

IN THE NEWS

February 2016

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



New logo, new name approved for Olympic site

By Jane Harrison

The remake of the site where 1996 rowers and paddlers competed now includes a name change and potential new logo. Gainesville Hall '96 board members approved a minor revision, renaming the venue "Lake Lanier Olympic Park." The title change reflects a more accurate description of the site, which covers not only the rowing and kayaking venue, but also Clarks Bridge Park, a popular locale for beachgoers, picnickers and boaters. Members voted in favor of dropping the old title "Lake Lanier Olympic Venue," for a more inclusive moniker.

Site manager Morgan House recommended the change last month during board discussions of ongoing renovations in preparation for an Olympic qualifying canoe/kayak event in May. The Pan American Sprint Canoe/Kayak Championships coincides with the 20th anniversary of Olympic competition on Lake Lanier. The board plans a birthday gala tentatively in August during the running of the 2016 Summer Olympics in Brazil.

The re-branding of the park will include a potential new logo that depicts an arch of blue water with slanting bars rising out of it, reflecting the colors of the Olympic rings.

"Water makes our site special ... we wanted to incorporate the feeling of water with the Olympic rings, without using the rings," said board member Stacey Dickson, also president of the Lake Lanier Convention and Visitors Bureau. The CVB staff and The Times Gainesville newspaper personnel brainstormed the proposed design, which also includes an option with Olympic rings depicted inside the water section.

Dickson said international Olympic committee rules prohibit copying the Olympic symbol in former site logos; but she added it might be worth a try to propose including the rings in the Lanier logo.

A surge of investment into the park continued last month with a \$35,000 contribution by 811 Call Before You Dig. The national safety organization snared the title sponsorship for the Pan American championship.

House shared how the 811 organization has a poignant link to the Olympic park. Current 811 spokesperson Cliff Meidl started kayaking after doctors told him he would likely never walk again after an electric shock burned his

legs when he hit electric lines using a jack hammer on a concrete slab. The former runner became one of the best kayakers in the world and competed on Lake Lanier in the 1996 Olympic Games and again in the 2000 Olympics in Australia, where he was the U.S. team flag bearer.

House said Meidl called him about sponsoring the Pan Am Games on Lanier. He expects 811 to launch a major marketing campaign around the competition.

The donation reaches nearly half the \$75,000 private sponsorship goal for the May event. Total private investments for the Olympic qualifier and anniversary celebration have topped \$335,000, including \$250,000 from Springer Mountain Farms, which grants multi-year naming rights to the finish tower, \$35,000 from an anonymous donor, and \$15,000 from the Lake Lanier Islands Development Authority. Public monies committed include a \$300,000 Appalachian Regional Commission grant, \$800,000 from Gainesville and Hall County general funds and Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax budgets.

GH '96 chairperson Mimi Collins said she believes the community will keep stepping up to support the venue. "There are so many community businesses I

think will be all over" the sponsorship effort, she said. The board also seeks smaller donations, from \$10,000 to \$2,500 with coordinating marketing opportunities on banners and buoys and perks such as free parking.

Physical improvements at the park tower began last month as local contractor Carroll Daniel Construction set to work on an ADA-approved ramp. The target completion date for renovations, which include a bridge from the tower to the plaza and improvements to the service building, is before March 19, when the John Hunter Regatta expects to bring thousands of rowers and spectators to the site. The Pan Am continental qualifier begins May 19.

Other changes will meet the eye in coming months as a Springer Mountain Farms LED sign lights up tower facing the Clarks Bridge and a smaller logo from the major sponsor is erected on the opposite side. In addition, board members reported a local art organization plans to erect a sculpture by a student public art winner and master gardeners anticipate planting butterfly gardens at gated entries.

The board also approved purchase of nine boat holding docks, for the starting line on the Olympic channel, replacing worn out 20 year old docks.

Wolverines undaunted by high water

By Jane Harrison

The University of Michigan women's rowing crew weathered new heights on Lake Lanier last month when the lake rose out of its banks during their winter training camp. The Lady Wolverines "didn't miss a beat," Lake Lanier Rowing Club past-president John Ferriss said of the voyagers from the north who came down to practice in the LLRC training session.

Travelers as far as Thompson Bridge saw Michigan blue stroking down lake from the Lake Lanier Olympic Park, which was covered with shin-high water after heavy rain escorted Lanier to its highest December level ever.

Ferriss said that crew members

were undaunted by having to wade in to launch their boats.

"This is not a problem," Ferriss said they told him, adding that frigid Lake Superior, icy in December, is still uninvitingly cold in July.

About 2,000 collegiate and high school rowers were expected to train on Lanier by the end of March. Athletes rent a boathouse exercise room and coaches' launch boats from LLRC, down grub at local cafeterias and restaurants, and bed down at area accommodations. Three crews weathered the storms of December and January. The remainder, mostly from ice-bound waters up north, will warm up on Lanier this month and next.

• Stormwater

Continued from Page 2

shelved a potential fee on impervious surfaces and that it will remain among options to pay for stormwater infrastructure. He said last month that staff is analyzing available alternatives and com-

posing a credits program that would offset the fee in some circumstances.

Lackey said, in the meantime, the city "is working to develop a public education program."

Transportation Forum 2016

Thursday, March 10

11:30 am - 1:00 pm

University of North Georgia
Gainesville /Continuing Ed Auditorium

The Chamber's Annual Transportation Forum is open to the public and creates discussion with transportation officials, Chamber members, business professionals and community leaders. Speakers will include officials from the Georgia Department of Transportation as well as the Gainesville-Hall County Metropolitan Planning Organization. Learn about important updates on current transportation projects! \$15 for Chamber Members, \$20 Non-members, and includes a boxed lunch. Reservations required. Reservations: Gerri Collins, 770-532-6206 x 106. Email: gcollins@ghcc.com



Job Fair 2016

Wednesday, March 23

10:00 am - 2:00 pm

* Gainesville Civic Center
830 Green Street in Gainesville

- Share Information About Your Company
- Recruit Qualified Job Applicants
- Meet Hundreds of Job Seekers

The Greater Hall Chamber's Job Fair, presented by Spherion Staffing Services, provides the perfect forum for companies hiring to recruit new employees.

