

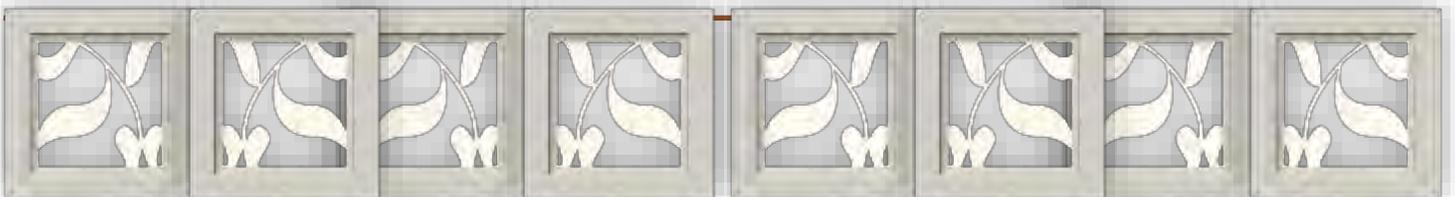
IN THE NEWS

October 2019

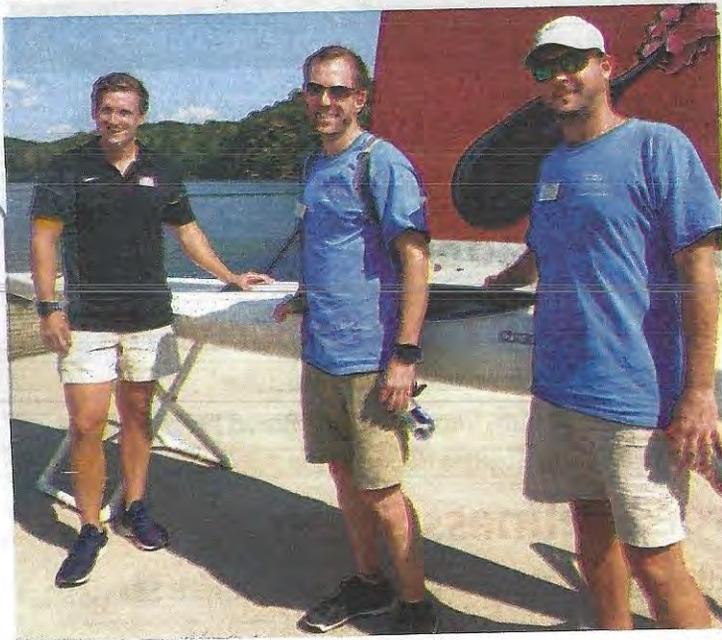
Parks & Recreation Programs
Frances Meadows Aquatic and Community Center
Gainesville Civic Center
Lake Lanier Olympic Center
City / County Issues
Miscellaneous



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



education & leadership



Stanton Collins, Team USA; John Baxter, Deep Roots Landscape; Lee Towns, Lee Towns State Farm Agency, at Lake Lanier Olympic Park.



(Above) Youth Leadership Hall at Riverside Military Academy (RMA) for a Styles of Leadership Program featuring program presenters **Dr. Britt Daniel**, Executive VP, RMA; **Phil Bonelli**, Senior VP Commercial Banking, Regions Bank; RMA **1SGT Stephen Peterson** and **1SGT Andy Williams**; Solicitor General **Stephanie Woodard**. Thank you Youth Leadership program sponsors: **Bitzer US, Inc.**, **Longstreet Café** and **Riverside Military Academy**. Leadership Hall's **Lake Life Day** began with the **Hall County Sheriff's Office Dive Team** then Dragon Boat racing at **Lake Lanier Olympic Park** followed by a lake cruise on the **Margaritaville**, with a presentation by historian **David Coughlin**. **Renee Carden**, **Lake Lanier CVB**, talked about promoting Lake Lanier, and **Stanton Collins**, **Team USA**, explained his journey to secure a position on the Olympic kayak team. **Dale Caldwell**, **Chattahoochee Riverkeepers**, gave fascinating details on keeping our lake clean. Thank you Leadership Hall program sponsors: **McDonald's of Northeast Georgia**, **Gainesville Parks & Recreation**, **Margaritaville at Lanier Islands**, **Georgia Power** and **Keller Williams-The Good Life Group**.

10-2-19



Kit Dunlap
President & CEO
Greater Hall Chamber

The Economic Impact of Quality Healthcare

With our premier location, surrounded by beautiful Lake Sidney Lanier, Gainesville-Hall County offers an unparalleled quality of life and a sound economic future for business and industry. In addition to growing and expanding industries, Gainesville-Hall County continues to have robust activity in retail development, tourism and healthcare services. **The growing healthcare sector is adding to our quality of life and economic outlook.** A 2019 study by

the Greater Hall Chamber indicates Hall County is served by **366 Health Care Service Providers** that employ over **12,500 people or 13% of the Hall County workforce**, producing approximately **\$740 million in annual wages**. Nearly 75% of those jobs are located in the City of Gainesville, the region's healthcare epicenter. Access to world-class healthcare services right here in Gainesville-Hall County is one of our strongest assets in economic and workforce development. The Chamber's Healthcare Committee has been the catalyst for connecting Health & Wellness Initiatives to local businesses and oversees a set of community-wide programs and events. The committee meets monthly to discuss access to healthcare, wellness programs and benefits, healthcare services, legislative issues, health insurance and other important health and wellness topics. **Now in its 13th year, the HealthSmart Wellness Expo on October 16 is presented by CIGNA and will feature some 60 booth exhibits providing interactive wellness services.** The event, free and open to the public, focuses on community health and wellness including FREE Community Health Screenings by Longstreet Clinic. FREE health and wellbeing seminars will be held along with door prize drawings and giveaways. No admission fee and open to the public.

HealthSmart

13th Annual
Interactive
Wellness Expo

October 16

Expo & Screenings – 7:30 am-1:30 pm
Kickoff Breakfast – 7:30 am-9:30 am
Gainesville Civic Center

FREE Community Health Screenings (18 and older)

- Carotid Artery, Glucose, Cholesterol, Triglycerides testing
- Blood Pressure Checks, Body Mass Index Calculation
- Open to the Public
- 60+ Wellness Exhibitors
- FREE Health & Wellbeing Seminars
- FREE, Convenient Shuttle Service
- No Entry Fee
- No Appointment Needed

HealthSmart Breakfast features presentation of Most Fit Company Awards!

