Fridays are coming back to Lake Lanier Olympic Park next week.

The park is starting up its 2019 season of Food Truck Fridays on the Lake at 5 p.m. Friday, March 15. The event will run once a month through September and feature a long list of food trucks for you to choose from, live music and plenty of people to interact with.

Dannella Burnett, one of the organizers for the event, said they average more than 1,000 people each month.

"It's just a ton of fun to come out and enjoy," Burnett said. "It's just grown. We

have several food trucks that are staples, and they love this event, but we always like to have the variety."

This month at the event, you'll find: Alice n Jacks Rib Shack, serving barbecue meats and pulled pork nachos; Cabaki's Catering, serving burgers, hot dogs and appetizers; Taquiza Mexican Restaurant, serving nachos, fajitas and tacos; OBA! Brazilian Cuisine, serving grilled kabobs and empanadas; Around the Block Cheesesteaks, serving different kinds of cheesesteaks; Gekko Sushi and Hibachi Truck, serving sushi rolls, bowls and bento boxes; Ray's Wings and Things, serving wings, chicken sandwiches and burgers; Hole in the Wall, serving jerk chicken, fish and shrimp

and chicken and waffles; Sweet G's Mini Donuts, serving an array of flavored doughnuts; Pretty Smooth Smoothies, serving all-natural, vegan smoothies and lemonade; Juke N Jive Creamery, serving ice cream.

Tap It will have its beer trailer at the event, serving beer and wine, too.

One of those staples at the event is OBA! Brazilian Cuisine. Co-owner Kathleen Canavan-Lima said they had a good turnout at each event last year, so she's excited for this year.

"People seem to love our food," Canavan-Lima said. "I think they like the experience of seeing food being grilled in front of them. The aroma itself calls people over, so that's helped us out a lot. And we're unique. We're not something people are accustomed to."

The location of the event — overlooking Lake Lanier — is an added bonus. Canavan-Lima said that's what makes the Food Truck Fridays on the Lake event unique and something everyone in the area should try.

"It's a beautiful area," Canavan-Lima said. "You have this beautiful lake that I'm so glad we're taking advantage of. There's seating for everyone and you can sit down, listen to the live music and enjoy a meal right by the lake."

Burnett said as long as reactions like that keep coming in, the event will continue for years to come.

"As long as people are enjoying it and they're coming out, seeing the park, seeing the lake, we can continue letting the event grow," Burnett said.

Photos by SCOTT ROGERS | The Times

Food Truck Fridays return March 15 to the Lake Lanier Olympic Park on Clarks Bridge Road. Inset: OBA Brazilian-Cuisine offers empanadas from its food truck.

3-7-19

Delegation backs Olympic Park takeover

Hall lawmakers to push annexation vote, increase in hotel-motel tax for funding

BY JOSHUA SILAVENT

jsilavent@gainesvilletimes.com

State lawmakers from Gainesville are supporting a plan for the city to assume full operational control of Lake Lanier Olympic Park.

And, so too, is the nonprofit Gainesville-Hall '96, which has developed a master plan for the venue and managed renovations in recent years.

But it will require a tax hike from the General Assembly in the last days of the 2019 session to make the change.

The plans have another "monkey wrench" in them, too, said

Rep. Lee Hawkins, R-Gainesville. The property has to be annexed from the county into the city, which also requires legislative approval.

Originally built as a canoe, kayak, and rowing venue for the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, the park is located north of the city off Clarks Bridge Road.

The venue has taken on a second life since 2014 when the nonprofit Gainesville-Hall '96 developed a master plan for the park and began long overdue renovations.

The nonprofit also began



Lynch

recruiting new events, such as national regattas, and has been the site of the ICF World Dragon Boat Championships.

The city and county have jointly funded some operations at the park, about \$150,000 each annually, but county officials have been cautious about

their long-term involvement in plans for the venue.

"The county really has some other priorities at this point," said Robyn Lynch, executive director of the Olympic Park.

Gainesville Councilman Sam

Couvillon said that he wished the park operated self-sufficiently, but that it's not a reality despite its storied history and legacy.