Meet hundreds of job candidates face-to-face. **The event is free and open to the public.** Employer Booths: \$300 (\$325 with electricity); \$200 Non-Profits (\$225 with electricity). Reserve your exhibit space NOW! Details: Amanda Lewis, 770-532-

6206 x 111. Email: alewis@ghcc.com. Online: GreaterHallChamber.com

GreaterHallChamber.com



FEBRUARY 2016

Wednesday, February 3
Healthcare Committee
8:00 a.m. - Chamber

Thursday, February 4 ✨
Buy Local Expo / Safe & Green Expo: 2:00 - 7:00 p.m.
Business After Hours & Taste of Gainesville: 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.
Gainesville Civic Center

Tuesday, February 9
Small Business Seminar
"7 Ways Company Culture Leads to Success"
Presented by Lee Goff, GetUWired
7:45 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. - Chamber

Tuesday, February 9
Youth Leadership Hall
8:15 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Tuesday, February 9
Ambassadors Council
3:45 p.m. - 2 Dog Cafe

Wednesday, February 10
Network Over Coffee
8:30 - 9:30 a.m. - McDonald's Oakwood

Thursday, February 11
Leadership Hall County
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Thursday, February 11
VISION 2030 Board of Directors
8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. - Chamber

Friday, February 12
Economic Development Council
7:30 a.m. - Chamber

Tuesday, February 16
South Hall Business Coalition
"Update on Lanier Christian Academy"
Presented by Al Gainey
8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.
Lanier Christian Academy
5285 Strickland Road, Flowery Branch

Wednesday, February 17
Issues Committee
8:00 a.m. - Chamber

Wednesday, February 17
Lunch 'n Learn
12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Milton Martin Toyota in Oakwood

Thursday, February 18
Chamber Executive Committee
12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. - Chamber

Friday, February 19
Arbor Day Celebration
10 a.m. - Elachee Nature Science Center

Wednesday, February 24
Network Over Coffee
8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. - Panera Bread

Thursday, February 25
Chamber Board of Directors ✨
12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Gainesville Civic Center

Thursday, February 25
Business After Hours
Sponsored by **Hasty Pope**
5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
529 Green Street in Gainesville

MARCH 2016

Friday, March 4
New Member Breakfast & Orientation
8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.
Lanier Charter Career Academy

Thursday, March 10
Transportation Forum
11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
University of North Georgia Gainesville

Wednesday March 23 ✨
Job Fair
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Gainesville Civic Center

Thursday, March 31
9th Annual Chamber Chase 5K and 2 Mile Wellness Walk
6:00 p.m. - Riverside Military Academy
Register Online: ChamberChase5k.com

Events Online: GreaterHallChamber.com

Thank You Chamber Event Sponsors

AccessWDUN • Anasley Communications • Chick-fil-A Stonebridge Crossing
Cotton Eyed Joe's • Elachee Nature Science Center • Georgia Power
Hall County Master Gardeners • Hasty & Pope • Highland Mountain Beverage
Jacobs Media • Jackson EMC • Keep Hall Beautiful • Milton Martin Honda
Milton Martin Toyota • New Leaf Landscaping • Premier GA Printing & Labels
Red Clay Interactive • Signs by Tomorrow • South State Bank
The Longstreet Clinic • WSI Digital Rainmakers

Lanier Technical College Update

Construction of new campus to begin in May 2016



Dr. Ray Perren, President of Lanier Technical College, presented an update at the Chamber's January South Hall Business Coalition meeting. Dr. Perren discussed details for a new campus slated to open in fall of 2018. Construction crews could break ground as early as May on the new location of Lanier Tech and includes an estimated 320,000-square-foot, six-building campus on 85 acres on Highway 365 at Howard Road in Hall County. Perren noted that many factors went into selecting the tract on Highway 365, including accessibility, size, and proximity to prospective employers for students.

"We tried to locate where our graduates are going. We took a look at health care providers. We took a look at industry. We took a look at other employers where graduates are going," said Perren, noting that 40 percent of the school's 5,157 students are enrolled in a health-related program.

The new location will feature all the current programs offered at the 43-acre campus in Oakwood, as well several new courses including commercial truck driving, hospitality and tourism, marine engine technology, and poultry science technology.

Buildings to be constructed at the new campus include training facilities for firefighting technology students, a mock cell tower for wireless technology students and a commercial truck driving range. The current Oakwood campus will be taken over by the University of North Georgia, expanding their campus in Gainesville. laniertech.edu

South Hall Business Coalition

(L-R): Gary Smith, Milton Martin Honda (an event sponsor); South Hall Council Chair Andy Kalinauskas, Conditioned Air Systems; Program Presenter, Dr. Ray Perren, President, Lanier Technical College; Kit Dunlap, President & CEO, Greater Hall Chamber, at the January South Hall Business Coalition Meeting at Lanier Technical College. The Coalition will meet on Tuesday, February 16 from 8-9am for an update on Lanier Christian Academy (LCA) by Al Gainey. LCA, formed by the unification of Heritage Academy and North Georgia Christian School, will offer unique educational models in the new school year (August 2016). Options include the traditional 5-day school model or the 3-day University Model (3 days of class and 2 at home allowing parents direct involvement). By unifying the two schools, LCA is able to provide more opportunities in the classroom, more sports programs, and increased options for fine arts and technology. Plans are to relocate to a permanent campus located on 145 acres in South Hall County. lanierchristian.org



Chamber South Hall Business Coalition meetings are held monthly and sponsored by Milton Martin Honda and Red Clay Interactive. Light breakfast included. \$5 Chamber Members; \$15 Non-Members. Details: Megan Martin, 770-532-6206 x 115. Email: mmartin@ghcc.com

Annual Job Fair is March 23 ✨



Job seekers complete applications on-site at the Chamber's 2015 Job Fair. The 2016 Job Fair is Thursday, March 23 at the Gainesville Civic Center. The event is open to the public, with no admission fee and 60+ employers on hand looking to hire.