For HealthSmart Expo info or to register for the Kickoff Breakfast featuring Eric Lagshur, contact Mandy Lathem 770-532-6206 x115 or email: mlathem@ghcc.com
Get all the details online at GreaterHallChamber.com

10-2-19

community development

HealthSmart

Interactive Health & Wellness EXPO

13th Annual HealthSmart Expo
Wednesday, October 16
Gainesville Civic Center

Presented by



7:30 am - 1:30 pm | Open to the Public

- FREE Community Health Screenings for men & women 18 years and older
- Carotid Artery, Glucose, Cholesterol, Triglycerides Testing, Blood Pressure, BMI
- No Entry Fee
- Open to the Public
- Convenient Shuttle Service
- No Appointment Needed



HealthSmart Kickoff Breakfast

October 16 | 7:30-9:30 am | Gainesville Civic Center



Eric Langshur
NYTimes Best Selling
Author & Co-Founder,
Abundant Venture Partners

The HealthSmart Expo Kickoff Breakfast is October 16 (7:30am-9:30am) with Guest Speaker **Eric Langshur**, NYTimes best-selling author of *Start Here: Master the Lifelong Habit of Wellbeing* and successful business entrepreneur/CEO. Eric will reveal why it is important to take care of our mental health and wellbeing in the same manner that we care for our physical health. His presentation – **Training the Skill of Wellbeing** – will focus on a topic that affects us all, in an engaging and interactive session, based not only on his personal experience of seeking wellbeing in his own hectic life but also on specific data that clearly links productivity and mental wellbeing. The Chamber's **Most Fit Company Awards** in three categories: large (251+ employees), medium (51-250) and small companies (50 or less) will be presented at the

HealthSmart Breakfast. Breakfast Cost: \$15 Chamber Members; \$20 Non-members.

Reservations: 770-532-6206
or make reservations online at
GreaterHallChamber.com



10-2-19

calendar

October

Tuesday, October 8
Small Business Seminar
7:45 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. | Chamber

Ambassadors Council
3:45 p.m. - 4:45 p.m. | 2 Dog Cafe

Wednesday, October 9
Network Over Coffee
8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.
Panera Bread | Gainesville

Human Resource Council
11:45 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Luna's | Gainesville

Thursday, October 10
Business After Hours & Annual Tailgate Party
5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Conditioned Air Systems | Gainesville

Friday, October 11
Economic Development Council
7:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. | Oakwood City Hall

Tuesday, October 15
Vision 2030 Board of Directors
11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. | Chamber

Wednesday, October 16
HealthSmart 2019
Kickoff Breakfast: 7:30 - 9:30 a.m.
Expo: 7:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Gainesville Civic Center

Wednesday, October 23
Issues Committee
8:00 a.m. | Chamber

Wednesday, October 23
Network Over Coffee
8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.
53 West Apartments | Oakwood

Thursday, October 24
Chamber Board of Directors
Sponsored by At&T
12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Chattahoochee Country Club

Monday, October 28
Vision 2030 "State of the Art" Meeting
5:30 p.m. Cocktails | 6:15 p.m. Remarks
Hunt Tower Atrium | Downtown Gainesville

Tuesday, October 29
South Hall Business Coalition
8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.
University of North Georgia
Gainesville Campus | Nesbitt Building

November

Thursday, November 7
Farm City Breakfast
7:30 a.m.
North Hall Community Center

Wednesday, November 13
Industry Appreciation Luncheon
11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Chattahoochee Country Club | Gainesville

December

Thursday, December 12
Eggs & Issues Breakfast
7:30 - 9:30 a.m. | Lanier Technical College
10-2-19

A vision for Park Hill



NICK BOWMAN | The Times

A rutted path shows signs of pedestrians traveling along the busy Park Hill Road in Gainesville. Gainesville planning officials are asking residents for input about pedestrians in the Park Hill and Riverside Drive areas.

Officials seek community input to create plan for traffic, safety

BY MEGAN REED

mreed@gainesvilletimes.com

Gainesville officials are taking a close look at the area between the Gainesville Civic Center and Enota Drive, and they are seeking input from the community about improvements people would like to see.

A survey will be online through at least the rest of October, according to Mate Tate, deputy director of community and economic development with the city.

The city is working with the University of Georgia Carl Vinson Institute of Government to create a strate-

gic plan that will cover the corridor along Riverside Drive, Morningside Drive, Park Hill Drive and U.S. 129, extending from the Civic Center to the Atlanta Botanical Gardens Gainesville.

The survey asks about pedestrian safety, local businesses, traffic and what improvements people hope can come to the area.

Rusty Ligon, the city's economic and community development director, said the area has potential for development, and the city would like to have a plan for that growth.

"We think that area has historic value, and it is

unique, but we need to create a vision for that area," Ligon said. "We can enhance it somewhat from what it is now."

Ligon said the area has seen some businesses leave, like the Zaxby's that relocated from Riverside Drive to New Holland, but it is anchored by some newer businesses, like the pizza restaurant Sliced, and businesses with a history like Green's Grocery and Inn-Between Deli.

The study comes ahead of some planned transportation projects in the area.

■ Please see **STUDY, 4A**

'We think that area has historic value, and it is unique, but we need to create a vision for that area.'

Rusty Ligon
Economic and community development director

 View the survey:

ugeorgia.ca1.qualtrics.com

10-4-19

STUDY

■ Continued from 1A

The Georgia Department of Transportation is considering roundabouts on Green Street, one at Thompson Bridge Road and Riverside Drive, and another at Academy Street and E.E. Butler Parkway. The roundabouts are part of a \$15 million set of improvements along Green Street, including a raised five-foot median.

"We saw in this general area, some transportation improvements being considered, and we thought ... let's establish what's the vision for this area and what improvements would we like to see so that we have something in place as these traffic studies conclude and they start making specific instructions about traffic improvements," Ligon said.

Cpl. Jessica Van of the Gainesville Police Department said 10 accidents, all without injuries, were reported in the area between Oct. 1, 2018, and Oct. 1, 2019. They all occurred on Park Hill Drive, with seven of them at the intersection with Old Clarks Bridge Road.

Any changes the city could make in the area, such as streetscaping, crosswalks and sidewalks could also motivate businesses to move in, Ligon said.

"Much like our philosophy with midtown, we want to make those strategic public investments to promote the private investment to follow," he said.

10-4-19

• Hall County announced that **Chief Judge Kathlene F. Cosselin** was elected as Chair of the Council of Accountability Courts. **Superior Court Judge Bonnie Oliver** was elected President of the Board of Trustees for the Georgia Institute of Continuing Judicial Education. **Zach Propes**, director of Hall County Financial Services, has been named Assistant County Administrator of Operations and will take over for **Lisa Johnsa**, who retires at year end. hallcounty.org

★ **Laketober Fest at Lake Lanier Olympic Park** is Saturday, October 26. The festival is a combination of Food Truck Friday and a craft beer festival. With a twist on Oktoberfest, this event (5-8pm) will also feature retail vendors and live music by Caleb Davidson set to the beautiful fall views of Lake Lanier. \$10 entry fee. lakelanierolympicvenue.org

• The **American Red Cross** Gainesville Community upcoming Blood Drives are Friday, October 4 and Thursday, October 24 (9:00am – 3:00pm) at Gainesville Parks & Rec's **Martha Hope Cabin**, 528 Prior Street in Gainesville. Your donation can impact up to 3 patients in need. Appointments: 1-800-REDCROSS or visit redcrossblood.org (locate the "find a drive" in the upper right corner & enter GVILLECOM).

