

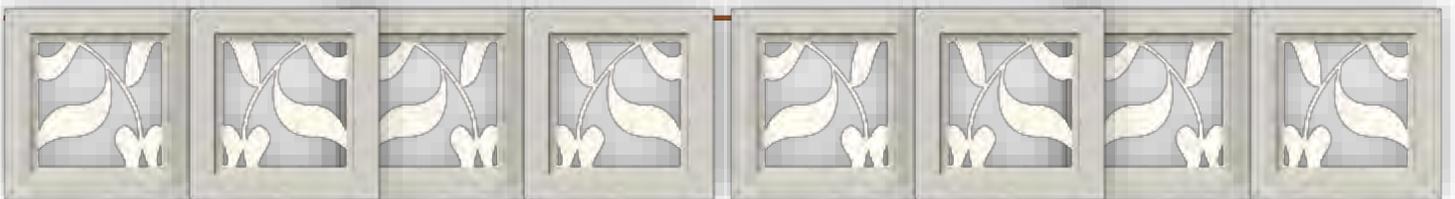
IN THE NEWS

June 2019

Parks & Recreation Programs
Frances Meadows Aquatic and Community Center
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Gainesville Parks and Recreation Agency
830 Green Street
Gainesville, GA 30501



Park rules, budget on tap for meeting

BY MEGAN REED
mreed@gainesvilletimes.com

Beginning July 1, Lake Lanier Olympic Park will officially be a city park, and the city may change its parks rules to reflect the addition. July 1 is also the start of the new fiscal year, and officials will hear public comment on the proposed budget Tuesday.

Updated parks rules

Gainesville officials want to update the city's parks ordinance to reflect the addition of Lake

Lanier Olympic Park and allow for lighting along the Highlands to Islands Trail.

The new ordinance would allow alcohol in city parks for events that have received a special events permit from the city or have been organized by the city. Currently, someone can only have alcohol in a city park if the parks and recreation board has approved it.

The city will take over Lake Lanier Olympic Park on July 1, and the city hopes to host events, including the Beach Bash on

July 13, at the venue.

The rules would also allow people to be on the Highlands to Islands Trail at night if the trail is lighted. Highlands to Islands is a trail network that is being planned in Gainesville and South Hall, with some portions currently open. Most other parks facilities would be closed at night.

The ordinance also specifies that people can only swim in designated areas at waterfront parks. Lake Lanier Olympic Park would be the first waterfront park for swimming.

Gainesville City Council

When: 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, June 4

Where: Public Safety Complex, 701 Queen City Parkway

Budget hearing

Council members will also hear public comments on the proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year, which begins July 1. While the meeting begins at 5:30 p.m., the budget hearing will start at 6 p.m.

The proposed budget includes a rollback millage rate to accommodate for increased property

assessed values. The proposed millage rate of 3.322 mills reflects what the average resident would need the rate to be in order to avoid a property tax increase based on their assessed property value.

The Council will vote on the budget and millage rate on June 18.

6-1-19

Lake Lanier Rowing Club offers multiple ways to get involved this summer

The Lake Lanier Rowing Club is conducting a one-week rowing camp for youths (13-17 year olds) and middle schoolers (sixth-eighth graders) at the Lake Lanier Olympic Park in Gainesville. Camps run Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to noon and cost \$125.

Newcomers are welcome to participate in the camp, which will focus on rowing, teamwork, sportsmanship and fun.

The youth camps are scheduled for June 10-14, June 24-28 and July 8-12, while the middle school camp runs from July 29-August 2.

Adults can also participate in the Adult Learn-to-Row program scheduled for June 11-28, July 9-27, August 6-24 and September 7-24.

Classes will meet at the Lake Lanier Olympic Park on Tuesday and Thursday from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., and Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. The nine sessions cost \$180.

To register for the camps visit www.lakelanierrowing.org or call 770-287-0077.

Compiled by Katherine Wright 6-1-19

Georgia Wake Series brings exposure to wakeboarding

BY KENNETH HUCKS
khucks@gainesvilletimes.com

The Georgia Wake Series, a traveling wakeboarding competition in the state of Georgia, held one of its eight tournaments at Lake Lanier on Saturday, hoping to expose visitors and competitors to its community of athletes.

Mission accomplished.

Fans were not only exposed to the athletes, but their immense skills and their determination to work together to grow the under-recognized sport.

Director Brandon Lee says he wants the Georgia Wake Series to be both a hub for Wakeboarding pros and a learning ground for newcomers and families who are inexperienced with the sport, one he says has a lot of misconceptions surrounding it.

"(We want to show people) that there's more to wakeboarding," Lee said. "Or just exposing what wakeboarding even is to some of the families that have never seen it. People think of wakeboarding and they think you're riding behind a boat. But seeing 10-year-olds that are going out there and doing flips and stuff shows that there's a whole lot more that you can actually do with it."

Regular competitor Scott Perkins says that the Georgia Wake Series has provided a space for local Wakeboarding fans to connect and, until now, the community has been lacking a consistent place to

convene for a long time.

"So this Georgia Wake Series started just a few years ago, and before that we only had hit or miss local contests," Perkins said. "But the Wake Series started this whole state championship, regional championship series, fun, healthy competition as a way to push yourself. Wakeboarding is an individual sport, you do it with your friends, but to really push yourself it's cool to have a venue."

While Lee says the Georgia Wake Series' attendance varies by each event, Perkins says he and riders like him have formed close friendships through the event, and he hopes that it will bring in more people who share a passion for the sport.

"One of the most unexpected things when we went to the first tournament a few years ago was just how many friends we've made since then through the series," Perkins said. "Now we have this whole crew that we've built and I've gained so many friends and riding partners that we never had before coming out here and meeting them. It's almost like a hub of people with wakeboarding a hobby."

Beyond the competition and the camaraderie, the Georgia Wake Series offers classes for a wide range of ages and skill levels, meaning a significant amount of the event's attendance is young children and fami-

lies. According to Perkins, the leadership takes great care to make sure people of all levels of expertise feel welcome and encouraged to participate.

"The Wake Series itself, Brandon and the guys do an amazing job," Perkins said. "You can probably tell already how friendly it is for beginners and anyone to get into it. There's like 4-year-olds out here and I'm 33 and there are guys at a lot of stops that are older than that. But it just runs the gamut and I think the friendly atmosphere is so cool."

Lee says this is a calculated move on his and the Georgia Wake Series' part, as he wants this to be a gateway experience to families and kids interested in approaching wakeboarding, whether at a professional or casual level.

"This is a grassroots, amateur wakeboard tournament," Lee said. "So we cater to riders who basically know how to ride a wakeboard and can at least go down and back standing on the board all the way to the pro, semi-pro level. Big family-friendly event. That's the main thing."

Cy Hedrick, a father at the event, brought his 12-year-old daughter, Rivers, to participate.

"It just helps her as far as maturity, and just makes her more confident," Hedrick said. "Actually, the biggest thing is it helps her with, you know, when you get nervous

about things that are important or things that are important to you it kind of helps you progress and handle those nerves."

Lee acknowledged the risks of such a physically demanding sport, but the Georgia Wake Series has taken precautions by bringing on safety-trained staff, as well as having emergency plans in place and equipment on site.

"All the crew in the boat are CPR, Lifeguard Certified as a minimum," Lee said. "We have off-duty EMC who's here for all the events too. We've got a stretcher on the boat, first aid kit, and for every event we usually have an emergency plan so we know where the closest fire department is and all that stuff."

Hedrick admitted that, as a father, the danger of wakeboarding is on his mind when his daughter is on the water, but the sport has enough to offer that he stands behind her decision to participate.

"You definitely get a little nervous, but it's something they really enjoy and the reward versus the risk is definitely worth it," Hedrick said. "So you just kind of take your chances and go along with it."

The Georgia Wake Series' next stop will be at the Valdosta Wake Compound later this month, with three more trips planned between now and August.



Photos by AUSTIN STEELE | The Times.

Above: John Goza performs a trick in the pro/am section of the GA Wake Series competition at Lake Lanier Olympic Park on Saturday, June 1. **Below/Bottom Left:** Scott Perkins performs a trick in the open pro/am section of the GA Wake Series competition.