The Greater Hall Chamber's Annual Job Fair is Thursday, March 23 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm at the Gainesville Civic Center and is a great opportunity for both employers and job seekers. The event is open to the public with NO admission fee!



Employers will have the opportunity to meet hundreds of job candidates face-to-face during a short period of time. Employer booths are available for \$300 (\$325 with electricity) \$200 for Non-Profits (\$225 with electricity).

For job seekers, the event provides coveted face-time and personal contact with hiring managers. The Presenting Sponsor is Spherion Staffing Services. Additional sponsors include Express Employment Professionals (Platinum); Kings Hawaiian (Gold); HTI Employment Solutions (Silver), Gainesville Area Employer Committee, Georgia Department of Labor and Lanier Technical College. Goods/Service Sponsors: Signs by Tomorrow, McDonald's, McGarity's Business Products, Milton Martin Honda and Panera Bread. For Employer Exhibit Info, contact Amanda Lewis, 770-532-6206 x 111. Email: alewis@ghcc.com

Accolades: Gainesville-Hall County

Site Selection Magazine ranked Gainesville-Hall County 5th on its list of "Top Metros by Number of Projects" in metros with population less than 200,000 and named Georgia as the #1 place to do business in the nation for the third consecutive year.

The Milken Institute Report has rated the Gainesville-Hall County MSA among the "Best Small Metro Areas in the U.S." for the fifth consecutive year, based on job and salary growth. Gainesville-Hall County is the #1 ranking Metro area in Georgia, according to the Milken Institute.

Area Development included Gainesville-Hall County among its 2015 cities for "Year-After-Year Growth," and Georgia has been named the #1 place for business by Area Development and CNBC.

Forbes Magazine has rated Gainesville as one of the "Best Small Places for Business & Careers" for the last four years.

In 2015, the Federal Reserve Bank named Gainesville-Hall County one of the most dynamic economies in Georgia and the nation.

Northeast Georgia Medical Center is Georgia's #1 hospital and is #2 in the U.S. for overall hospital, medical and surgical care, according to a 2015 study by CareChex.

Lanier Technical College was named Georgia's Technical College of the Year for 2014. It is the fastest growing Technical College in Georgia, with an 8.5% increase in enrollment, to 5,240 students.

Where to Retire Magazine named Gainesville one of the "Top 5 Places to Retire Affordably" in 2014 and a "Tax-Friendly City" in 2015.

Chairman's Column
Page 2

Economic
Development
Page 4

Upcoming Events
Page 6

Member
Announcements
Page 10

VISION 2030
Page 11

Small Business
of the Month
Page 12

Welcome New
Members
Page 13

Leadership Hall
Page 14

Ribbon Cuttings
Page 15

Save the Date

Thursday, February 4
Buy Local Expo

Tuesday, February 16
South Hall Business Coalition

Thursday, February 25
Business After Hours

FEBRUARY
2016



"A Taste of Gainesville" is 5-7pm at Business After Hours sponsored by AccessWDUN with menu samples from local restaurants: 2 Dog, Buffalo Wild Wings, Fajitas Mexican Restaurant, Gainesville Seafood Market, Mountain Fresh Creamery, Oakwood Occasions, Panera Bread, Scott's Downtown and Southern Smoq BBQ. Open to the Public. \$5 Entry Fee. Cash Bar. See you at the Expo! Details: Megan Martin, 770-532-6206 x 115. Email: mmartin@ghcc.com

The Buy Local EXPO IS THIS Thursday, February 4!
The EXPO not only showcases businesses in Greater Hall County but also features great prizes including a **GRAND PRIZE DRAWING** for over \$1,000 of local merchandise!

Follow the prize and drawings at #BuyLocalWinBig

- February 4 from 2-7pm at the Gainesville Civic Center
- Great Drawings throughout the day • Open to the Public
- Business After Hours at the EXPO • Free Shuttle Service
- "A Taste of Gainesville" is 5-7pm at Business After Hours
- Grand Prize Drawing at 6:30 pm
- Do not have to be present to win Grand Prize

Grand Prize Valued at \$1,000 Includes:

2 Dog Restaurant Gift Card (\$100) • DressUp Gift Card (\$100)
Look Who's Happy Dog Treats (\$150 Value) • Turkey Fryer from Liberty Utilities (\$100 Value) • Home Décor from House Dressing Interiors and Gainesville Design Center (\$510 Value)

2016 Chamber Chase 5K Register Online Now

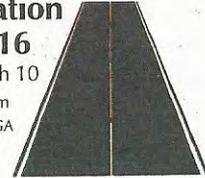
- Chamber Chase 5K is Thursday, March 31
- Race at 6:00 pm / Walk at 6:10 pm / Awards at 7:00 pm
- Riverside Military Academy in Gainesville
- Register Online now-3/24 and at the Chamber now-3/31
- \$30 per runner/walker; \$35 after March 17
- Register Online: ChamberChase5K.com



Transportation Forum 2016

Thursday, March 10

11:30 am - 1:00 pm
University of North GA
Gainesville Campus
Open to the Public



The Chamber's **Annual Transportation Forum** is **Thursday, March 10** at the **University of North Georgia** from **11:30 am - 1:00 pm** at the Gainesville Campus, Continuing Education Auditorium. The forum is **open to the public** and creates discussion with transportation officials, Chamber members, business professionals and community leaders.

Speakers will include officials from the **Georgia Department of Transportation** as well as representatives from the **Gainesville-Hall County Metropolitan Planning Organization**.

The event is presented by **Independence Bank of Georgia and Rochester & Associates**. Additional sponsors are Coca-Cola of Gainesville, Highland Mountain Water, McDonald's, AccessWDUN and The Times.

Cost \$15 for Chamber Members, \$20 Non-members, and includes a boxed lunch. Reservations required. Gerri Collins, 770-532-6206 x 106. Email: gcollins@ghcc.com. Online: greaterhallchamber.com

FEATURED MEMBER

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Finding wedding inspiration



Photos by **SCOTT ROGERS** | The Times

Models show the latest designs in wedding dresses Sunday afternoon at the Gainesville Civic Center during the 24th annual Bridal Expo.