• The **University of North Georgia (UNG)** ranked 16th among all public regional universities in the South on the *U.S. News & World Report 2020 Best Colleges* list, up four spots from last year's ranking. UNG was also ranked for the second time on the magazine's **Most Innovative Schools** list. ung.edu

• **Family Opioid Awareness Day at Jaemor Farm** is October 26 (10:00am-2:00pm). Sponsored by the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities' State Opioid Response (SOR), the event is open to the public with the first 1,500 guests in free to enjoy lunch and fun fall activities including hayrides, corn maze, pumpkin painting and more. Details: 770-535-1050 x 102.

• **CenterPoint's Partnership for a Drug Free Hall** presents the **Dangers of Vaping** on October 10 (6-8pm) at the First Baptist Church Banquet Hall in Gainesville with keynote speaker **Merrill Norton, Pharm.D., D.Ph., UGA**, who will explain the chemistry of vaping that is causing concerns expressed

by the CDC, the Surgeon General and the FDA. **Chief Jay Parrish, Gainesville Police Department**, will describe what we are seeing here in Gainesville-Hall County. Other presenters include **Deb Bailey, Northeast Georgia Health System; Laurisa Barthen, GA Council on Substance Abuse; Adam Raulerson, Laurelwood**. The forum is free, open to the public and sponsored by **Northeast Georgia Health System**. drugfreehall.org

• **Mule Camp Market Festival** is Friday October 11 - Sunday October 13 on the Historic Gainesville Square. This annual fall festival showcases various mountain arts and crafts from vendors all over the U.S., along with top quality country and Blue Grass entertainment. The family can enjoy mule rides, live music, and great food, while the kids enjoy the petting zoo and many other activities. The Gainesville Jaycees have organized this wonderful event since 1993. gainesvillejaycees.com

• For the past 20+ years, **Motul Petit Le Mans** has been THE sporting event in the Southeast to experience. Don't miss the event, **October 9-12**, with manufacturer and team rivalries, kid's zone, vendors, food trucks, car corrals, camping, Patrón bar, grid walk, autograph sessions and so much more with family-friendly prices, too! **The Podium Club** is an all-inclusive upscale hospitality club in the brand-new **Michelin Tower** at Michelin Raceway Road Atlanta and is the ideal place to indulge with food and drink in a comfortable, climate-controlled setting with excellent viewing and live race coverage.

• **The Annual Farm City Breakfast is Thursday, November 7** at 7:30am at the North Hall Community Center. The event is sponsored by **Jackson EMC, Bagwell Insurance** and **Mountain Fresh Creamery** and features **Will Bentley**, president, Georgia Agribusiness Council. Former EVP of the 5,500-member Georgia Cattlemen's Association, Bentley has been active in local, state and federal policy formulation and agriculture advocacy and has direct lobbying experience in Atlanta and Washington, DC. Full breakfast from **Loretta's**. No Charge. Reservations, UGA Extension Hall County, 770-535-8293.

Health Smart

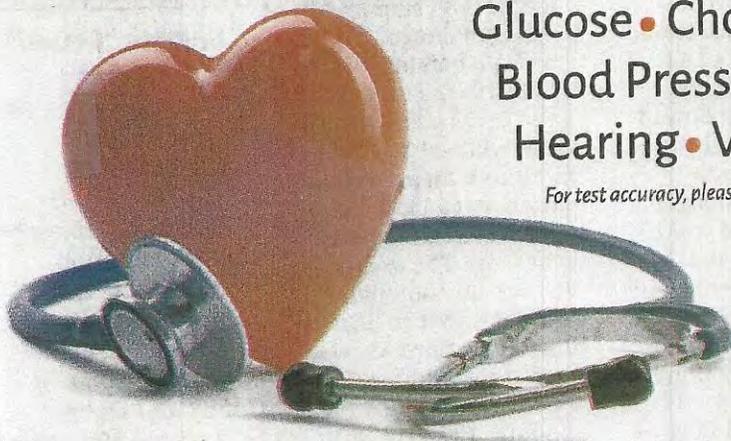
Interactive Health
& Wellness EXPO

Wednesday
October 16

7:30 am - 1:30 pm
Gainesville Civic Center

Open to the Public

FREE Health Screenings



Glucose • Cholesterol • Triglycerides
Blood Pressure • Body Mass Index
Hearing • Vision • Carotid Artery

For test accuracy, please fast prior to participating in health screenings.



Vision
2030

No Appointment Needed | Door Prizes | Free Wellness Seminars
— Free Salad to 1st 100 Screenings —



10-5-19

770-532-6206 | GreaterHallChamber.com

Linwood Preserve is true local nature treasure trove

Even with all the development going on, Gainesville has places where nature can be enjoyed in its original setting. One of those is the Linwood Nature Preserve, a partnership between Gainesville Parks & Recreation and the Redbud Project. Located on Linwood Drive off Thompson Bridge Road, this 30-acre urban forest offers views of old-growth forest and native plants that would have been familiar to the first settlers in Georgia. For residents used to subdivisions adorned with exotic trees and chemically engineered shrubs and flowers, it's quite an education.

"We've been working on this for a number of years, with the help of students and local volunteers," said Margaret Rasmussen, director of the Redbud Project.

"We now have a bird sanctuary, two rain gardens, an Ecology Center and a walking trail stretching across the property." A recent tour for Brenau students confirmed the extraordinary condition of the preserve. Ancient oak trees, gone from most of Hall County, line the trail. They are interspersed with plants native to the Eastern U.S., but rarely seen in cities. The Paw-Paw tree is one of them. "You can even eat the fruit that it produces," Rasmussen said. "This type of tree produces beautiful dark red flowers in the spring. When the fruit are ripe, their tropical taste is a treat. Some people make ice cream from them."

Because Paw-Paw leaves turn a golden brown in the fall, they are also favored for landscaping. "Many gardeners use them as ornamentals," confirmed Elizabeth Dietz, a Hall Co. Master Gardener who accompanied the tour.

Evidence of past colonization also enhances the forest. Native Americans or early immigrants probably made the "mailbox tree". Bending and immobilizing it to a horizontal angle, removing its bent top and later hollowing it out made a feature that has a striking resemblance to a U.S. mailbox, with a secondary branch growing upward to form the new main trunk. "They used it to leave messages inside, just like a postal service," Rasmussen explained.

High-voltage power lines crossing the area could have been a disturbance, but the Georgia Power corporation has been managing the clearing that's required along the poles' pathway. "Instead of just cutting everything to the ground, they shaped and maintain it as a native prairie land," Rasmussen said. An abundant population of birds confirms that the Linwood Preserve is a true local treasure.



RUDI KIEFER
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Rudi Kiefer, Ph.D., is a professor at Brenau University, teaching physical and health sciences on Brenau's Georgia campuses and in China. His column appears Sundays and at gainesvilletimes.com.

10-6-19

28th Annual Marketplace

Festive Holiday Shopping!

November 7 – 9

Gainesville Civic Center

benefiting Safe Kids Northeast Georgia

Presented by Premier Sponsors:



The Medical Center Auxiliary

&



WILLIS INVESTMENT COUNSEL

Principled Investing

Celebrating the 11th consecutive year as our Premier Sponsor!