6-2-19



6-2-19

Artists rock the house at 5th annual Lake Show



Photos by AUSTIN STEELE | The Times

Above: Brandon Reeves performs during the 5th annual John Jarrard Foundation Lake Show at Lake Lanier Olympic Park in Gainesville on Saturday, June 1. **Left:** Attendees mingle.



Attendees make their way to their tables. **Below:** Attendees enter the venue.



'Getting out and exploring'



Photos by **SCOTT ROGERS** | The Times

Above: A group of blind veterans get their first lesson in dragon boat paddling Monday, June 3, on Lake Lanier. **Below:** Lloyd Hanslow takes hold of a paddle as instructed, as he and a group of blind veterans get team-building experience and training in dragon boats at the Lake Lanier Olympic Park boathouse.

Blind combat veterans take to the water at Lanier in dragon boats

BY LAYNE SALIBA
lsaliba@gainesvilletimes.com

A group of seven American and British veterans, all blinded in some way during combat, climbed out of a dragon boat at the Lanier Canoe and Kayak Club's boathouse Monday, June 3.

They all stood in a circle, put their hands in the middle and shouted "USA" as they raised their hands to the sky.

They had just gotten back from being on the water, learning how to paddle, and were ready to cool off from the heat.

"It was so exciting," said Monaca Gilmore, who served in the Army in Iraq in 2005. "It was an adrenaline rush."

The group was in the area for its fifth year — trying out dragon boats for the first time — as part of a week-long event put on by the Blinded Veterans Association and Blind Endeavors, two organizations that give veterans opportunities to join in activities in which they may otherwise not get to participate.

"A lot of the events we'll be doing is really to get those people who are visually impaired, our blind veterans, to feel more confident in more social situations," said Thomas Zampieri, vice president of the Blinded Veterans Association.

He said when veterans are blinded in

■ Please see **BLIND, 4A**



6-5-19

BLIND

■ Continued from 1A

combat, they oftentimes come home and isolate themselves. They have trouble acclimating to life after being blinded.

"They just won't go out and do things," Zampieri said. "They won't even go to the store with their families and they become so self-conscious of the fact that they have to have a cane."

But for Steve Baskis, who was blinded while serving in the Army in Iraq in 2008, there's not much he won't try. That's why he started Blind Endeavors and hopes events like the dragon boat training remind blind veterans to keep moving, no matter what.

"A lot of the things we do this week revolve around moving," Baskis said. "I stare into darkness. I have no vision at all. I'm completely blind. So, that can

influence people to be still and not do anything. So getting out and exploring the world around us helps us establish a new normal."

The week will include things like climbing Yonah Mountain and going to a shooting range in order to help the veterans find that new normal.

"Some of the veterans here do live near water, so they can get excited from what they learn here and head home and get on the water," Baskis said. "That could be added to their lifestyle and what they do because some veterans have a hard time figuring out what they want to do after a traumatic change."

But as the veterans walked down to the water to get in the dragon boat Monday, it was clear what they wanted to do: paddle.

They didn't hesitate or second-guess. Each one stepped over into the boat, paddle in hand, and began paddling to the beat of the drum.

"It's been a fabulous experience," said Lloyd Hanslow, one of the blinded British veterans. "It's been absolutely an eye-opening experience."

He was happy that everyone in the boat was able to paddle, even though most of them had no experience. He said, "Everybody just worked on the same level."

Gilmore was happy to have that community on the water, too. But she was even happier to have it back on the shore, walking alongside her to the boathouse and in life in general.

"It brings hope to blinded veterans, who a lot of times are left behind," Gilmore said. "And when we're left behind and not given these opportunities, it sticks many of us deeper into depression. It lets us get out and socialize with others who are having the same issues we're having and get a better understanding that we're not alone. There are others out there."



Blind veteran and adventurer Steve Baskis, left, and Blinded Veterans Association Vice President Maj. Thomas Zampieri gather in the Lake Lanier Canoe and Kayak Club boathouse Monday, June 3, prior to dragon boat lessons on Lake Lanier.

SCOTT ROGERS
The Times

GAINESVILLE

Council updates city park rules as Lanier added to list

BY MEGAN REED
mreed@gainesvilletimes.com

The Gainesville City Council voted on Tuesday to adjust the city's parks rules to accommodate for Lake Lanier Olympic Park, which officially will become a city park on July 1. July 1 also is the start of the new fiscal year, and the Council held a hearing on the proposed budget before it will be adopted June 18.

Officials also recognized first responders from Gainesville Fire Station No. 2 for helping an elderly veteran with yard work.

Budget hearing

No one spoke at the city's only hearing about the proposed budget for the next fiscal year on Tuesday. The budget includes a rolled back millage rate of 3.322 mills to accommodate for increased property value assessments.

The \$31.9 million budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1 includes plans for capital improvements like a rebuilt fire station and a skate park.

Councilman George Wangemann offered a suggestion Tuesday that the city use some of its surplus funds, usually spent on capital projects, to make it more affordable for



MEGAN REED | The Times

First responders from Gainesville Fire Station No. 2 stand with Mayor Danny Dunagan and Fire Chief Jerome Yarbrough while being honored Tuesday. They helped a World War II veteran with yard work on May 26.

city residents to stay in Gainesville.

"I'd like to recommend that we make room in next year's budget to work some kind of incentive into the budget for the taxpayer, ultimately to keep them here in Gainesville," Wangemann said. "I don't want anyone moving away to a place that's a lot cheaper."

Rates for Gainesville Water Resources customers will not be increasing. But revenues are slightly up, mostly due to population growth and new construction bringing in

more dollars from sales tax, the title ad valorem tax and franchise fees. The city will have about 1.8% more money in the budget compared to the current fiscal year.

The new budget is not official, though — the Council will vote to approve it on June 18. There will not be a public hearing at that meeting.

Parks rules

Alcohol is now allowed in city parks for events organized by the city or events that have gotten a

special events permit issued by the city. Previously, someone could only have alcohol in a city park if the parks and recreation board approved it.

The city hopes to use Lake Lanier Olympic Park to host some events, including the Beach Bash in July, as construction takes over some areas of the downtown square. Gainesville already hosted the Spring Chicken Festival at Longwood Park in April.

The updates rules, approved unanimously by the Council Tuesday, also state that people can only swim in designated areas at waterfront parks. Lake Lanier Olympic Park would be the first park with a swimming area.

Another rule change approved Tuesday would allow people to be on the Highlands to Islands Trail at night if it is lighted. Highlands to Islands is a planned trail system that would connect Gainesville and South Hall, and many portions of the trail are already open. Most other parks are closed at night.

Firefighters honored for helping resident

On May 26, firefighters from Gainesville's Fire Station No. 2 received a medical call and went

to a residence on North Enota Ave. As they were leaving, they noticed the yard could use some maintenance and decided to help out the World War II veteran who lived there.

The first responders returned to the station, got the tools they needed and went back to the residence. They removed limbs and leaves from the roof, trimmed the hedges, edged the driveway and blew leaves from the yard and driveway.

The crew included Todd Summer, Jonathan Benton, Noe Guajardo, Brandon Cobb and medical unit personnel Danny Nguyen and Ashley Mashburn, according to the Gainesville Fire Department's Facebook page.

Fire Chief Jerome Yarbrough said firefighters often connect with the community through helping out and have been known to fix faucets and help people with other problems they may have.

"We adopt our communities, and we keep it as our home," he said.

Officials also thanked the firefighters for their service.

"It's hard to put into words how much we appreciate the service you all do for our citizens," Mayor Danny Dunagan said.