And that's why city officials plan to target an increase in the hotel-motel tax as a dedicated funding stream if and when it's absorbed by the parks and recreation department.

"I do see the value in it," Couvillon said. "We've been committed to them."

Lynch said she and the Gainesville-Hall '96 leadership is "very supportive of (Gainesville's) deci-



Couvillon

sion and very thankful."

Legislators from Hall County said they hope to raise the hotel-motel tax in Gainesville to 8 percent from 6 percent to provide a funding stream for the park.

The city has made about \$800,000 to \$900,000 from the hotel and motel tax

annually for the past few years.

Thursday, March 7, is Cross-over Day in the General Assembly, meaning a bill has to pass one chamber to be taken up in the

■ Please see OLYMPIC, 10A

3-7-19

OLYMPIC

■ Continued from 1A

other before the year is out.

But since the changes Gainesville seeks are deemed "local legislation," state Rep. Lee Hawkins, R-Gainesville, said he can bring that for a vote at any time.

Hawkins said he is confident the changes will be approved and that discussions about it have been ongoing.

Rep. Emory Dunahoo, R-Gainesville, said he supported local legislation to move the park under Gainesville's control and raise the hotel-motel tax, as did Rep. Matt Dubnik, R-Gainesville.

"I'm supportive and our delegation will pursue this," Dubnik added.

Between July 2017 and June 2018, the Olympic Park had about \$4 million in economic impact, though this figure did not include

proceeds from the dragon boat championships, one of the most popular events held at the venue.

Lynch said 250,000 people visit the venue each year, including 3,000 athletes from across the country during two regattas.

"It's a great venue," Hawkins said. "It brings a lot of business."

The city of Gainesville seeks to annex the venue property from Hall County and the tax hike would support operations and potential renovations to the Olympic Park, including new restrooms, a pavilion and repairs to the boathouse that flooded this year due to heavy rains.

Gainesville-Hall '96 would assist in fundraising and programming, as it moves away from management operations, Lynch said, but the nonprofit will also remain an advisory council to the city's parks and recreation department.



Dunahoo



Hawkins



Dubnik

"It's a huge stepping stone to get started," Lynch said of the city's investment, "but there are extra projects that might not be a top priority for the city but could be for Gainesville-Hall '96."

"Both Hall County and the city of Gainesville have been important strategic partners since we reconstituted the GH'96 board of directors," said Mimi Collins, board chair. "They have supported GH'96 in centralizing the management of the park since 2014 and have supported us strategically and operation-

ally. As a result of this support, we have been able to invest in professional management of the park and have made significant capital improvements through public and private partners. Hall County will continue to be a partner with the park as we move forward. This transition with the city will allow the operations of the park to be managed by one

central entity and also allow GH'96 to focus on continued fundraising and capital investment the Olympic Park and ongoing economic development opportunities that benefits all our community."

3 7-19

Gold on the Greenway back for second year

BY LAYNE SALIBA

lsaliba@gainesvilletimes.com

Gold on the Greenway is coming back after a successful first year that raised almost \$140,000 for childhood cancer research.

The event at 4 p.m. March 16 on the Midtown Greenway will feature music from The Dave Matthews Tribute Band, The Ryan Casper Band and The Allen

Nivens Band. There will be plenty of food from Hop's Kitchen, Johnny's Barbecue, Carniceria Tapatia and Frozen Frenzee and drinks from Tap It. Tickets are \$25 and can be purchased online in advance or at the entrance on the day of the event.

"After last year's turnout and how great the event went, I don't doubt for a second we'll exceed our numbers from last year,"

said Molly Johnson, whose family helps organize the event that benefits the Rally Foundation.

Truth be told, Johnson wishes her family never would have had to be a part of the event in the first place. Her son, Riley, 8, was diagnosed with leukemia in 2016 and has been fighting the disease since.

Now, he's about three months away from the end of his treat-

ment, which means he'll no longer have to receive chemotherapy. It wasn't until last year that Johnson said her family finally felt like they had their feet on the ground and could start thinking of ways to give back and help other families who may go through the same thing.