Preview Party: \$50 tickets

Nov. 7, 6:30 – 9:30 p.m.

General Admission: \$5 tickets

Nov. 8, 9:30 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Nov. 9, 9:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Chaired by:

Katie Crumley, Jenny Floyd

Morgan Wood

To purchase tickets for

Preview Party, visit

nghs.com/marketplace



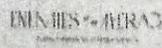
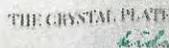
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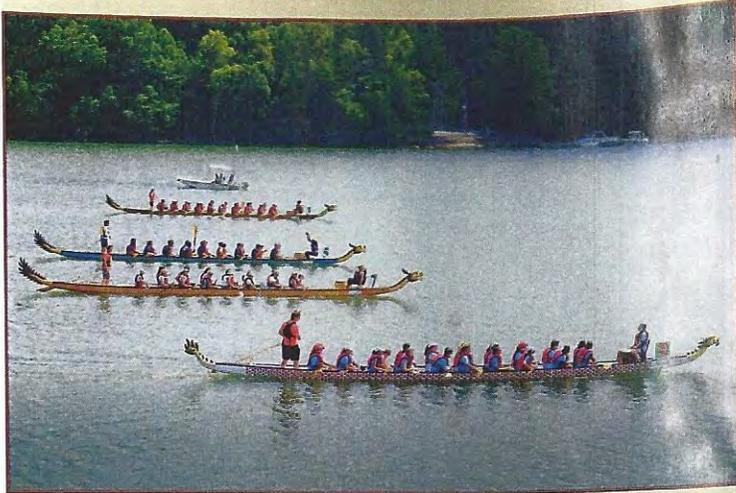
Maggie and David Griffin



10-6-19

AROUND TOWN

HONG KONG DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL



The Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival returned to Lake Lanier Olympic Park in Gainesville for a free, all-day event on the water that included presentations and dances from Asian culture, races, music and food.



Participants wearing their life jackets watch from the shore during the The Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival at Lake Lanier Olympic Park in Gainesville.



A boat is seen at the Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival at Lake Lanier Olympic Park in Gainesville.



Spectators watch at the Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival at Lake Lanier Olympic Park in Gainesville on Saturday.



Participants paddle their boat during the Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival at Lake Lanier Olympic Park in Gainesville.



Participants sit in their boat at the Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival at Lake Lanier Olympic Park in Gainesville on Saturday.



HALLOWEEN

THINGS TO DO

1-31: Frightfully fun Haunted Forest at Buford Corn Maze, 4470 Bennett Road, Buford, GA 30519, at the intersection of Friendship Rd. and Ridge Rd/Hog Mountain Rd, bufordcornmaze.com

4-31: Netherworld Haunted House and Escape Games, fearworld.com

6-27: Jaemor Farms 14th Annual Corn Maze. 1 to 7 p.m. 5340 Cornelia Highway/ GA Hwy 365, Alto. 770-869-3999.

7: Spooky Autumn Drop in Craft. 1 to 3 p.m. Spout Springs Library Meeting Room, Gainesville.

8: Stranger Things Escape Room. 7 to 7:45 p.m. Sharon Forks Library, 2820 Old Atlanta Road, Cumming. 770-781-9840, fcplblog@gmail.com. Free.

12: Pumpkin Decorating. 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. Lumpkin County Library, 342 Courthouse, Dahlonega.

12, 13, 19, 20, 26, 27: Grapes and Ghosts Wine Tour. 5 p.m. 19 East Main Street, Dahlonega. 706-482-8795. \$20.

14-31: Pumpkin Patch for Missions. 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. The Highlands Church, 3678 Cleveland Hwy, Gainesville. 770-535-0843, missions@thehighlandchurch.net. Free.

19: Braselton Zombie 5K Run. 8:30 a.m. More information at www.DowntownBraselton.com

21-23: Pumpkin Decorating Contest Drop Off Days. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Spout Springs Library Meeting Room, Gainesville.

22: Boo Fest. 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Commerce Main Street, 1645 S. Elm Street / P.O. Box 717, Commerce.

22: Pumpkin Dash. 6 to 8 p.m. Frances Meadows, 1545 Community Way, Gainesville. 770-533-5850. Free.

23: Funeralizing: Stories about burials, haints and huants of Southern Appalachia. 5 to 6 p.m. Murrayville Branch Library, 4796 Thompson Bridge RD, Gainesville. (770) 532-3311 ext. 171, bhhood@hallcountylibrary.org. Free.

24-25: Library Haunted House. 6 to 8:30 p.m. Sharon Forks Library, 2820 Old Atlanta Road, Cumming. 770-781-9840, fcplblog@gmail.com. Free.

25-27: 2019 North Georgia Home Show. 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Oct. 25, 26 and 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. - Oct. 27. Ramsey Conference Center, 2535 Lanier Tech Drive, Gainesville.

25: Halloween Spooktacular. 6 to 9 p.m. Jug Tavern Park, 113 E. Athens St, Winder.

25: Scream in the Dark. 6 to 8 p.m. Sharon Forks Library, 2820 Old Atlanta Road, Cumming. 770-781-9840, fcplblog@gmail.com. Free.

26: 21st ANNUAL BOO RUN. 7:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. City of Flowery Branch, 5517 Main St, Flowery Branch. 770-540-9470, fbl212@bellsouth.net. \$25 - \$30.

26: Trick or Treat on the Trail. 3 to 5 p.m. Midtown Greenway, 682 Grove Street, Gainesville.

28: Family Fun Night: Costume Carnival. 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Spout Springs Library Meeting Room, Gainesville.

29: Mother Son Halloween Dance Party. 6 to 8:30 p.m. Gainesville Civic Center, 830 Green St NE, Gainesville. 770-531-2680, civiccentermanager@gainesville.org.

29: Trick-or-Treat on the Square. 4 p.m. Gainesville Historic Downtown Square, Gainesville.





Nights of tricks & treats

BY LAYNE SALIBA
lsaliba@gainesvilletimes.com

Sometimes, strolling through the same old neighborhood for Halloween gets boring. Lucky for you, there are plenty of events around town to mix things up. There's fun for the kids and the adults, so get outside and check these out.

Maybe you'll find a new way to do Halloween this year.

Halloween events for both the kids and the grown-ups:

For the kids

Trick or Treat on the Trail

Businesses will set up home fronts along the greenway to hand out candy at this Saturday event.

Julie Butler-Colombini said it's "whimsical fun" in the afternoon and an event that's seen plenty of success over the years.

"Kids literally get the feeling of going door to door trick-or-treating, but in a perfectly safe greenspace," she said. "The Midtown Greenway is perfect for it. It's ample in space, the trails are wide and there's lots of space for families to play."

There will also be a petting zoo, face painting and bounce houses at the event. Those attending can bring canned food

to donate to the Georgia Mountain Food Bank.

Butler-Colombini said they started the event nine years ago, with five house fronts and 40,000 pieces of candy. Now they have 15 house fronts and 200,000 pieces of candy.