Member Announcements

ater Hall Chamber of Commerce

• **Hasty Pope**, a family-run law firm with over 100 years of combined experience in settling and litigating personal injury and workers' compensation lawsuits, announces **Dustin Davies** as partner. With the firm since 2012, Davies joins partners **Jonathan Pope** and **Tom Pope III**. He is a Leadership Hall graduate and has been named a Georgia Super Lawyers "Rising Star" six years in a row. hastypope.com

• **Angel Retana**, owner of Fajitas Mexican Cuisine and Gainesville Seafood Market, announces **787 Hacienda**, a new sports bar and entertainment venue. Celebrating the Hispanic community, the facility offers indoor/outdoor spaces, Latin themed music, Blanco Bar with craft beer and mixed drinks, unique dining space for special events and a meeting venue for corporate events. The refurbished 10,000 sf building is located at 787 Hospital Drive in Gainesville. [Facebook.com/787-Hacienda](https://www.facebook.com/787-Hacienda)

• **UGA Hall County Cooperative Extension** is hosting **Summer Canning Classes**. Join **Carin Booth**, *Family & Consumer Sciences Agent*, on June 25 for Pickling & Fermenting; July 25 or August 15 for Pressure Canning. \$5 per session. Classes are at 734 E. Crescent Drive, Suite 300 in Gainesville. To register: 770-535-8293 or boothc@uga.edu

• **Downtown Braselton's Second Saturday Concert Series** includes events on June 8, July 13 and August 10 with rockin' evenings of music. All concerts will be staged on the Town Green at 9924 Davis Street with free parking at the town's parking deck. Food trucks and beverage tents on site. **Braselton Main Street** earned its recertification from the National Main Street Center that recognizes exemplary commitment to preservation-based economic development and community revitalization. DowntownBraselton.com

• **Lake Lanier Olympic Park's (LLOP) Summer Food Truck Fridays** with live music, a variety of food trucks, games and more are **Friday, June 14** featuring

the April Rooks Band and **Friday, July 12** with Kenny Kirby Trio. **The City of Gainesville's Annual Beach Bash** has moved from the square to LLOP and is **Saturday, July 13** with Electric Avenue. lakelanierolympicvenue.org

• **Chamber Board meetings are open to members**. Attend one and network with Chamber leadership while learning what's happening in Greater Hall County! The next meeting is Thursday, June 27 at the Gainesville Civic Center, 12-1:30 pm. Reservations Required. \$15, includes lunch. Gerri Collins, 770-532-6206 x 106. Email: gcollins@ghcc.com

• **American Red Cross (ARC)** will host **Community Blood Drives** on Friday, June 7 (10am-4pm) and Tuesday, June 18 (12:30-6:30pm) at Lakeshore Mall (JCPenny Wing), 150 Pearl Nix Parkway in Gainesville. Your blood donation can impact up to 3 patients! Every 2 seconds, someone in the U.S. needs blood. ARC is the largest supplier of blood in the U.S., seeking 13,000 blood donations every day to meet these needs. Appointments: redcrossblood.org and use sponsor code: GVILLECOM

• **Forbes** magazine ranked **University of North Georgia (UNG)** one of the nation's Best Value Colleges for the second consecutive year. UNG serves nearly 20,000 students across its five campuses and ranked 20th among all public regional universities in the South on the *U.S. News & World Report* 2019 Best Regional Universities list. UNG was also ranked on the magazine's Most Innovative Schools list. ung.edu

• **Georgia Mountain Food Bank (GMFB)** recently earned the Platinum Nonprofit Profile Seal of Transparency by GuideStar, the world's largest source of nonprofit information. GMFB, an affiliate of the Atlanta Community Food Bank, collects food and grocery products serving the hungry in Northeast Georgia. gamountainfoodbank.org

GOT NEWS?

Email: kwest@ghcc.com
6-6-19

Lake Lanier Rowing Club Summer Programs



YOUTH SUMMER CAMPS

- No experience needed
- Young men and women under the age of 18 (Ages 13 years and up)
- Teamwork, sportsmanship and fun!
- One-week camps (\$125/week)– 8:00AM - Noon weekdays – see schedule below
- Middle School Camp Week is open to Grades 6-8

LEARN TO ROW SESSIONS

- 9 classes/Session (\$180/session)
- Classes meet Tuesdays and Thursdays 6:30-8:30 PM and Saturdays 8:30-10:30 AM
- Fun, whole body exercise
- A life-long activity
- Sign up as an individual or a group of colleagues and/or friends
- Four sessions offered this summer – see schedule below

YOUTH CAMP DATES

all youth camps are 8:00AM - NOON
 One week day camp dates
 (sign up for one or more weeks):
 10-14 June 2019, 24-28 June 2019, 08-12 July 2019
 Middle School Camp Week (Grades 6-8):
 29 July – 02 August 2019

LEARN TO ROW SESSIONS

11-29 June 2019,
 09-27 July 2019,
 06-24 August 2019,
 07-24 September 2019

Lake Lanier Rowing Club Boathouse, 3105 Clarks Bridge Road, Gainesville
 Check on our website for details and to register: www.lakelanierrowing.org 6-6-19

Vision 2030 Block Party



Vision 2030's 2nd Annual Block pARTy was a complete success with a sold out crowd of 450 attending the event featuring art for sale, live music and food trucks. Committee members (Front, L-R): Allyson Everett, Leigh-Anne O'Brien, Elizabeth Higgins, Christie Gregory, Julie Butler, Tina Carlson, Whitney Brown (Event Chair). (Back): Ashton Meeks, Katie Crumley, Amanda McClure. All proceeds will fund community public art projects. [Facebook.com/Vision2030PublicArt](https://www.facebook.com/Vision2030PublicArt) 6-6-19

Juneteenth festival set for Midtown



Photos courtesy Kaylee Marin

Chyna Borders, London Borders, DJ Truehill, Paris Borders and India Borders of Borders Bakers had plenty of baked goods for sale at the Juneteenth Festival on Saturday, June 23, 2018, at the Gainesville Midtown Greenway.

Communities come together to celebrate end of slavery

BY KENNETH HUCKS
khucks@gainesvilletimes.com

The Gainesville-Hall County Black Historical Society will hold its seventh-annual Juneteenth Day Festival on Saturday, June 15, from 3-8 p.m. as a celebration of African-American emancipation after the end of the Civil War in 1865.

The festival will take place at the Midtown Greenway and will feature performances, food and art exhibits, all in the name of spotlighting local African-American creators and culture. Gainesville-Hall County Black Historical Society chairwoman Linda Hutchens said Juneteenth is meant as a tribute to the art and music of African-American communities, and that she wants everyone who comes to enjoy themselves while also exposing themselves to the entertainment that will be on display for them.

"We'll have the vendors there with food and there will be music," Hutchens said. "We're going to have a DJ, performances, dance performances and spoken word by a poet and a couple of choirs are going to do music, gospel and otherwise. Just a lot of fun activities."

Hutchens says she hopes people from a wide spectrum of backgrounds and cultures will come, as she believes the celebration of freedom to be a universal event and appeal to people and families of all kinds.

"It's just a family and community celebration of freedom as a whole," Hutchens said. "It's a multicultural event and



Destiny Brawner, a young local artist, brought some of her work to sell at the Juneteenth Day Festival on Saturday, June 23, 2018, sponsored by the Gainesville-Hall Black History Society on the Gainesville Midtown Greenway.

Juneteenth Day Festival

What: Festival commemorating the end of slavery in 1865, featuring African-American music, food and art

When: 3 p.m. Saturday, June 15

Where: Midtown Greenway, 682 Grove St., Gainesville

How much: Free

opportunity for everybody to celebrate. It's free to the public and just join us in the fun and the celebration."

As a whole, Hutchens says she hopes Juneteenth can bring together the diverse cultures in Hall County to create a sense of unity, and over the years that the Gainesville-Hall

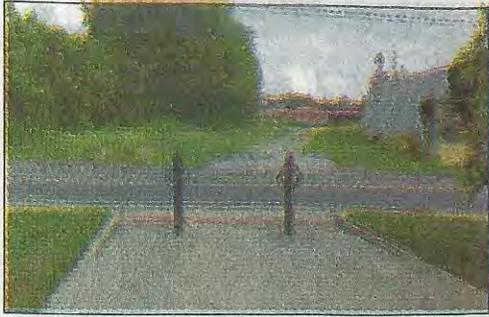
County Black Historical Society has held the festival, Hutchens thinks she's seeing that vision gradually becoming a reality.