Annual bridal expo offers brides, grooms chance to view vendors

BY KRISTEN OLIVER
koliver@gainesvilletimes.com

The Gainesville Civic Center hummed with the sound of women chatting excitedly with their mothers and closest friends, as they planned the best day of their lives.

The 24th annual Bridal Expo welcomed hundreds of brides with their friends, fiancés and families Sunday at the Gainesville Civic Center. Nearly 50 vendors from across Northeast Georgia set up booths with samples for attendees.

The theme of this year's expo was "Be Inspired," and future brides had plenty of inspiration at their disposal.

Vendors included companies providing decor, tuxedo rentals, invitations, photography, registries and more. Some booths offered wedding makeup services, while event planners had numerous table arrangements on display.

Wedding venues included the civic center itself; the Atlanta Botanical Garden, A Smithgall Woodland Legacy; the Hilton Garden Inn; Lake Lanier Olympic Venue; the Smith House in Dahlonega and Greg Hall in Hartwell, to name a few.



■ Please see **EXPO, 6A**

Vianey Ortiz takes a photo of a display of champagne-filled glasses Sunday afternoon.

2/1/16



EXPO

Continued from 1A

Several caterers offered samples of food, including 2 Dog Cafe and Longstreet Cafe from Gainesville and Natalie Jane's Restaurant from Cornelia.

Music, including string quartets, DJs and bands, was available for perusal, and several photographers and florists were set up, as well.

Brides were given bags from Gainesville Parks and Recreation, which they filled with pamphlets, business cards and fliers.

Bride-to-be Alexis Chadwick said she has started planning her summer wedding in Dahlonega, but there were still some items she was hoping to find at the expo.

"I'm getting married June 3," she said. "The Juliette Chapel is where I'm getting married, but I'm here looking for cakes and flowers and such."

Guests were also treated to bridal fashion shows featuring two Georgian fashion

designers: Atlanta-based House of Van Miller fashion brand by Vanessa Henderson and Rita Workman of Hana Couture of Buford.

Bride-to-be Tiffany Anderson said she was excited to also see travel agents offering honeymoon packages.

"I've done a lot of planning already, but it really seems like you could plan a whole wedding right here," she said.

The Times was the major media sponsor for this year's Bridal Expo and debuted its new Brides & Grooms magazine at the event. The magazine shares a variety of features about getting married in North Georgia and was available for free at the expo and at The Times office.

Other major sponsors included Carrie Jean Photography, Oakwood Occasions and Greg Hall Weddings and Events.

"I just love this," said Dee Reising, a wedding consultant with Occasions Florist in Gainesville. "It's so much fun to see all the little details that make a wedding come together."



Photos by SCOTT ROGERS | The Times

Top: Models wait backstage for their turn on the runway Sunday afternoon at the Gainesville Civic Center during the fashion show portion of the 24th annual Bridal Expo. Above: Elizabeth Shults, right, and Ashley Shults sample food from Donna Clopton, left, at the Lodge Montagna booth

2/1/16

Buy Local, Safe & Green Expo set for Thursday

The Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce's annual Buy Local, Safe & Green Expo will celebrate and showcase local businesses of all varieties from 2-7 p.m. Thursday at the Gainesville Civic Center.

Featuring nearly 70 exhibitors, the event "promotes buying local and keeping tax dollars here," according to Megan Martin, vice president of membership and events with the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce.

She said there's a wide range of exhibitors, including "everything from a local water company to a chiropractor, lots of nonprofits, local restaurants and a car dealership."

For more information, visit www.ghcc.com.

2/1/16 Times staff reports



Buy Local Safe & Green EXPO
Thursday, February 4
 2:00 pm - 7:00 pm
 Gainesville Civic Center

Visit the EXPO and Register!
Grand Prize Drawing
\$1,000 of Local Products
 Drawing at 6:30 pm
 Do not have to be present to win!
 Follow: **#BuyLocalWinBig**

EXHIBITORS

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2 Dog Restaurant & Catering | HTI Employment Solutions | Panera Bread |
| AccessWDUN | Jaemor Farms | People Check |
| American Cancer Society | "Just" People, Inc. | PrideStaff |
| Ansley Communications Group | Keep Hall Beautiful | Ranger Lock |
| Big Creek Foods/Look Who's Happy | Kristy Collins Slaton Farmers Agcy | Scott's Downtown |
| Bio Green of Northeast GA | Lake Lanier CVB | Signs by Tomorrow |
| Carry on Youth | Lake Lanier Olympic Park | South State Bank |
| Collins Property Group | Lanier Christian Academy | Southern Directory Publishing |
| Comcast Spotlight | Lanier Technical College | Spectrum Business |
| Cry for Me, No More | Lemonade Makers | Spherion Professional Staffing |
| District 2 Public Health | Main Street / Gainesville CVB | Suntrust Mortgage |
| Fidelity Bank | McGarity's Business Products | The Arts Council |
| GA Manufacturing Ext. Partnership | MICA Compliance Services | The Times |
| Gainesville Design Center | Milton Martin Honda | T-Mobile |
| Georgia's Own Credit Union | Mobile Fleet Solutions, Inc. | TV 18 |
| HallCO Credit Union | Mountain Fresh Creamery | VISION 2030 |
| Hayes Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram | MV-1 Specialty Vehicles | Vistage International |
| Highland Mountain Beverage | Oakwood Occasions | Watkins Total HealthCare |
| His Field 4 Life / Young Living Oils | Organo Gold Coffee | Woodruff Medical |

Open to the Public
No Admission Fee • Free Shuttle Service

Business After Hours

5:00-7:00 pm at the Gainesville Civic Center

A Taste of Gainesville-Hall County!