"It's just fun and a great event," she said. "The main purpose is we want our community to be able to enjoy this and create these memories with their families that last a lifetime."

When: 3-5 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 26

Where: Midtown Greenway, 682 Grove St., Gainesville

More info: 770-531-2680

Mother-Son Halloween Dance

This annual event includes a catered dinner and dancing. There's also a costume contest and raffles.

When: 6-8:30 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 29

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

Gainesville

More info: 770-531-2680, civiccentermanager@gainesville.org

How much: City residents \$50 per couple plus \$17.50 for additional children; nonresidents \$60 per couple plus \$21 for additional children.



Times file photo

Emily Talley and her son Tate Talley-Jones, dressed as firefighters, dance during the 14th annual Mother-Son Halloween Dinner and Dance Party in Gainesville, on Oct. 24, 2017.

10-10-19

Laketoberfest

When: 4-10 p.m., Oct. 26

Where: Lake Lanier Olympic Park, 3105 Clarks Bridge Road, Gainesville

More info: www.lakelanierolympicvenue.org/events

How much: \$10

Trick or Treat on the Trail

When: 3-5 p.m., Oct. 26

Where: Midtown Greenway, Gainesville

More info: www.gainesville.org/recreation

How much: Free

10-10-19

Mule Camp 5K

What: A run through midtown Gainesville

When: 8:30 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 12

Where: Starts near the downtown bridge at Roosevelt Square, traveling the greenway into midtown

More info: www.unsignup.com/mulecamp5k

How much: \$25

10-10-19

HALL COUNTY

Sales tax up for renewal would fund capital projects

BY MEGAN REED

mreed@gainesvilletimes.com

A sales tax first approved in 1985 and renewed six times is on the ballot Nov. 5 and could be used to fund capital projects for Hall County and its cities.

The Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax VIII is projected to bring in about \$217 million between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2026. The money collected would

be divided based on populations as of July 1, 2017 census numbers.

It is a sales tax of 1%, or a penny on the dollar, that must be used to pay for capital projects, not regular operations.

The vote on SPLOST is countywide. SPLOST law was enacted statewide in 1985. Hall County's SPLOST I was approved by 53% of voters in July of that year, and the first SPLOST, which lasted two and a half years, generated \$25

million for road, street and bridge improvements. Seven rounds of the tax have been approved by local voters since then, with support growing over the years. SPLOST VII was approved by 63% of voters in 2015.

SPLOST has paid for about \$671 million in county and city projects since 1985. Investments over the years include the Hall County Government Center, new public safety vehicles, parks and community

centers, libraries and several road projects.

If approved by voters, here's how the governments would spend the money:

Hall County

Total: Estimated \$126,315,093

The county has allocated \$35,871,920 for Tier II countywide projects, which include an expansion of the fire training center, a new library in East Hall and a new

cell at the Hall County Landfill.

■ \$73.6 million: Road improvements including the Sardis connector running from West Hall to North Hall, along with widening of Spout Springs Road in South Hall

■ \$7 million: Fire services

■ \$7 million: Trails and greenspace

*■ \$6 million: Parks

■ \$6 million: Public safety,

■ Please see **SPLOST, 5A**

10-13-17



SPLOST

■ Continued from 1A

including the Hall County Sheriff's Office

Gainesville

Total: Estimated \$36,664,541

■ \$15 million: Roads, streets, bridges and sidewalks

■ \$9.16 million: Parks

■ \$8.5 million: Public safety

■ \$4 million: Downtown parking deck near the Gainesville branch of the Hall County Library System

* Other project ideas include a new police training building and renovations at the Gainesville Civic Center, including a new audiovisual system, City Manager Bryan Lackey told The Times in August.

Flowery Branch

Total: \$6,792,614

■ \$5.7 million: Roads and infrastructure, including improvements at Exit 12, where the Georgia Department of Transportation is planning to widen Interstate 985

■ \$383,384: Public works property and equipment

■ \$415,000: Parks

■ \$276,000: Public safety/police

Oakwood

Total: \$3,768,357

The city is considering radius improvements on several Thurmon Tanner Parkway intersections to accommodate trucks, particularly Chamblee and Plainview roads, City Manager Stan Brown said in August.

■ \$2.4 million: Roads, streets, bridges and sidewalks

■ \$800,000: Water and sewer improvements

■ \$600,000: Police vehicles and equipment

Lula

Total: \$2,621,793

■ \$1.3 million: Water and sewer improvements

■ \$1 million: Roads and sidewalks

■ \$262,118: Parks facilities, vehicles and equipment

Braselton

Total: \$2,374,789

Town Manager Jennifer Scott said in August that improvements are planned for LifePath, multi-use paths around and along Old Winder Highway/Ga. 211 in Hall, Gwinnett and Barrow counties.

■ \$1.2 million: Roads, streets, bridges and sidewalks

■ \$1.2 million: Parks and leisure facilities

Buford

Total: \$1,427,155

Buford's whole SPLOST budget has been set aside for transportation projects.

Clermont

Total: \$864,877

■ \$432,439: Roads, streets, bridges and sidewalks

■ \$432,438: Parks facilities and equipment

Gillsville, 0.12%, or \$220,746

■ \$66,746: Downtown projects, including a new parking lot with about 20 spots and a new space for local artists to display their work

■ \$77,000: Roads

■ \$77,000: Parks

Rest Haven

Total: \$38,210

Rest Haven plans to spend all its SPLOST funds on transportation. Buford manages the operations of Rest Haven.

Reporter Jeff Gill contributed to this story.

KO-13-19

Health Smart

Interactive Health & Wellness EXPO

Wednesday, October 16

Gainesville Civic Center

7:30 am - 1:30 pm

FREE Health Screenings • Open to the Public

Glucose-Cholesterol-Triglycerides Testing · Blood Pressure Check
BMI Calculation · Carotid Artery · Hearing & Vision Testing

Free Seminars at the HealthSmart Expo



Donna Anderson

Employee Wellbeing

10:15 - 11:00 am - Chattahoochee Room

Donna Anderson, Director of Employee Wellbeing, Northeast Georgia Health System, will provide information for employers on connecting wellbeing to employee retention, engagement and business success.



Cindy Levi

Community Health Services

11:15 - 12:00 pm - Chattahoochee Room

Cindy Levi, CEO, Avita Community Partners, will present a continuum of behavioral health services available across the lifespan. These services are offered through Avita, Georgia's safety net provider in Hall County.

HealthSmart Kickoff Breakfast

7:30-9:30 am · Wednesday, October 16 · Gainesville Civic Center
- Reservations Required for Breakfast -



Eric Langshur
National Speaker & NY Times
Best Selling Author

Eric Langshur, *New York Times* best selling author and successful business entrepreneur, is the keynote speaker at the HealthSmart Breakfast on October 16 and will reveal why it's important to take care of our mental health and wellbeing in the same manner that we care for our physical health.

Eric's presentation - **Training the Skill of Wellbeing** - will focus on a topic that affects us all, in an engaging and interactive session. Breakfast reservations required: 770-532-6206.