"I think it's very important that we come together as one community," Hutchens said. "We can only reach out to others and hope for the best. I've noticed an increase in atten-

dance and an increase in the various cultures attending. Although, some years it's been slight, but I do see an increase. It's been more diverse."

The Juneteenth Day Festival will be free to the public, and attendees are encouraged to bring their own blankets and chairs with them to set up.

This year marks 154 years since slavery was abolished in America. Juneteenth is officially observed on June 19, and was formally recognized in the state of Georgia in 2011, making it the 37th state in the country to acknowledge the holiday.



JEFF GILL | The Times

The Greenway trail currently ends at MLK Boulevard with plans to expand the trail further from here.

Greenway's second phase could be built this summer

BY JEFF GILL

jgill@gainesvilletimes.com

Gainesville's Midtown Greenway, a winding trail that offers an urban escape for walkers and bikers, is poised for a long-awaited expansion, possibly beginning this summer.

"We are excited," said Jessica Tullar, special projects manager for the Gainesville Community Development Department.

A pathway is now in place between an area just south of Jesse Jewell Parkway near United Community Bank and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard between Grove and Pine streets.

The city is looking to expand the trail from MLK to Industrial Boulevard at Pine Street — or just a short jog from Queen City Parkway/Ga. 60. The project also is known as the greenway's second phase.

"Parking and other park amenities may come in the future after Gainesville Parks & Recreation can master plan that park space," Tullar said last week.

A decision on the work could come soon, as the city had a May 30 deadline to receive bids on the project.

"We're still reviewing bid responses and hope to make our selection among those responses within the next few days," Tullar said. "If we're able to select from among the bids received, we

■ Please see GREEN, 4A 6-16-19

GREEN

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anticipate work beginning on or around the end of July."

The work could wrap up in spring 2020, even though "we don't anticipate (the project) taking that long," she added.

The project features a trail-head, benches, trash cans, bike racks, landscaping, lighting and fiber optic cable for a future security camera system, according to a legal advertisement for the project.

Also planned are sidewalks on Parker Street, as well as on Main Street between Parker and College Avenue. Sidewalks also are planned on College Avenue between Main and Bradford Street.

Tony Herdener, chairman of Vision 2030's greenspace committee, applauded the efforts.

"People are seeing this as an alternative to roads," he said. "It kind of cuts across all the

interest groups — people who just want to walk their baby and then walkers, strollers and so forth."

Also, "the feedback we get from other communities is do it as soon as you can, because you have (trails) in place, it's going to be more difficult as other development takes place."

The second phase shows just how slow-moving trail efforts can take.

"We received the first round of (state) money, \$400,000, in 2011, and another \$100,000 in 2012," Tullar said. "We were trying to save as much money as possible for construction, so we did all of the original design work, environmental studies and right of way acquisition in-house."

Right of way was secured in 2018.

Also, the city has been working with the Georgia Department of Transportation, which provided funding, on the project.

More trail work could be on the horizon, beyond the second phase.

Ultimately, the goal is to connect to the Highlands to Islands Trail, a multi-use trail system that will connect several existing and future trails throughout Hall County.

The third phase of the greenway could connect Industrial Boulevard to Queen City Parkway.

"We haven't received any funding for that. We were denied the first time we applied, and we're reapplying," Tullar said.

The Hall County portion of Highlands to Islands, which includes pathways through historic Chicopee Village, ends at Palmour Drive near Lee Gilmer Memorial Airport.

The Gainesville-Hall Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Hall area's lead transportation planning agency, has been involved with the efforts as well.

The organization voted in February to approve Gainesville and South Hall trail studies.

A trail system is proposed to run through South Hall, as well.

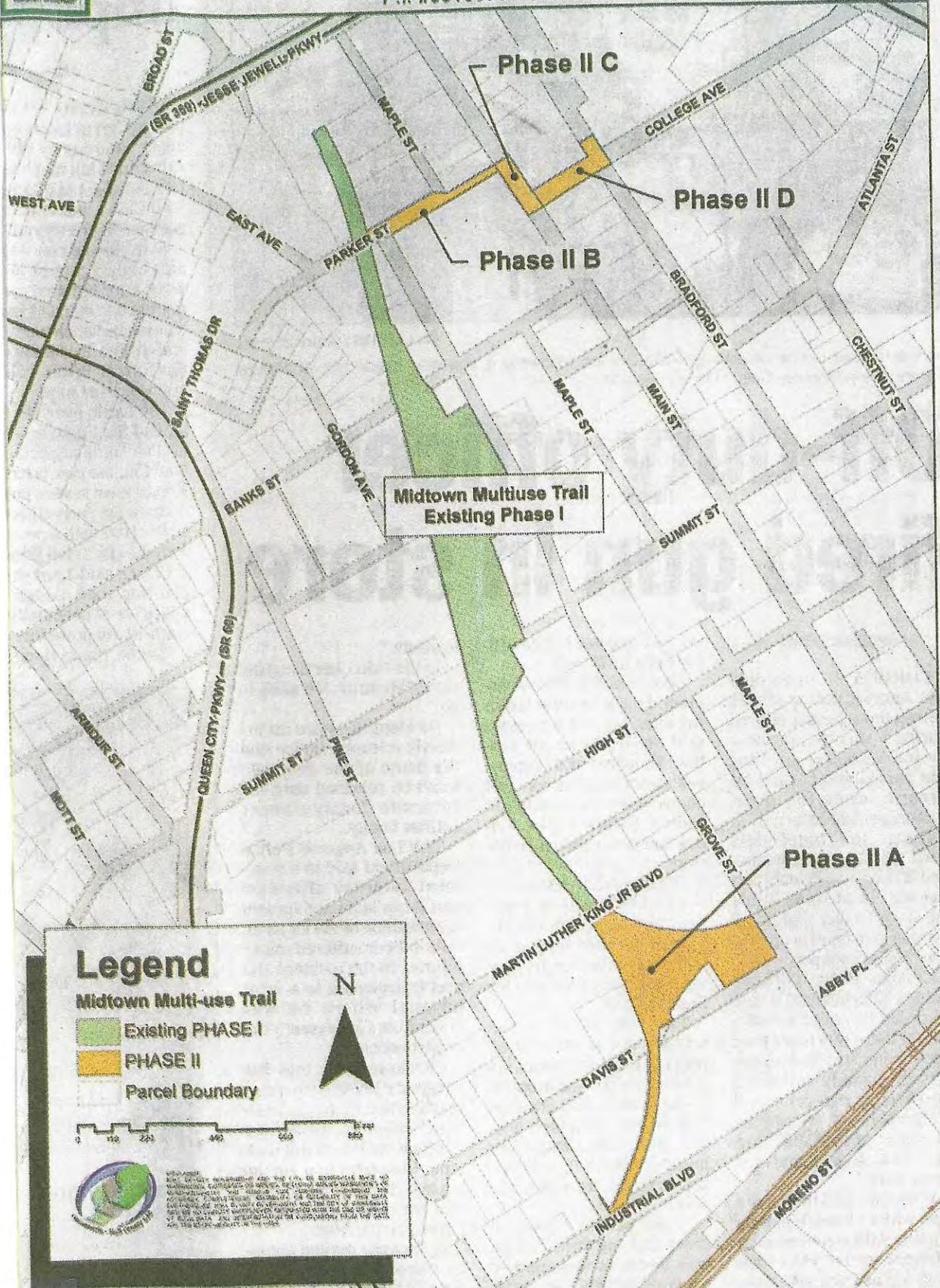
The Gainesville Trail Study explored possible routes to connect the Midtown Greenway to the north end of the Chicopee Trail. The South Hall Trail Study explored possible routes connecting the Oakwood and Chicopee Trail areas with the multi-use path along Friendship Road near Flowery Branch.

6-16-19



City of Gainesville

Location & Layout Map - Gainesville/Hall County GIS Map
P.I. #0010679 - Gainesville Midtown Multi-use Trail - Phase II



Courtesy City of Gainesville

Work on the second phase of Midtown Greenway could start as early as July. The third phase of the greenway could connect Industrial Boulevard to Queen City Parkway. "We haven't received any funding for that. We were denied the first time we applied, and we're reapplying," said Jessica Tullar, special projects manager for the Gainesville Community Development Department.