"We kind of got through the whirlwind of the initial diagnosis and then the intense treatment

our son was going through," Johnson said. "Those first two years were really hard and by the time 2018 came around, we could catch our breath a little bit and we could see the light at the end ... and had a little bit of extra wind in us — a little bit of motivation."

Hearing the news that Riley had leukemia was tough. But as

■ Please see GOLD, 3D



Photo courtesy Adam Hicks | For The Times

Gold on the Greenway, pictured March 2018, is coming back for a second year after raising almost \$140,000 to support childhood cancer research in 2018.

GOLD

■ Continued from 1D

the dust settled, the Johnsons found a purpose in finding ways to support other families, many of which live in the area.

"You never expect to be given that news," Johnson said. "But once you are, you're automatically part of this group of cancer families. And unfortunately, in our community, there is a large number of kids fighting cancer."

Through Gold on the Greenway, Johnson hopes to make it easier for families that will be given the same news her family was.

"We were able to fund fully on our own three research programs toward childhood cancer," Johnson said of the money raised last year. "That's huge. That's awesome. That helps somebody else's kid down the road when they're diagnosed to maybe have a better outcome."

And it's not only about the children that will be diagnosed with cancer in the future. The event is for the ones who are currently living that reality.

Quite a few families are behind the event — some with children who have cancer, others just friends and family — helping plan everything that makes it happen.

Organizing families

The Johnson family: J.R. and Molly with son Riley

The Rock family: Marcus and Josie with son Asher

The Bales family: Andy and Holly with daughter Addi

The Ligon family: Rusty and Carol Ann with son Eli

The Allgood family: Zach and Courtney with daughter Brecklynn

The Wages family: Chris and Christine with son Tyler

The Price family: Jeff and Lisa with Daughter Lilliana

The Gossling family: Michael and June with son Grant

The Greene family: Chris and Brannan with son Max

The England family: Tommy and Amy with son Luke

The Powell family: Rob and Emily with son Henry

And those children that do have some form of childhood cancer show up at Gold on the Greenway.

"They're going through a serious fight," Johnson said. "For them to see their town and their friends come out in honor of them, it also gives them a little extra push in their fight to keep going and that's huge."

3-10-19

Job Fair

Wednesday, March 20

10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Gainesville Civic Center



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| Carroll Daniel Construction | Goodwill of North Georgia | Massey Services Inc | The Sherwin-Williams Company |
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GreaterHallChamber.com 3-13-19

Chamber to host job fair, career expo March 20

BY KELSEY RICHARDSON
krichardson@gainesvilletimes.com

Whether someone is looking for a job or needs help tweaking their resume, people can take the next step in their job pursuit during the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce's annual job fair and career expo on Wednesday, March 20.

The event takes place in the Civic Center on 830 Green St. NW in Gainesville from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and is free to the public.

The Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce, Georgia Department of Labor, Lanier Technical College and Gainesville Area Employer Committee are coordinating the job fair and career expo.

Kit Dunlap, the president of Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce, said the event will have more than 70 employers staffing booths, 95 percent of which are hiring.

Annual job fair and career expo

What: Event for job hunters and employers seeking to hire

When: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Wednesday, March 20

Where: Civic Center, 830 Green St. NW, Gainesville

Contact: 770-532-6206 or alews@ghcc.com

3-14-19

"This is not a come-out-and-see-what-we-do type of event. They're actually wanting workers and hiring," Dunlap said. "They're looking for employees, whether fresh out of school, wanting to change jobs or temporarily unemployed."

Some of the companies, organizations and businesses participating on Wednesday include Carroll Daniel Construction, City of Gainesville Water Department, CMS Industrial Technologies, Foundation Food Group and Northside Hospital.

Dunlap said that attendees should be prepared to meet employers face-to-face and even compete their job applications on-site.

The WorkSource Georgia Mountains Career Coach will park outside of the Civic Center.

Micah Thomas, Mobile Training Unit instructor of WorkSource, said the Career Coach is a large van that supplies a "one-stop shop."

"We bring the Career Coach to different places and job fairs to help provide services related to resume writing, reviewing and critiquing applications and providing information about companies hiring," Thomas said.

The mobile unit travels around Northeast Georgia, and offers a list of available jobs found within the area it visits.