Most Fit Company Awards

Awards for our community's Most Fit Companies will be presented at the HealthSmart Breakfast and recognize outstanding businesses that provide wellness, nutrition and fitness opportunities for employees.



- Presenting Sponsor -



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SPLOST is a good deal

Penny sales tax allows our community amenities it may not otherwise have

Those who live, work and visit in Hall County would not be able to enjoy the same quality of life and community amenities that combine to make the area a special place were it not for the Special Purpose Local Option Sales tax programs of the last 34 years.

It is a simple as that.

Since 1985, county and municipal leaders have used revenue from the SPLOST to finance major capital projects that otherwise would have impossibly overburdened those who pay traditional property taxes.

Since the approval of the first SPLOST in 1985, some \$670 million has been generated by the 1% sales tax to fund specific projects, such as roads, bridges, fire stations, parks and libraries. And for the most, the collection process has been relatively painless, an additional penny sales tax added to each dollar spent locally.

Because it taxes consumer purchases rather than property ownership, the additional sales tax is paid by everyone who buys goods in the county. For a community like ours that benefits from a heavy influx of tourists and travelers each year, that means those who live elsewhere are helping to finance badly needed government facilities that might otherwise go unbuilt.

Needless to say, we are unabashed supporters of the SPLOST concept. The nature of the SPLOST program requires that specific projects be identified in advance of voter approval, and funds earmarked for use on those projects are not available for other needs. The SPLOST expires after a

certain period of time, and has to be presented to the voters again for approval if it is to continue. In addition, there is an ongoing SPLOST Citizens Review committee to monitor the tax program.

This fall, voters are being asked to approve SPLOST for the eighth time. They have never refused to do so in the past, providing perhaps the best evidence of the program's record of success.

If voters approve SPLOST VIII, proceeds from the sales tax will be used to fund parks, nature trails and greenspace, ambulances and law enforcement vehicles, roads and traffic improvements, renovations of government buildings and facilities, an expansion of the county's fire training center, a new library for the East Hall area and a variety of municipal projects specific to the various towns located within the county.

If approved, the new SPLOST will last for six years, and cannot be continued again unless the voters again approve doing so. During that six years, it is expected to generate an estimated \$216 million.

It is important to note that this is not a new tax. The SPLOST has been collected locally for more than three decades. It is a continuation of what is already in place, with no increase.

Because we have become so accustomed to the SPLOST, it is easy to forget the consequences of not having the program in place. Were the sales tax not being collected to pay for certain big ticket items, they would have to be funded through traditional property taxes. Many of the projects vital to the ongoing growth,

progress and improvement of our area would prove financially impossible if their cost had to be shouldered only by the county's property owners.

And lest you think higher property taxes would not affect you because you don't own property, remember that such increases typically filter down to the rents paid by residential tenants and leases for commercial space.

Simply put, without SPLOST we could not do many of the things that most of us want to see done and expect as a given in the area in which we live — like improving traffic, building parks, and supporting public safety.

So why are we talking about SPLOST now? The current sales tax program is about to expire, and voter approval is needed to continue the tax. The Nov. 5 election ballots for the county and its municipalities include the renewal of SPLOST, and early voting starts Monday morning.

While some of the county's municipalities have city elections on Nov. 5, the SPLOST referendum is the only issue on the countywide ballot, meaning turnout is likely to be sparse at best. Given that, it's more important than ever that voters take the time to cast a ballot in favor of continuing the 1% tax collection.

If you want to do your part to make ours a better place to live, work and play, take the time to cast a ballot, either in early voting or on Nov. 5, and vote "yes" for continuation of the SPLOST tax program as a means of financing big-ticket items that would otherwise prove impossible.

Because it taxes consumer purchases rather than property ownership, the additional sales tax is paid by everyone who buys goods in the county. For a community like ours that benefits from a heavy influx of tourists and travelers each year, that means those who live elsewhere are helping to finance badly needed government facilities that might otherwise go unbuilt.

HealthSmart breakfast focuses on stress, fit companies

BY SHANNON CASAS
scasas@gainesvilletimes.com

A crowd gathered Wednesday morning at the Gainesville Civic Center learned about how prevalent stress is in our culture and got a few tips on how to handle it.

Using a cue in the everyday routine can help employees remember to stop and take deep breaths, leaving them more productive, presenter and author Eric Langshur told the audience — for example, breathing in for four counts and out for four counts at a designated time or at the same time as another daily activity.

He also emphasized reducing distractions that often come with cellphones and finding a balance between anxiety and boredom in

order to optimize productivity.

The breakfast Oct. 16 was the kickoff of the annual HealthSmart expo.

An announcement was also made about winners of the 2019 Most Fit Company Awards. They are as follows:

Large company (251 or more employees): Mars Wrigley Confectionery, 4500 Atlanta Highway, Flowery Branch. The manufacturer works to provide healthy choices in its cafeteria and vending machines. It has an on-site fitness center and outdoor track. Employees are also encouraged to complete an annual biometric screening and health assessment.

Medium company (51-250 employees): Carroll Daniel Construction, 330 Main St., Gainesville. The company offers yoga

classes, walking competitions and sponsors employee kickball and softball teams. Its newly constructed office includes a rooftop gym and standing desks. Last year, it held a “stress-free week” including on-site massages, visits with puppies and pumpkin smashing.

Small company (50 or fewer employees): Watkins Total Healthcare, 961 Green St. NE, Gainesville. The practice offers nutritious snacks in the office, classes on healthy eating and newsletters including health information. All employees have access to at-cost medical services and free chiropractic services.

Vendors lined rooms in the Civic Center offering screenings and wellness information during the expo.



SCOTT ROGERS | The Times

Legacy Link's Ayesha Rockett helps visitors at their booth Wednesday, Oct. 16, at the annual Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce's HealthSmart Expo at the Gainesville Civic Center.

10-17-19

Olympic Park saying farewell to event season with Laketoberfest

BY NICK BOWMAN
nbowman@gainesvilletimes.com

The Lake Lanier Olympic Park is closing out its event season with Laketoberfest, a souped-up food truck Friday featuring a few truck regulars, live music and plenty of German beer.

Laketoberfest is the first Oktoberfest-

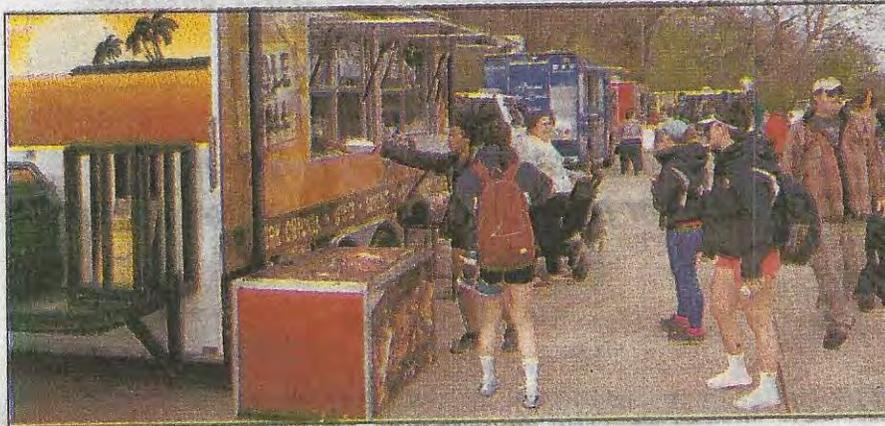
style event for the park and signals the end of its warm-season events — its regular food truck Fridays, concerts and other events held above the grandstands on the tower side of the Clarks Bridge Road park.