6-16-19

Juneteenth celebrated for 7th year

BY LAYNE SALIBA
lsaliba@gainesvilletimes.com

The Gainesville-Hall County Black History Society held its seventh-annual Juneteenth Festival on Saturday, June 15, at the Midtown Greenway Park, hosting a crowd of community members sharing their talents in the form of food, art and dance.

The festival has grown in

Gainesville over the years and has quickly become a time to teach the community.

"The purpose of Juneteenth is to celebrate our freedom," said Linda Hutchens, president of the Gainesville-Hall County Black History Society.

Although the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing slaves during the Civil War, went into effect in 1863, not all slaves were

truly freed. Many continued to be enslaved until 1965, which is when those who celebrate Juneteenth, consider true freedom for African Americans

Stephanie Watkins had never heard of Juneteenth until she joined the military and was stationed in Arizona in her early 20s. While there, she heard about the holiday and began celebrating it.

"I realized that we are not aware

of our history as people because it wasn't taught," said Watkins, vice president of the Gainesville-Hall County Black History Society. "I think many African Americans are ashamed and embarrassed as well. At one time, I hated discussing (slavery) or even talking about it, but I realized we cannot hear that which we cannot speak."

That's why she said Juneteenth is such an important event and why

she shows up and gets involved in every way she can.

"It is giving the community an opportunity to fellowship and celebrate something that may have been bad, but we're celebrating the beauty and accomplishments," Watkins said. "The mission is to make people aware of our history and hopefully take time to dive in and learn about it themselves."

■ Please see **JUNETEENTH, 3C**
6-16-19

JUNETEENTH

■ Continued from 1C

Rickey Young has taken that about as far as he can. After setting up a tent with tri-fold display boards illustrating his family's legacy and pulling books and binders of information out of at least a dozen crates, he rolled out a roll of paper — more than 50 feet long — on the grass that showed his entire family tree.

"On my mom's side there were 12 children, 47 grandchildren," said Young, a member of the Gainesville-Hall County Black History Society. "I'm 31st out of 47. On my dad's side of the family, there were 12 children that had 63 grandchildren. I'm 62nd

out of 63."

The retired Gainesville High School teacher said he's a part of the event each year because he's from Gainesville and is happy to share and celebrate his family's history from the area.

"I majored in history because I have a history," Young said. "I keep the story going and that's the whole point of this event."

And for John Harris, president of Fair Street-Butler High Schools Alumni Inc., sharing that story with young people is an important part of the event. That's just one reason he's involved.

"The only way that this can survive is if we spread it to the young group," Harris said. "It gives us the opportunity to highlight history and a time to come together and just celebrate our culture."



Cars are on display during the festival.



Ricky Garrett of Gainesville prepares a variety of meat during the 7th annual Juneteenth Day Festival at the Midtown Greenway.



Photos by AUSTIN STEELE | The Times

Above: Carol Sheffield of Gainesville serves Italian ice from her daughter's business, D's Sweetz & Treatz. Top left: Leon, left, and Tanger Osborne look through historical photos,

6-16-19

MILLAGE RATE

City to vote on rollback next week

No public hearing planned

The Gainesville City Council will vote Tuesday on the proposed budget and rollback millage rate for the next fiscal year, which begins July 1.

There will not be a public hearing before the vote Tuesday.

The proposed millage rate is 3.322 mills, a rollback from the current year's 3.364 mills. The decrease reflects the average amount a city property owner would need to see in order to avoid having to pay a higher rate because of a higher assessed property value.

The \$31.9 million budget for Fiscal Year 2020 includes the relocation of Fire Station No. 2 from Holly Drive to Cleveland Highway, a skate park at Pine Street and High Street, and replacements of some aging police vehicles.

Water and sewer rates for Gainesville Water Resources will stay the same.

The budget is available on the city website.

Gainesville City Council

When: 5:30 p.m.
June 18

Where: Public Safety Complex,
701 Queen City Parkway

Megan Reed
6-15-19

Housing festival to educate area residents June 22

BY MEGAN REED
mreed@gainesvilletimes.com

An event at Longwood Park on June 22 will educate the community about housing and employment help in the area.

Local agencies that offer assistance with housing, utilities or repairs will be at the free event, according to Jessica Tullar, Gainesville's special projects manager. People will also be able to talk to power companies about rebate programs and conservation techniques so they can cut down on costs.

Tullar said there will be workshops at the park's pavilion on credit counseling and homebuyer education, fair housing and local children's programs.

The Gainesville police and fire departments will also be there to educate on safety in the home.

The "housing festival" will cover more than just housing, though — organizations that offer job training and resume help will be there as well, Tul-

Housing festival

When: 9 a.m. to noon
Saturday, June 22

Where: Longwood Park, 20 Pearl Nix Parkway, Gainesville

How much: Free

lar said.

There is no cost for anything at the event, which will also include lunch, Tullar said.

People can win door prizes or get their face painted, too. They could even leave with a new pet from the Hall County Animal Shelter, which will be hosting an adoption day at the park, Tullar said.

In the case of inclement weather, Tullar said the event would move to the Gainesville High School cafeteria.

The event is hosted by the Gainesville-Hall County team for the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing, a statewide organization focusing on housing and revitalization. The local team has representatives from governments, organizations, citizens and nonprofits.

6-19-19

GAINESVILLE

City council OKs budget, recycling deal

BY MEGAN REED

mreed@gainesvilletimes.com

Gainesville's new fiscal year begins July 1, and the City Council approved the budget for the next year on Tuesday. It includes a rolled back millage rate and funds for several capital projects.

Also starting July 1, the city will be reaching out to residents about recycling—glass will need to be separated and recycled at a compactor site starting in August.

Rollback millage approved

Gainesville is going with the rollback millage rate for the next fiscal year, which begins July 1, after the Gainesville City Council unanimously approved the budget Tuesday.

The city rolled back the rate to 3.322 mills from

■ Please see **COUNCIL, 4A**

6-19-

COUNCIL

■ Continued from 1A

3.364 mills. The rate reflects what the average property owner would have to see in order to keep their payment the same in light of increased assessed property values.

The Council also unanimously adopted the Gainesville Board of Education's millage rate of 6.614. While the board of education establishes its own budget and tax rate, the Council needs to adopt the rate because the city collects property taxes for the school system.

The \$31.9 million city budget keeps rates the same for Gainesville Water Resources.

The budget is 1.8% larger than the current year's budget due to increased revenue from some sources such as sales taxes and franchise fees.

Projects planned for the next fiscal year include a new skate park, the relocation of Fire Station No. 2 from Holly Drive to Cleveland Highway and a quality-of-life study for the Park Hill Drive area.

Recycling agreement with Hall County

Starting Aug. 1, Gainesville residents will no longer be able to put glass in

their recycling bins, but the change will help them avoid a recycling rate increase.

The city has been sending its recycling to Athens, but it will soon go to the Hall County Recycling Center, which is not equipped to handle recycling with glass mixed in.

The City Council unanimously approved the agreement with the county on Tuesday.

An education campaign will start July 1 to make residents aware of the change.

The county can sell recycled materials to vendors, which process them to make new products. Under the agreement with Gainesville, Hall will pay the city half the market rate for the cardboard it brings in. Gainesville wouldn't receive any payment for single-stream recycling, which includes paper, plastics and metals.

City spokeswoman Nikki Perry said last week that Gainesville has been paying \$100 per ton for single-stream recycling with glass, plus the labor and gas required to bring the materials to Athens. Hall County will take single-stream recycling for free and charges \$33 per ton for trash, which would include glass.

City Manager Bryan Lackey has said the savings will allow the city to avoid having to increase recycling rates for residents. People will still be able to bring

6-19-19

their glass to a Hall County compactor site to be recycled, and bringing the materials to the county recycling center in Gainesville is more efficient, he said.

"We were actually having to pay a company in Athens to take it from us, so it's been costing us money,

costing us man hours and time to take the material down there, so this change is really needed," Lackey said Tuesday.