Thomas said people can also apply for WorkSource grants, which give funding for those wanting to go back to college. He said the grants contribute more than tuition assistance. If eligible, applicants can receive income for child care and gas to and from school.

"A lot of times people looking for jobs don't know where to go or who to turn to," he said. "We provide encouragement and schooling if that needs to be an option for them."

Dunlap said the job fair first started in 2007 because of the need for workers in the community. She invites Hall County residents to attend the event and look at all the opportunities available.

"We hope it's a service to the community and not only to the manufacturing companies, but to all businesses," she said. "Hopefully we'll have a big turnout of folks looking for jobs."

3-14-19

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| Carter's OshKosh B'gosh Skip Hop | Hall County Government | McDonald's | United Talent |
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GreaterHallChamber.com 3-14-19

Gainesville Parks and Rec looks to increase its budget for FY2020

By [Marc Eggers](#) Anchor / Reporter

Posted 3:41PM on Thursday 14th March 2019 (1 hour ago)

GAINESVILLE – As the population of Gainesville grows so does the demand for recreational opportunity. That message was clear Thursday morning as the Parks and Recreation Department budget for fiscal year 2020 was presented to the Gainesville City Council.

“If there is any indication from the maintenance that we’re handling in the parks, our parks are being loved to death,” said Michael Graham, Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation for Gainesville.

Alongside Graham sat Melvin Cooper, longtime Director for Parks and Rec. Thursday morning would be Cooper’s final budget presentation as [he officially retires June 1 after 47 years](#) with the department.

(The search team working to fill Cooper’s position has announced [one finalist for the opening: Kate Mattison of Dublin, Ohio](#). Mattison’s hiring is pending board approval.)

“Looking at the numbers,” Graham told council members, “the FY20 budget right now totals \$5,791,258. It is balanced; it represents an overall increase of almost 10-percent over FY19.”

Graham said projects at the Lake Lanier Olympic Center, the new skate park, and additional personnel represent the largest share of the budget increase, but the more commonplace items are not being overlooked.

Upgrading and enhancing existing parks remains a primary goal of the department. “We launched implementation of the new park signage and new outdoor fitness equipment. Every time we’re looking at a new playground or replacing an existing playground, then we’re putting fitness equipment in at the same time.”

“Then when the parents or the grandparents bring the kids to the playground they can jump on some fitness equipment at the same time,” Graham added.

However staffing was a constant problem in 2018 according to Graham. “Literally the workload is starting to exceed the staff that we have,” he explained, saying new staff people were being hired to better handle the heavier demands.

Graham said a recent online community survey revealed some of the major concerns and suggestions that are forefront to park users: for example, bathroom facilities - costly additions to any park. “People want restrooms in every park; that’s something that we do not have.”

Because the millage rate for the Gainesville Parks and Rec Department is rigidly fixed, finding additional revenues can be a challenge. That should not be the case this year, according to Graham, because the tax base upon which revenues are generated has increased by over 11-percent.

Gainesville Parks and Rec looks to increase its budget for FY2020 | AccessWDUN.com
 (The Parks and Recreation millage rate is unique, having been established by the voters of Gainesville in 1924. In that voter-approved referendum the Parks and Recreation millage rate cannot drop below 0.75-mils.)

Both Graham and Cooper pointed out to the council that the Parks and Rec Department does more than just spend money – it generates revenue, as well.

“If you notice,” Graham said, pointing at the budget report displayed overhead for the city council, “Lanier Point Park only brings in \$139,000 in revenue, but it brings in almost \$4-million in economic impact. And you’re going to see the same thing with Lake Lanier Olympic Park, even though it only brings in \$74,000 in direct revenue, currently it brings in \$3.9-million in economic impact.”

Those dollars spent at local hotels and restaurants and other places by visiting users of the park facilities are monies that would not otherwise come into Gainesville and Hall County, according to Graham. “That’s a huge part of what we have to look at.”



Melvin Cooper (in blue) and Michael Graham (in red check) present Parks and Recreation Department's FY2020 Budget

<http://accesswdun.com/article/2019/3/773699/gainesville-parks-and-rec-looks-to-increase-their-budget-for-fy2020>

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