It begins at 6 p.m. Oct. 26 and is the “last really big festival-style food truck event of the year,” said James Watson,

manager of the park, adding that he hopes the event becomes a repeat for the park.

Tap It on Thompson Bridge Road is providing the beer, while Caleb Davidson is performing.

The event costs \$10 at the door and comes with a souvenir cup and one drink ticket.



Laketoberfest

When: 6-10 p.m., Oct. 26

Where: Lake Lanier Olympic Park, 3105 Clarks Bridge Road, Gainesville

More info: www.lakelanierolympicvenue.org/calendar

How much: \$10

People place orders at food trucks during Food Truck Fridays at Lake Lanier Olympic Park on Friday, March 15.

Times file photo

10-17-19

COMMUNITY NEWS

Those are some good parks

Gainesville Parks and Recreation was honored as agency of the year by the Georgia Recreation and Park Association District 7 during its annual banquet held at the North Hall Community Center on Thursday, Oct. 17.

The agency was recognized for its focus on strategic planning, effectiveness of operations; as well as its successful programs and services geared towards the health, wellness and livability of the Gainesville community.

Notable accomplishments highlighted in the award presentation were the 2030 Parks, Greenways, and Open Space Master Plan to be released in November; the area's first skate park under construction, major park renovations, outstanding community events, economic impact, partner-

ships and its commitment to Learn to Swim programs for at-risk populations.

Compiled from information submitted by Gainesville Parks and Recreation

Homerun for Billingsley

Youth baseball coach Jacob Billingsley received the distinguished volunteer of the year award by the Georgia Recreation and Park Association District 7.

In his presentation to Billingsley, Eason Spivey of Gainesville Parks and Recreation described him as an outstanding individual coach whose philosophy is sportsmanship and fundamentals above anything else.

"He does not encourage a 'win at all costs' mentality. Win or lose, Jacob's team carries themselves with dignity and treats their opponents with the utmost respect."

However, the heartwarming story of a special young man chosen to be on Billingsley's all-star team was one of the most powerful moments of the night.

"After the all-star selection meeting Jacob approached me about an addition to the roster," Spivey said.

"Jacob wanted to add a young man from his regular season team by the name of John Grimsley. John was born with spina bifida and when he plays baseball his mother and father push him in the outfield and around the bases in his wheelchair. John brings a light to the ball field like no other child in our program. He has the most positive attitude and uplifts everyone he meets."

Compiled from information submitted by Gainesville Parks and Recreation



Photo courtesy Gainesville Parks and Recreation

Youth baseball coach Jacob Billingsley was honored as volunteer of the year by the Georgia Recreation and Park Association District 7 at its annual banquet at the North Hall Community Center.

10-20-19

When the party's over



Times file photos

The American Collegiate Rowing Association Championships, top, usually generates an economic impact of about \$300,000, according to a state formula. Festivals like Mule Camp Market, bottom, also bring in tourism dollars as visitors spend money at local gas stations and restaurants.

Formula helps tourism officials measure economic impact of events

BY MEGAN REED
mreed@gainesvilletimes.com

When a tourism event is in town, local residents may see a sports team dining at a restaurant, extra boats on the lake or businesspeople spending an evening on the square.

While tourists may only stop in Gainesville and Hall County for a day or two, the dollars they spend can stay in the community long after they leave — and tourism officials have their own tools to track that impact.

The Georgia Department of Economic Development offers tourism officials in

the state access to an Economic Impact Calculator that can help determine how much an event can boost a local economy. The state purchased the tool from a vendor in 2015.

The calculator takes information such as the estimated number of visitors, number of overnight stays, average hotel room rate in the area, and admission cost for the event to estimate the economic impact of the event. The tool also breaks the spending down into categories such as lodging, transportation, and food and beverage purchases.

The calculator can be used to predict the impact of an event beforehand, or

actual numbers of participants and room stays can be used after the event to evaluate how it went.

Tourism officials can then use that data in planning future events for their area.

"They want to know whether or not something is going to be a good investment for them. They want to know how they can improve things year over year, and they want to make sure that they are getting out of it what they're putting into it," Ashley Barfield, director of tourism research for the Georgia Department of Economic Development, said.

■ Please see **IMPACT, 4A**

10-27-19

IMPACT

■ Continued from 1A

Meggan Hood, director of brand strategy for the economic development department, said economic impact also shows tourism officials the results of all the work they have done to recruit or plan events and help tourists navigate the process.

"Events are costly. They take both time and money from a community, to create a really good event," Hood said. "Communities will experience these events, they'll think positively or negatively about them, and for people who run events, (economic impact is) one of the most important things to help people understand the impact of an event, beyond some people showed up in my town that day."

Events that can seem small can impact businesses or other stakeholders more than they expect, Hood said.

"If there's a festival that goes on for the day in the town square, obviously the people who participate in that festival and sell goods and sell food understand that they've done well or they've had a good day, but maybe the owner of the gas station a block away may not see or understand that they're also benefiting," Hood said.

Regina Dyer, manager of the Gainesville Convention and Visitors Bureau, uses the state's calculator to estimate the impact of events and prioritize what events may need some extra work as they prepare to come to the city.

"There are so many events out there, and

of course we want to be involved with as many events as possible, but there are criteria we have to look at. Having a positive economic impact on the community will definitely boost an event and give them a little more priority," Dyer said. "We have to be selective, and that helps us see what events are bringing the people in, what events are benefiting the community."

The American Collegiate Rowing Association Championships, held annually at Lake Lanier, usually generates an economic impact of about \$300,000, Dyer said. The Georgia State Square Dancers Association held a convention at the Gainesville Civic Center in September that generated about \$225,000, she said. Spending at smaller events can add up, too. The Longstreet Society's recent conference required about 50 hotel rooms for three nights, a total of about \$15,000 just for lodging. One fishing tournament can generate more than \$200,000, Dyer said.

The Gainesville CVB is funded by the city's hotel-motel tax, an 8% fee charged on hotel rooms in the city. Events that require hotel stays benefit both the hotels and the CVB's efforts, Dyer said. Hotel-motel tax reports also track room stays, which increase when an event has been held, she said.

Stacey Dickson, president of the Lake Lanier

Convention and Visitors Bureau, also uses the state's economic impact calculator and said she likes how nuanced it is, taking into

account the type of event and location.

"An overnight guest for an event in downtown Atlanta is likely to spend more than the same visitor attending an event in Gainesville," she said. "Hotel rates, dining and entertainment cost more in that region than here."

State data shows that when a tourist comes to the area for business or leisure travel, not just an event, they spend an average of \$82 a day, Dickson said.