The Hall County Board of Commissioners will also have to approve the agreement at an upcoming meeting.

6-19-19

Roll down to Midtown Greenway for skating, barbecue

BY LAYNE SALIBA
lsaliba@gainesvilletimes.com

This weekend might be the perfect time to roll around the Midtown Greenway.

Celestial Studios, with help from Gainesville Parks and Recreation and Main Street Gainesville, is hosting Skate the City at the park along the greenway. They hope to bring out young and old for a fun evening on wheels.

"Skating is making a resurgence, so there's a lot of interest in it right now," said Fox Gradin, owner of Celestial Studios, a photography studio in midtown. "So we decided to bring it to Gainesville."

The free event is scheduled for 6 to 9 p.m. Saturday, June 22. Skates will not be provided.

Gradin said her family are "avid skaters." They've been to other skate events in Atlanta, which is where they first heard of an event like this. She said the activity is growing in popularity again, so she decided to pitch the idea to Gainesville Parks and Recreation.

"When she came to us with this idea, we went with it," said Julie Butler-Colombini, spokeswoman for Gainesville Parks and Recreation. "And the whole idea of people utilizing the Midtown Greenway in so many different ways, it's just such a natural fit. The layout of the park makes it perfect for all kinds of wheels."

Skate the City

When: 6-9 p.m.
Saturday,
June 22

Where:
Midtown
Greenway,
682 Grove St,
Gainesville

How much: Free
More info:
www.celestial
photography.
com

Whether on inline skates, scooters or a bike, the event is for everyone.

"We've got an awesome DJ that we've brought in that's going to be playing '80s and early '90s music," Gradin said. "We're looking for anything with wheels: skates, bikes, scooters. Whatever you've got."

The Inked Pig will be out at the park serving barbecue and beer alongside Jeannie's Weenies serving hot dogs. Kona Ice will be there, too.

"We just thought it might be a great idea on a summer evening," Butler-Colombini said. "Just like a fun summer night out in the park. It's just a unique idea. And we are really putting focus on bringing as many cool things as we can to the Midtown Greenway."

It's not just for those with wheels, though. Butler-Colombini said she hopes people come out to simply enjoy the community that turns out, whether it's just for the food or music.

"You don't have to skate," Butler-Colombini said. "This is going to be great people watching. So just come out and enjoy some music."

Gradin hopes Skate the City turns into an annual event, or even a bi-annual event.

"I was born and raised here in Gainesville and I'm committed to bringing the community things that I want to do, things that I think are cool and I want to share with my community," Gradin said.

6-20-19

6-20-19

Festival shines light on local affordable housing needs

BY JOSHUA SILAVENT
jsilavent@gainesvilletimes.com

Catherine Chapman, with her granddaughter in tow collecting stickers and other freebies, strolled along the footpath at Longwood Park in Gainesville on Saturday, June 22, unsure about what kind of assistance she might find

for repairs needed to her home. "I'm just getting some information," she said.

Chapman came to the right place.

Though marketed as a housing festival, Saturday's event was also an opportunity for a number of different social service providers - including nonprofits, churches

and local government agencies - to educate the public about how to access local resources.

Businesses were also on hand.

Along her path, for example, Chapman learned how she might cut her energy costs from representatives of Georgia Power, and spoke with employees of the Salvation Army about the non-

profit's rent and utility assistance programs.

Employment information, such as workforce development and continuing education programs, were also available to attendees.

And the Gainesville police and fire departments were on hand to educate kids about safety at home.

The event was hosted by the

Gainesville-Hall County team for the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing, a statewide organization focusing on housing and revitalization. The local team has representatives from governments, organizations, citizens and nonprofits.

■ Please see HOUSING, 4A

6-23-19

HOUSING

■ Continued from 1A

Workshops at the park's pavilion aimed to educate attendees on credit counseling and homebuyer education, as well as fair housing laws and local children's programs.

Jessica Tullar, Gainesville's special projects manager, said the festival was "an opportunity, in a fun way, to give the community an opportunity to connect with resources."

Chad McCranie, a staff attorney with the Georgia Legal Services Program, which has a branch in Gainesville, said the variety of different resource providers on hand at the festival reflected the way local agencies work with one another to "piece together resources."

Georgia Legal Services, for example, operates an eviction prevention program aimed at helping low-income families remain in their homes.

McCranie said communities like Gainesville have to take their own



JOSHUA SILAVENT | The Times

Rosa Hightower (left), who works for the Salvation Army in Gainesville, speaks with Catherine Chapman about the nonprofit's assistance programs at a housing festival hosted by the Gainesville-Hall County team for the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing at Longwood Park on Saturday, June 22.

steps to address affordable housing needs and related issues, such as transportation and emergency shelter options for low-income families.

Beth Brown, executive director of the Gainesville Housing Authority, said agencies cannot operate in a silo to address these issues.

"It helps us to talk to other" pro-

viders, she added.

A lot has changed in the six years since the last similar housing festival was held.

Across the nation, an affordable housing crunch in the rental market has made it difficult for low- and middle-income families to find suitable housing, straining budgets and contributing to a growing number of homeless families.

More than 50 percent of all renters in Gainesville, for example, are considered "cost-burdened," according to census figures, meaning they spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing.

And more than 60 percent of all households in the city limits are renter-occupied.

These numbers reveal a major need in the community to connect individuals with housing assistance, "but also other resources that help people once they get housing, whether that's home ownership or renting," Tullar said.

A few homeless families were assisted at the festival.

Joanne Capias, who leads the St. Vincent de Paul Society at St. Michael's Catholic Church in

Gainesville with her husband, Jack, said a young couple with two children told her their family had recently been evicted.

Capias then connected the family with representatives from the Salvation Army, which has shelter apartments for families.

Capias said St. Vincent, the church's social service arm, would provide the family food and pay for their stay at the shelter.

Capias said St. Vincent will also be delivering beds and furniture next week to several families who attended the festival.

"What an amazing day!" Capias said. "I told Jack, God sent us to be a vendor today."

Beth Oropeza, manager of the United Way of Hall County's Compass Center, said she also connected with a homeless family and helped point them to immediate resources.

"It was a great opportunity for us to learn more about what others are doing and to put names and faces with agencies, but we also wanted to reach out to potential clients and offer hope," Oropeza said. "I think that happened." 6-23-19

New parks director settles in

Wants to make Gainesville more walkable, trail friendly

BY MEGAN REED
mreed@gainesvilletimes.com

After about a month on the job, Kate Mattison, Gainesville's new parks director is settling in and looking ahead.

"Everyone has been so welcoming and so kind. It has been a really wonderful experience so far," she said.

She started working with the city on May 28 and was previously a recreation services administrator in Dublin, Ohio, her home state. Mattison fills the position formerly held by Melvin Cooper, who retired in May after 47 years working in Gainesville's parks department.

"There has been so much to learn. I feel like I've been overwhelmed with information, but in a good way. There has been so much to learn, especially stepping in after Melvin's exit," Mattison said. "He has actually been so kind and wonderful as well, and I've seen him several times and talked to him and gotten some advice and opinions."

Mattison joins the department as it is finalizing its master plan, which will guide decisions on parks facilities and programs for the next decade.

"It's going to be really help-



SCOTT ROGERS | The Times

Kate Mattison has been on the job as Gainesville's new parks director for about a month. She comes from Dublin, Ohio, where she was a recreation services administrator.

ful for me as a professional but for the department overall, it lays out the framework for us for the next 10 years," Mattison said. "It provides us a path, and it gives us a plan to move forward and implement."

Trails were a top request from community members as the city gathered public input for the master plan. Walking at Linwood Nature Preserve, Wilshire Trails Park, Ivey Terrace Park and along the Midtown Greenway

have been some of Mattison's favorite experiences since coming to Gainesville, she said.

"That is a beautiful walk. It's not even like you're in a

■ Please see **DIRECTOR, 8A**

6-27-19

DIRECTOR

■ Continued from 1A

city," she said. "It's like you're in a nature center in the middle of the woods."

Walkability is a trend in recreation, and trails are becoming more popular. Mattison said she is looking forward to working to expand Gainesville's options.