Delicious Menu Samples from Local Restaurants • \$5 Entry Fee • Cash Bar

2 Dog Restaurant • Buffalo Wild Wings • Fajitas • Gainesville Seafood Market • Panera Bread
 Mountain Fresh Creamery • Oakwood Occasions • Scott's Downtown • Southern Smoq BBQ

Buy Local EXPO: No Admission Fee
Business After Hours: \$5 Entry Fee
 Grand Prize Drawing at 6:30pm
 1 entry per person • Do not have to be present to win
 Open to the Public • Free Convenient Shuttle



For Information: Megan Martin, 770-532-6206. Email: mmartin@ghcc.com

GreaterHallChamber.com - 770-532-6206

No water resistance



Get Out file photo

A group of brave swimmers plunge in to the chilly waters of Lake Lanier during last year's annual Polar Bear Plunge at the Lake Lanier Olympic Venue. This year's event was originally set for Jan. 1, but flooding and debris in the lake caused the event to be postponed until Feb. 6.

Rescheduled Polar Plunge set for this Saturday

Times staff reports

Participants young and old can jump in the frigid waters of Lake Lanier at the 19th annual Polar Bear Plunge after flooding and debris in the lake postponed the New Year's Day event.

Individuals or groups can take the plunge at noon Saturday, Feb. 6, at the Lake Lanier Olympic Venue on 3105 Clarks Bridge Road.

"Last year we had about 160," Lanier Canoe and Kayak club volunteer Chris Potter said in a previous Times story. "We hope to have more this year to jump."

Participants will be divided into two categories: Dare or Scare. Those who "DARE" can dive into the water and receive a "I dared" T-shirt. Those who are "SCARE"

will take home an "I scared" T-shirt.

Afterward, all may enjoy a bowl of warm chili and hot cocoa. The chili comes from a cook-off, which is mostly the members of the club, but anyone may cook up a batch.

Registration will begin at 10:45 a.m. and the plunge will happen at noon. Jumpers should be ready by then.

The cost is \$30 for a single jump or \$90 for a family jump up to four people. Online registration is at www.lckc.org/events/polar-bear-plunge and closes today.

The event supports Lanier Canoe and Kayak Club's Olympic legacy program, which helps train paddlers for a chance to compete in the Summer Olympics. This spring, the venue will host the U.S. Olympic Trials, the Canadian Olympic Trials and the Pan American Games.

2/4/12



Greater Hall Chamber Of Commerce

Buy Local Safe & Green EXPO
Thursday, February 4
 2:00 pm - 7:00 pm
 Gainesville Civic Center

Visit the EXPO and Register!
Grand Prize Drawing
\$1,000 of Local Products
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- | | | |
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| AccessWDUN | Jaemor Farms | People Check |
| American Cancer Society | "Just" People, Inc. | PrideStaff |
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| Big Creek Foods/Look Who's Happy | Kristy Collins Slaton Farmers Agy | Scott's Downtown |
| Bio Green of Northeast GA | Lake Lanier CVB | Signs by Tomorrow |
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| Collins Property Group | Lanier Christian Academy | Southern Directory Publishing |
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| Cry for Me, No More | Lemonade Makers | Spherion Professional Staffing |
| District 2 Public Health | Main Street / Gainesville CVB | Suntrust Mortgage |
| Fidelity Bank | McGarity's Business Products | The Arts Council |
| GA Manufacturing Ext. Partnership | MICA Compliance Services | The Times |
| Gainesville Design Center | Milton Martin Honda | T-Mobile |
| Georgia's Own Credit Union | Mobile Fleet Solutions, Inc. | TV 18 |
| HallCO Credit Union | Mountain Fresh Creamery | VISION 2030 |
| Hayes Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram | MV-1 Specialty Vehicles | Vistage International |
| Highland Mountain Beverage | Oakwood Occasions | Watkins Total HealthCare |
| His Field 4 Life / Young Living Oils | Organó Gold Coffee | Woodruff Medical |

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Buy Local EXPO: No Admission Fee
 Business After Hours: \$5 Entry Fee

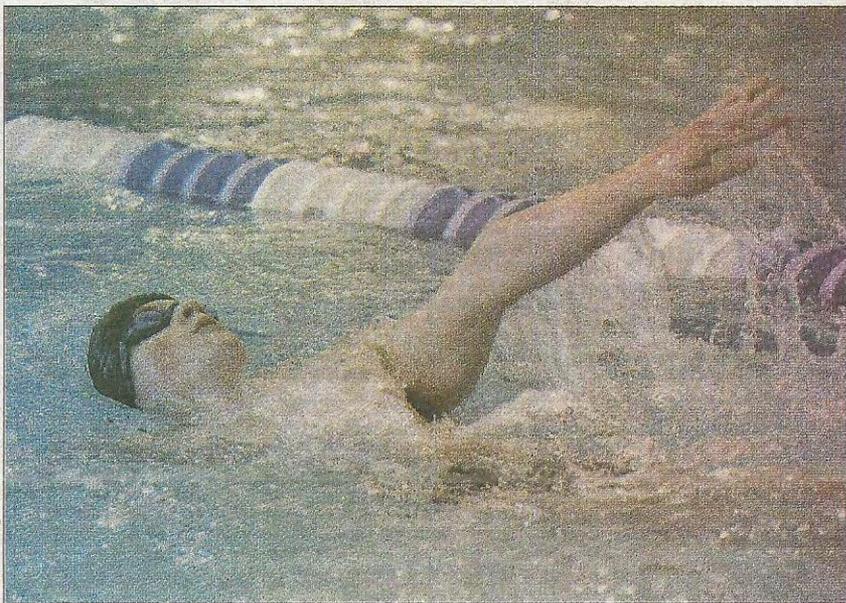
Grand Prize Drawing at 6:30pm
 1 entry per person • Do not have to be present to win
 Open to the Public • Free Convenient Shuttle



For Information: Megan Martin, 770-532-6206. Email: mmartin@ghcc.com

GreaterHallChamber.com – 770-532-6206

2/1/16



Photos by ERIN O. SMITH | The Times

Chestatee's Luke Hene swims backstroke during Thursday's practice at Frances Meadows Aquatic Center in Gainesville. Hene will be competing in the 100 individual medley and the 100 backstroke during Saturday's state swim meet at Georgia Tech.