Like Dyer, Dickson said she keeps in touch with hotels about the business they're getting to give her an idea of tourism activity.

Tourism destinations can also use their own tools to track visitor activity, she said.

"Some destinations use the services of companies who not only track a potential visitor while they are searching for vacation destinations from their home, but they are able to follow them as they travel, push special offers to them in real time and follow up with them when they return home," Dickson said. "It's a little intrusive, but in the long run it helps destinations to target their most likely visitor and serve people who are genuinely interested in visiting the information they desire."



Dickson



Dyer



— FACES OF HALL COUNTY —

Faces of Hall County: Kate Mattison

Brad Abernathy (<https://www.abernathycochran.com/author/bradabernathy/>) / October 26, 2019

Meet Kate Mattison! Kate is the new Gainesville Parks and Recreation Director, taking over the position of longtime director Melvin Cooper. She is married to Nate and the couple has two daughters; Harper, 6 and Maggie, 17 months. The family moved to the area earlier this year from Columbus, Ohio.

“We always said we wanted to move towards mountains or water and I feel like we lucked out with the lake and mountains here,” Kate said. “I have told people this since moving here that I had always thought Midwesterners were really nice people but Southern hospitality is real! Everyone has been so nice, we’ve been really pleased so far.”

Kate went through an intense interview process for her position with Parks and Recreation. She said the most daunting part of the process was taking over for Melvin Cooper. “He is the absolute best and you can see why he is so beloved by everyone. He has been an ear to talk to when I have questions, he’ll stop by and we’ll have lunch,” she said.

We want to thank Kate for spending time with us and answering a few questions about her new life in Gainesville and Hall County.

Question: What inspired you or led you to your career today?

Answer: "I was a nature loving, outdoor sports person. I don't know if it's because my parents pushed it on me but either way it worked! I got my undergrad degree in Sports Management and Business and then I have a Masters degree in Recreation, Sport and Tourism. I got into it because we spent most of my childhood on roadtrips. I've been to all 50 states...we drove to Alaska when I was 7. My parents were teachers, so they had the summers off. We took our pop up camper and traveled all the time. I played a ton of sports in high school and I decided I'd rather work with the public as opposed to working at a division 1 college doing their halftime shows."

Q: What is your favorite restaurant in Hall County?

A: "I want to choose by type of food. So far my favorite Mexican restaurant is Senor Fiesta but I also love Atlas Pizza."

Q: What is one of your favorite places you have traveled to?

A: "I would say Denali in Alaska. We went there again two years ago. The number of grizzlies, moose and caribou we saw was amazing. The mountain was also spectacular. We also went to Iceland this past January. We try to travel a lot as you can tell. We took the kids to Iceland, too. I had on my bucket list to see the Northern Lights and we saw them. I was so happy I cried. It was amazing."

Pro Tip: Kate said for travel inspiration to look at the air-inclusive trips on Groupon.

Q: What was the first movie that you saw in the theatre?

A: "I remember seeing 'The Little Mermaid' and 'Jurassic Park.'"

Q: What three bands/musicians would like you like to see?

A: "Creedence Clearwater Revival (I can thank my mother for that, she is a huge CCR fan), Florida Georgia Line and Lizzo."

Q: Where is the next trip you are planning to take?

A: "In April, we are going to Big Bend National Park in Texas, where I've always wanted to visit. I always have in mind reasonable trips and then ones that take a lot of planning and my next crazy wild one is to go to Kruger National Park in South Africa and see the Big Five (lion, leopard, rhinoceros, elephant and Cape buffalo). That's a long term goal trip."

Q: Who is one of the most interesting people that you have met in Hall County?

A: "Melvin Cooper (<https://www.abernathycochran.com/faces-of-hall-county-melvin-cooper/>)"

100 percent, because he knows everyone and everything."

Q: What three words mean HOME to you?

A: "Happy, chaotic and full of love."

Q: If you could star in a movie who would be your costar?

A: "Chris Pratt (formerly of the TV sitcom 'Parks and Recreation')."

Q: What advice would you give a crowd of people?

A: "Life is short, be brave and go on the adventure. I'm doing it right now."

The Faces of Hall County is a project to showcase the amazing people that live or work in our community. If you would like to nominate an interesting person to be featured please email babernathy@gonorton.com (<mailto:babernathy@gonorton.com>).

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**Brad Abernathy and Abernathy Cochran Group
would love your Faces nominations.
(<http://www.abernathycochran.com/nomination/>)**

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Gainesville changes location for proposed Youth Athletic Complex

GAINESVILLE – It's always good to have a "Plan B" in case "Plan A" doesn't work as expected.

At the Thursday morning work session of the Gainesville City Council, council members heard from City Manager Bryan Lackey about just such an adjustment being needed for the city's new youth athletic complex, funded by SPLOST VII revenues and planned for a site across the road from Allen Creek Soccer Complex.

Lackey said that shortly after architectural designs for the new complex were approved, "Our designers came back to us and said, 'Folks, we're getting some shallow rock out there, and in order to...flatten out that area...the rock estimates are going to be about \$2-million.'"

"Well, that's a third of the budget," Lackey said grimly.

"So we started thinking, why don't we maybe start to evaluate another site where we're not going to have to pay so much in rock removal or site development costs," Lackey continued.

Lackey said he also felt the Allen Creek location would not be the best place to promote the city and attract visitors to the downtown area. "People coming in to town for soccer tournaments there, they come in and leave; they're not really seeing Gainesville."

"So when we started looking at a map, we saw that there's a big piece of land out on the east side of Gainesville, already in the city, we don't have to annex it...it's 1500-acres."

The parcel is just east of I-985 and just south of Old Cornelia Highway, behind White Sulphur Elementary School.

Lackey added, "While we don't need 1500-acres, it's been sitting there a while, it's dormant, why don't we go approach that property owner and see if they're willing to carve off a little bit of that for us."

Lackey said that working out the details with the property owner for such a transaction was more complicated than expected, but eventually all sides reached an agreement. He said once the property owners realized that the youth sports complex would make the rest of the acreage more marketable and valuable, terms for selling a small portion of the property to the city were quickly agreed upon.

"It's roughly 88.9-acres. The price comes to almost \$778,000," Lackey said. He added that with approval Tuesday evening from the Gainesville City Council, closing on the property would likely take place in January, 2020.

Lackey told council members that plans to name the complex in honor of recently retired longtime Parks and Recreation Director Melvin Cooper would not change.

Cooper's successor, Kate Mattison, explained that adjustments to the original \$6.75-million budget for constructing the complex would need to be worked out. "We have already done some work out at the property adjacent to Allen Creek, so that takes away a little bit of money...and the (purchase) of the new property comes out of that as well...and there will be some work we have to do over again: a survey and the geo-tech coring, and we might have to reconfigure the layout based upon the topography out there."

Gainesville Mayor Danny Dunagan called the decision to relocate the park a good idea that will benefit the entire community. "It's going to be a great amenity for our city ...it's been a long time coming...and I hear they've already got somebody who might be interested in the rest of that property."