"Everybody wants a walkable community and walkable neighborhoods. It's an overall goal nationwide," she said. "... We have already been working on it, so now I just get to be a part of it."

Lake Lanier Olympic Park is set to officially become a city park on July 1, and Mattison said the city will work with the park's foundation to make some improvements, including renovations such as new restrooms.

"We're working through the details, but we're really excited about it. ... What can we do to improve the overall look of the park and attract more visitors?"



SCOTT ROGERS | The Times

Kate Mattison, left, meets with aquatics manager Shannon Parris at Frances Meadows Aquatic Center.

she said. "They already have a ton of really awesome things going on, but how can we help promote it the rest of the way?"

6-27-19

Beach Bash

When: 5-10 p.m. Saturday, July 13

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

Cost: Free

More info: www.gainesville.org

The city of Gainesville is hosting its fifth-annual Beach Bash this year at a new location: Lake Lanier Olympic Park will be the place for a flood of water-related activities for kids and adults, complete with food truck and beer/wine vendors.

Even if you're not keen on getting wet, there will also be a free performance by '80s tribute band Electric Avenue at 7 p.m.

If you're looking for an inexpensive night out with tons of food and entertainment both in and out of the water, carve out some time for Beach Bash on Saturday, July 13.

6-27-19



Rock Creek Veterans Park

Sidewalks wind through this park off the Gainesville square, passing by monuments honoring veterans who served and died in America's wars. The heavily landscaped park is part of a downtown trail system and features an amphitheater.

Where: 223 Northside Drive, Gainesville

6-30-19

New Salvation Army leaders unpack, reach out to Gainesville community



AUSTIN STEELE | The Times

Lieutenant's Débora, left, and André Pereira, new corps officers at the Salvation Army in Gainesville, speak Wednesday, June 26.

André and Débora Pereira come from organization's branch in Augusta

BY JOSHUA SILAVENT
jsilavent@gainesvilletimes.com

A festival last weekend at Longwood Park in Gainesville, which aimed to educate the public about how to access housing assistance and other social services, was about as good an introduction to the local community as André and Débora Pereira could have hoped to receive.

The couple are the new corps officers and leaders of the Salvation Army's Gainesville branch on Dorsey Street, and they had just moved into the city in mid-June.

"People didn't feel like strangers," Débora said of her experience at the festival. "It was just amazing to see" these groups "work together to make a difference in the community."

The Salvation Army, with support from a local church, was able to assist a few homeless families who attended the festival and provide them emergency housing at its shelter on Dorsey Street.

The Pereira's said the sense of partnership and collaboration they felt was both reassuring and exciting.

"We're firm believers that there's not one organization that can do it all," André said about serving those in need.

The Salvation Army, among its many services, provides rent and utility assistance, operates an annual Christmas toy drive, and runs a thrift store on Atlanta Highway that provides clothing vouchers to those unable to afford such a need.

And it's these services André said he hopes to raise awareness about locally.

"Our mission is always to preach the

Gospel of Jesus Christ ... without discrimination," he said.

But, he added, "We really want to get out there. I think there's so much we offer that I don't think people know about."

Every three to four years, on average, the Salvation Army rotates its mission leaders among the nonprofit's established social service sites.

After five years in Gainesville, that time came for Lt. Arnaldo Pena and Lt. Niurka Pena, who have now transitioned to Dalton.

And after four years in Augusta, the Pereira's were moved to Gainesville, just the latest in a series of transformative moves the couple have made since 2011.

The Pereira's moved to the United States from their native Portugal with plans to live and work here for three years. That first move was mostly inspired by their love of travel and desire to experience new places, people and things.

They worked in Washington, D.C., before beginning a two-year training program in Atlanta to become corps officers with the Salvation Army.

"Things just worked out," André said. "God seemed to be working all that out. So, we stayed."

In Augusta, the couple's first placement at a Salvation Army site, the Pereira's worked as pastors at a community resource center that included a gymnasium and swimming pool as part of its amenities to support community programs.

"We were able, through the church,

to connect to the community and so we were able to bring children in and give them an opportunity to learn how to swim, to learn new skills like art, and things like that," Débora said.

André described it as a "great experience," which made leaving difficult.

But there's some solace to be taken from that feeling.

"I think you're doing something wrong if you ever get to the point where you leave a place and it's not hard to leave," André said.

Débora echoed those sentiments. "It's hard to leave those faces because they become a part of your family," she said.

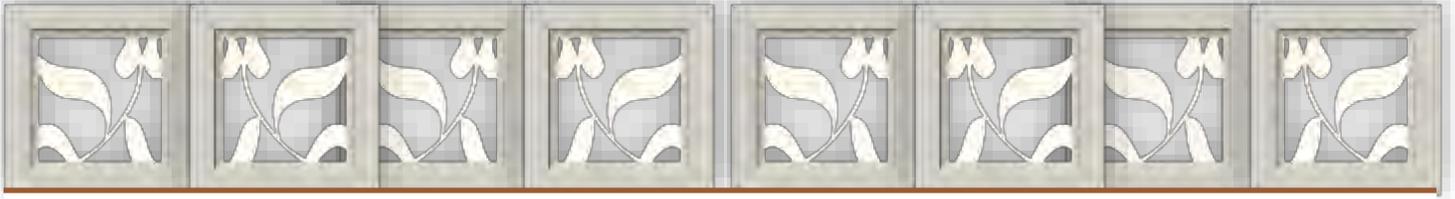
The bittersweet emotions of leaving Augusta, however, have been tempered by the response the Pereira's have received upon their arrival in Gainesville.

"One of the things we realized really quick is that Gainesville wants to help," André said. "That was a blessing for us, walking in and feeling that."

While the Pereira's have much to unpack — literally, as moving boxes still harbor space on their office floors, and metaphorically, as they learn more and more about the local community — the uniqueness of Gainesville has impressed and excited them already.

"The biggest difference (compared with Augusta) is that multi-cultural touch," André said of Gainesville, which has a minority-majority population. "We really feel that different cultures ... bring a richness to a city and a community."

6-29-19



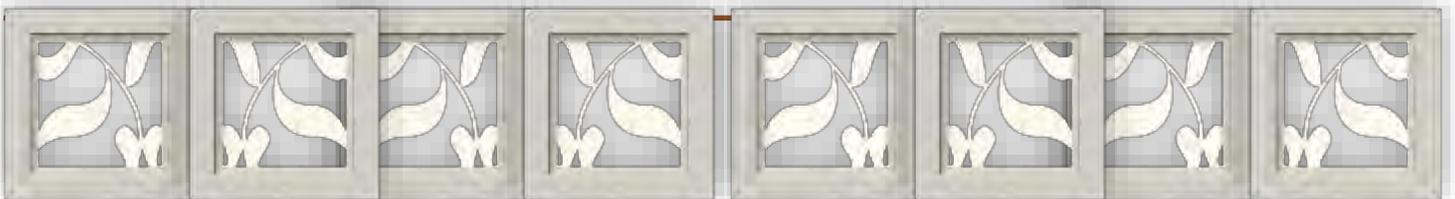
IN THE NEWS

July 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



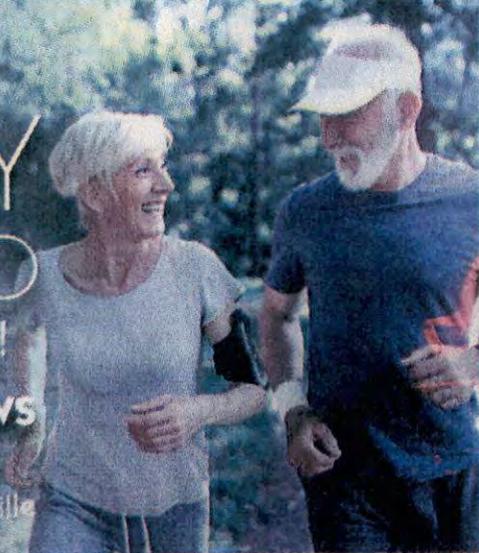
SAVE THE DATE!