Setting ambitious goals

Area swimmers prepare to break personal bests at state meet

BY COLIN OCHS
cochs@gainesvilletimes.com

Chestatee senior Luke Hene is focusing on finishing out his high school swim career with a personal-best time in his strongest event, the 100-yard backstroke, at the GHSA Swimming and Diving Championships this Friday and Saturday.

"I want to break 50 (seconds)," Hene said. "I've never done it before. I want to do it so I can prove to myself and my coach that I am capable of it."

If Hene accomplishes his goal, it will be the fastest 100-yard backstroke ever recorded by a Chestatee High swimmer. He qualified fourth in the state with a time of 52.22.

Along with the 100-yard backstroke, Hene will be competing in the 200-yard individual medley, while helping the relay team for the 200-yard medley and 200-



Gainesville High's Brian Monaghan swims breaststroke Thursday during practice at Frances Meadows Aquatic Center in Gainesville. Monaghan will be competing in the 100 butterfly and 100 breaststroke during the state swim meet at Georgia Tech held on Friday and Saturday.

yard freestyle.

"It's definitely great to swim with some teammates that have been working hard who don't get the opportunity to swim year round like I do, but have been working with our coaches," Hene said.

Chestatee senior Trace

Austin is one such swimmer who has also qualified for two individual events.

The championships will be on the Georgia Tech campus at the Recreation Center.

"It's not your typical year-round swim meet," said Hene, who has scholarship

State swimming championships

When: 9 a.m. today for preliminaries, finals start 1 p.m. Saturday

Where: Georgia Tech campus recreation center, Atlanta

Tickets: \$12 for all day

offers from the University of Pittsburgh, University of Cincinnati, West Virginia University, University of Buffalo and East Carolina University.

"It's a high school meet that a lot of my friends will attend. You want to impress your friends and try your best to show where you stand in the state."

The North Hall girls swim team boasts two top-five qualifiers in the 100-yard freestyle. Senior Ashley Johnston finished with the fifth fastest time in the state, while junior Rosemary Schofield recorded the top time in

■ Please see STATE, 2B

2/5/16

STATE

■ Continued from 1B

the state of Georgia at 53.84 seconds.

"(Schofield) is a very hard worker," said North Hall swim coach Peter Doig. "She has a positive attitude and hopefully it will show Friday and Saturday."

With two of the five fastest 100-yard freestyle swimmers in the state, North Hall is expected to be strong contenders in the girls' 200-yard freestyle relay.

Joining Schofield and Johnston on the relay team are Jordan Battle and Emily Anne Frederick.

Schofield and Johnston also qualified third in the 50-yard freestyle and ninth in the 100-yard

backstroke respectively.

Other top qualifiers include Gainesville's Tanner Doan (200-yard individual medley) and Brian Monaghan (100-yard breaststroke), Riverside Military senior Kevin Reale (100-yard breaststroke and 100-yard butterfly), Jefferson senior Camille Porter (50-yard freestyle) and Chestee sophomore Lindsey Grater (200-yard freestyle).

Flowery Branch juniors Alec Burke and Jena Killian have also qualified for individual events.

Burke will be competing in the boys 100-meter butterfly and 100-meter freestyle, while Killian will be in the girls 50-meter freestyle.

"(Burke and Killian) worked very hard to overcome obstacles," said Flowery Branch swim coach

Valerie Lancaster.

"We are excited to see them end their season in the state championship."

The Flowery Branch swim team also has six entries in the team relays. Both the boys and girls relay teams qualified for the 200-meter medley, 200-meter freestyle and 400-yard freestyle.

Buford, Jackson County, Lakeview Academy, Lumpkin County and West Hall will also have swimmers that will be hoping to compete through the weekend.

Preliminaries start 9 a.m. Friday, while the finals will begin 1 p.m. Saturday.

Other area schools represented in the state championships are Buford, Jackson County, Lakeview Academy, Lumpkin County and West Hall.

2/5/16

Raising 'brand awareness'



Photos by ERIN O. SMITH | The Times

Jane Gregson with Keep Hall Beautiful watches as Sally Jones spins a prize wheel Thursday at the annual Buy Local Safe & Green Expo at the Gainesville Civic Center.

Buy Local Expo showcases more than 60 area businesses

BY FRANK REDDY
freddy@gainesvilletimes.com

Officials with the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce said Thursday's Buy Local Safe & Green Expo went well, bringing in more than 300 at the annual gathering of local businesses exhibiting wares and services at the Gainesville Civic Center.

Paul and Karen Beiger, who are newcomers to Gainesville, said they came out to see a sampling of what the area has to offer.

"We just wanted to see what's available here," Karen Beiger said.

"So far, there's a lot of variety."

Cheryl Carter of Flowery Branch said she too came out to see business offerings.

"Last time I was here I found some good information," Carter said as she walked the floors, taking pamphlets and business cards.

"I do enjoy coming here," she said. "I feel like I learn something new when I'm here."

Kelsey Bishop, owner of Lemonade Makers, said the annual Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce gathering is a chance for



Jay Lawson with the Lake Lanier Convention and Visitors Bureau speaks with Ted Weiss at the expo.

■ Please see EXPO, 5A

25116



EXPO

■ Continued from 1A

small businesses like hers to get exposure.

"That's a huge factor with an event like this," Bishop said. "Just letting people know you're here and what your business is all about."

Warren King, a board chair with Vistage, worked a booth several feet away from Bishop.

He said the Buy Local expo was an opportunity to help raise "brand awareness."

Megan Martin, vice president of membership and events with the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce, said the day was "a great success."

The expo continued as the chamber's business after hours and "A Taste of Gainesville" began at 5 p.m. at the Civic Center, which Martin said both "were going great," as well.

Above: Bert and Laura Nagy browse business booths Thursday at the annual Buy Local Safe & Green Expo at the Gainesville Civic Center. The Nagys recently moved to Gainesville and attended the expo to see what the area had to offer.

Right: Bryson Smith, 6, puts flavoring on his Kona Ice on Thursday at the expo.

Below: James Raper helps Mary Jo Shope and Shirley McDonald at the Jaemor Farms booth.

Photos by **ERIN O. SMITH**
The Times



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Dozens take icy lake plunge



Photos by ERIN O. SMITH | The Times

Astrid and John Breakfield brace themselves as they jump into the chilly lake Saturday during the Lanier Canoe and Kayak Club's 19th annual Polar Bear Plunge at Clark's Bridge Park. **More photos on page 3C**

BY ALEXANDER POPP
apopp@gainesvilletimes.com

On Saturday, 53 brave individuals chose to do something most would consider strange or abnormal: jump into the frigid February waters of Lake Lanier at the Olympic venue.

The 19th Polar Bear Plunge was sponsored by the Lanier Canoe and Kayak Club, with proceeds from Saturday's event to help the club improve its facilities and programs.

Interested jumpers were given the choice between jumping into the 59-degree water and receiving an "I Dared" T-shirt, or chickening out and receiving a shirt that reads, "I Scared."

This year's Polar Bear Plunge was set for New Year's Day but had to be rescheduled due to the "massive flooding" that Lake Lanier experienced at the end of December.

"We would be standing under about 3 feet of water right now," said Lanier Canoe and Kayak Club board member Chad Copper, indicating a stretch of sandy earth about 30 feet from the dock. "We have had to refund registrations when we rescheduled... but we have about 40 people pre-register."

Copper said the event typically had a high day-of-registration.

Vicky Howell, 60, of Gainesville said the yearly dip had become a ritual.

"I have been doing this for 12 years and it has become a tradition," she said.

Jim Filhart of Cartersville said though it was his first time taking the plunge, he knew he was going to like it. "I have been in cold water before. I'm an ice fisherman and I fell through



Ben Puckett, Chad Copper and Eric Grabau cannon ball into the lake Saturday during the Polar Bear Plunge.

Video online

See coverage and photos of the Polar Bear Plunge at gainesvilletimes.com

the ice one time and I liked it so well, I figured I gotta do it again," said Filhart.

True to his word, Filhart along with a few others took the plunge multiple times during the event.

Awards were given in several cat-

egories for best jump, best splash, best costume, oldest jumper, youngest jumper and "best chicken."

Later this year, the Olympic venue will be home to the U.S. and Canadian Olympic trials for the canoe and kayak events, qualifying athletes for the Summer Games in Rio de Janeiro.

"Anyone who competes in Rio from this hemisphere will come through Gainesville in May," Copper said.

ATHL



Above: Stephanie McClusky, Sarah Pruitt, Cathy Daniel and Amy Bagby jump into the lake together Saturday during the Lanier Canoe and Kayak Club's 19th annual Polar Bear Plunge at Clark's Bridge Park. **Top right:** Vicky Howell watches as Jennifer Hulseley leaps into the lake Saturday during the Polar Bear Plunge. **Bottom right:** Samaria Carpenter makes a splash as she jumps into Lake Lanier on Saturday during the Polar Bear Plunge. **Bottom left:** Cole Dorminey, 11, jumps into the lake Saturday dressed as Superman.

Photos by ERIN O. SMITH | The Times



SWIMMING STATE MEET

Hene finishes strong career at state meet

BY COLIN OCHS
cochs@gainesvilletimes.com

The high-school swim career of Chestatee's Luke Hene came to a close Saturday at the GHSA Swimming and Diving Championships on the Georgia Tech Campus.

Hene just wishes it came to a close 0.11 seconds sooner.

The Chestatee senior set a goal for himself coming into the championships; a sub-50 second 100-yard backstroke. His best time was 50.11 seconds in the preliminary round.

"I'm a little disappointed I didn't hit the 50 second mark like I was hoping," Hene said.

What Hene did do, however, was score a pair of fourth place finishes. One in the 200-yard individual medley and one in the aforementioned



ERIN O. SMITH | The Times

Chestatee's Luke Hene warms up for practice Thursday at Frances Meadows Aquatic Center in Gainesville.

100-yard backstroke, a race that saw Dalton High's Ethan Young set a new state record at 47.2 seconds.

"I had a lot of fun swimming at high school meets," Hene said. "It's been a great experience. It has been fun every time I go to meets and going to the state championship every year.

"Overall, I'm pretty happy with the results."

One of the more unexpected results came in

■ Please see **SWIMMING, 4B**

2/7/16

SWIMMING

■ Continued from 1B

the girls' 100-yard freestyle, where Jefferson High's Camille Porter defeated the North Hall duo of Rose Schofield and Ashley Johnston to win the event. Porter finished with a time of 51.99, nearly five seconds better than her best time entering the championships, while Schofield (the top qualifier) finished sixth and Johnston finished seventh.

Porter also had a seventh place finish in the 50-yard freestyle and anchored the Jefferson relay team to a fifth place finish in the 200-yard freestyle relay, three places higher than the North Hall squad.

Other performances of note include Lakeview Academy senior Michael Wacho (9th in boys 100-yard freestyle and 10th in 200-yard freestyle), Gainesville sophomore Brian Monaghan (10th in boys 100-yard breaststroke) and Chestatee sophomore Lindsey Grater (seventh in girls 500-yard freestyle and eighth in 200-yard freestyle).

In the team events, Riverside Military Academy finished seventh in the boys 200-yard freestyle relay and Gainesville High finished ninth in the boys 200-yard medley relay.

2/7/16

Gainesville Parks and Recreation Presents

16th Annual
**DADDY DAUGHTER
DANCES**

*a Night Under
the Stars*

DINNER AND DANCING | GAINESVILLE CIVIC CENTER BALLROOM

Grades 6 & Up	Grades 3-5	Grades PreK-2
February 23	February 25	February 26
6:00-8:30pm	6:00-8:30pm	6:00-8:30pm

City Resident Fee: \$50/per couple
\$17.50 Additional Sibling Discount

Non Resident Fee: \$60/per couple
\$21.00 Additional Sibling Discount

No Walk-Ins Accepted on Day of Event

Registration Deadline:
February 19, 2016 by 5pm

Late Fee: \$15 per person after 5pm
on February 19 if space is available

www.gainesville.org/recreation

Northeast Georgia's entertainment guide

Twist and twirl! — page 4

Daddy Daughter
dance at Gainesville
Civic Center



GET OUT

gainesvilletimes.com/getout
Thursday, February 18, 2016

An evening with Dara Tucker. Page 12

Cutting a rug at Civic Center

Annual Daddy
Daughter dances
Feb. 23, 25 and
26 in Gainesville

BY AMBER TYNER
atyner@gainesvilletimes.com

Dads may prepare to dance for a couple of hours with their daughters during "A Night Under the Stars" at the Gainesville Civic Center.

The annual Daddy Daughter Dance will begin with girls in the sixth-grade and older on Tuesday, Feb. 23, at 830 Green St. NE in Gainesville. Two days later, girls in the third through fifth grade can dance with their fathers on Thursday, Feb. 25, at the civic center. On Friday, Feb. 26, dads can experience an evening with their girls who are in prekindergarten to second grade.

All three dances are from 6-8:30 p.m. in the ballroom, which will be transformed for the night, complete with a DJ, dinner catered by Longstreet Cafe, dancing, raffle prizes and bonding time.

"We have a different theme each year," said Michael Waters, program coordinator in the recreational division of Parks and Recreation. "This year the theme we came up with is 'A Night Under the Stars.' We wanted to give some sort of elegance to the event and bring something that would have a nice, classy feel to it."

With it being such a popular community event, it's important to get tickets early, Waters said.

"We usually end up serving around 500 couples throughout the three nights," he said. "It sells out fast."

Now in its 16th year, the event has grown tremendously.

"It started off small and then it continued to grow to where it's



Get Out file photos

The 16th annual Daddy Daughter Dance, above and below, will be Feb. 23, 25 and 26 at Gainesville Civic Center. Registration ends at 5 p.m. Feb. 19.

this massive event now," Waters said. "We're just constantly trying to make sure it's better than it was the year before."

Tickets are \$50 per couple for city residents, plus \$17.50 additional sibling, and \$60 for non-city residents plus \$21.50 additional siblings. The registration deadline is 5 p.m. Friday, Feb. 19. For couples who register late, it is \$15 extra per person and only if space available.

"The money that we earn from this event we try to put it back into the next year to make it even better," Waters said.

Plus, the event becomes an annual tradition for fathers and daughters.

"If you've been the past couple



years and you're thinking, 'Oh, I might skip out on this one because I've been before' I would



strongly suggest not to do that," Waters said. "It's going to be an event you don't want to miss."

Daddy Daughter Dances

When: 6-8:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 23, for sixth-graders and older; Thursday, Feb. 25, for grades third through fifth; and Friday, Feb. 26 for pre-kindergarten to second grade. Registration ends at 5 p.m. Feb. 19.

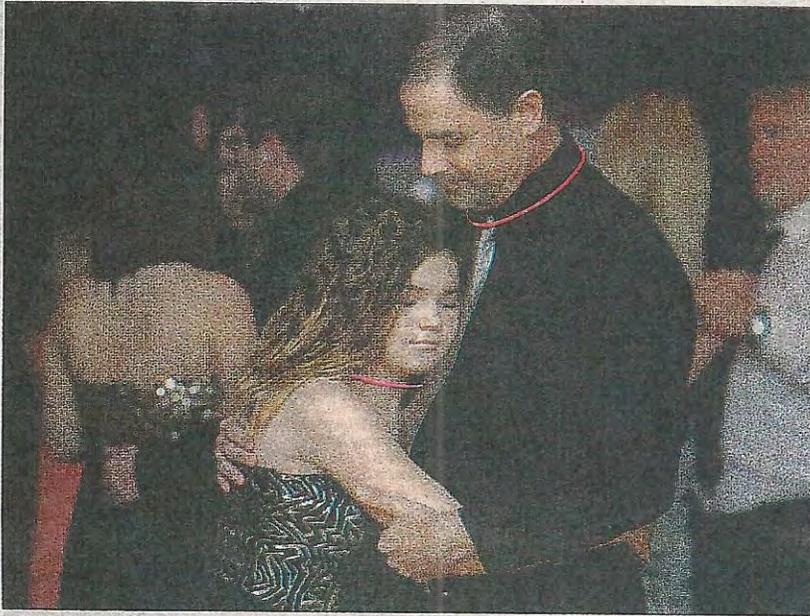
Where: Gainesville Civic Center Ballroom, 830 Green St. NE, Gainesville

Cost: \$50 per couple for city residents and \$17.50 additional sibling; \$60 per couple for non-city residents and \$21.50 additional siblings; \$15 late fee.

More info: www.gainesville.org/special-events

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Dads, daughters cut a rug



Above: Sarah Delay, 13, dances with her father Leland Delay on Tuesday night during the 16th annual "A Night Under the Stars" Daddy-Daughter Dance at the Gainesville Civic Center. In addition to the dance, a DJ, dinner catered by Longstreet Cafe and raffle prizes were available to participants. **Left:** Allison Giroux, 12, and her father John Giroux dance Tuesday night. **Below:** Kylee Lambert, 18, dances with friends Tuesday night.

Photos by ERIN O. SMITH | The Times



Above: Kaitlynn Bennett, 11, dances with friends Tuesday night.



Above: Emma Hoffman, 15, dances with Pastor Tom Smiley at the Gainesville Civic Center. **Left:** John Hoffman and his 13-year-old daughter Amelia take a selfie Tuesday night during the Daddy Daughter Dance.

2/24/16

THURSDAY



Daddy-Daughter dance

When: 6-8:30 p.m. Feb. 26 for pre-K through second grade

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

Cost: \$50 per couple and \$17.50 per additional siblings for city residents, \$60 per couple and \$21.50 per additional sibling for nonresident fee

More info: www.gainesville.org.

alaska