The Times
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HEALTHY AGING EXPO

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at Frances Meadows
Aquatic Center

1545 Community Way, Gainesville



Wednesday, September 25th
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1545 Community Way • Gainesville, GA 30501

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7-15-19

HealthSmart

Interactive Health & Wellness EXPO

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Available!

October 16

Expo & Screenings—7:30 am-1:30 pm

Breakfast—7:30 am-9:00 am

Gainesville Civic Center

13th Annual HealthSmart Expo with over 60 wellness exhibitors

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



HealthSmart Breakfast kicks off the day with the **Most Fit Company Awards**. Many levels of sponsorships open! Mandy Lathem, 770-532-6206 x 115. Email: mlathem@ghcc.com

7-4-19

Job Fair & Career Expo on September 24



The Chamber hosts two Job Fair & Career Expos annually -- one in the fall and one in the spring. The events are the perfect forum for companies hiring to recruit new employees. Hiring managers meet hundreds of job candidates face-to-face in a convenient location in a short span of time. Consider sponsoring or exhibiting in the upcoming **Job Fair on Tuesday, September 24 from 2-6 pm at the Gainesville Civic Center**. Job fairs are free and open to the public and are a partnership of the Greater Hall Chamber, the Gainesville Area Employers Committee, Lanier Technical College and the Georgia Department of Labor.

7-4-19

Fall 2019

September 10
Small Business Resource Fair*
7:45-9:30am | Business Incubator at Brenau

September 19
Business After Hours
5-7pm | Chattahoochee Country Club

September 24
Fall Job Fair & Career Expo*
2-6pm | Gainesville Civic Center

October 3
Business After Hours
5-7pm | Conditioned Air Systems

October 16
HealthSmart Expo*
7:30am-2pm | Gainesville Civic Center

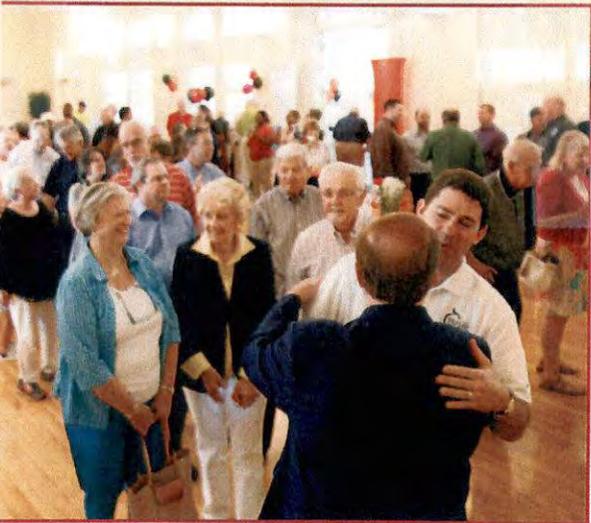
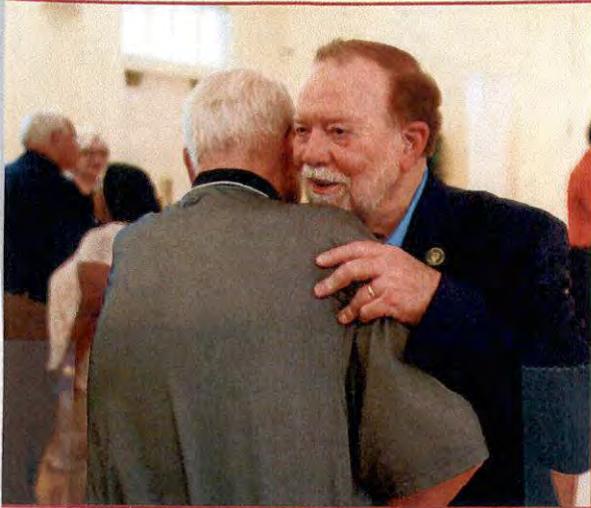
November 7
Farm City Breakfast*
7:30-9:00am | North Hall Community Center

November 13
Industry Appreciation Luncheon*
11am-1pm | Chattahoochee Country Club

*Sponsorship opportunities
Call 770-532-6206
GreaterHallChamber.com

7-4-19

COOPER RETIRES



Gainesville Parks Director Melvin Cooper greets attendees during his retirement party at the Gainesville Civic Center. Cooper worked for the city for 47 years with it being his only job.

7-7-19

BEACH BASH

When: 5-10 p.m. Saturday, July 13

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

Cost: Free

More info: www.gainesville.org

If all the swimming and food isn't enough to tempt you to come to this year's Beach Bash, there will be a free performance by '80s tribute band Electric Avenue. The festivities will begin at 5 p.m. and Electric Avenue's show will start at 7 p.m. Entry is free, so if you're looking for a fun night of '80s nostalgia, Beach Bash has that in spades.

7-11-19

Beach Bash to serve up fifth year of sandy entertainment at Lake Lanier

BY KELSEY RICHARDSON
krichardson@
gainesvilletimes.com

This year's Beach Bash is serving up its fifth year of sunny entertainment with live music, food trucks and copious amounts of sand.

The party, which is free to the public, kicks off at 5 p.m. on Saturday, July 13, at its new venue, Lake Lanier Olympic Park.

Electric Avenue, an '80s tribute band based out of Atlanta, will put on a live performance from 7-10 p.m.

Nikki Perry, City of Gainesville's communications and tourism director, encourages people to "kick back, put their feet in the sand and watch the concert."

"We're looking forward to the band," Perry said. "They're fantastic and I'm sure everyone will find a song to dance to."

The event will offer family-friendly activities like a hula-hoop and limbo contest at 6 p.m. and an inflatable waterslide.

ChopBLOCK, The Inked Pig, Southern Baked Pie and other local vendors will set up booths and food trucks during the Beach Bash. Avocados Restaurant plans to serve margaritas, and Lake Lanier Olympic Park Foundation will sell beer and wine to benefit the park.

Although the venue has



Times file photos

A crowd gathers Friday, July 7, 2017, at the "beach" in downtown Gainesville made from 100 tons of sand during the third annual Beach Bash in downtown Gainesville. The beach bash is being moved to the Lake Lanier Olympic Park this year.

changed, the 100 tons of sand will still make its way to the event. Perry recommends bringing a chair or a blanket.

Last year Perry said around 5,000 people attended the Beach Bash, which was previously held on the square in Gainesville.

"I think people are going to enjoy the new location," Perry

said. "People will get those nice lake breezes and it's just a beachy atmosphere right on Lake Lanier."

Lake Lanier Olympic park is located at 3105 Clarks Bridge Road in Gainesville.

For more information about the event, visit lakelanierylympicvenue.org/event/beach-bash.

Beach Bash 2019

When: 5-10 p.m. Saturday, July 13

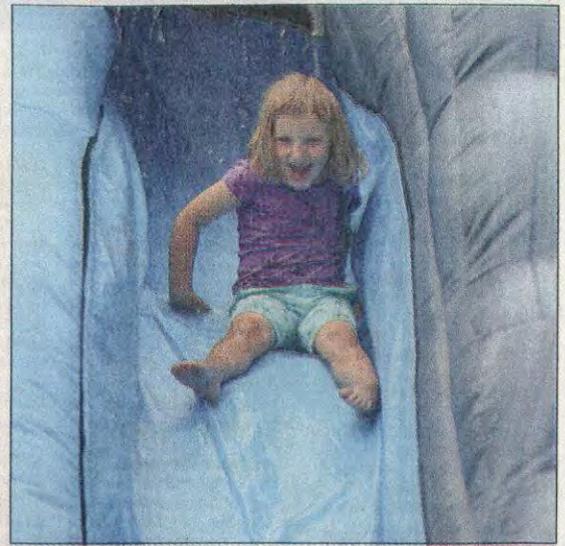
Where: Lake Lanier Olympic Park, 3105 Clarks Bridge Road, Gainesville

How much: Free

Contact: lakelanierylympicvenue.org/event/beach-bash

7-11-19

Beach Bash makes waves



Photos by **AUSTIN STEELE** | The Times

Above: Claudia Harn, 5, from Banks County, slides down a water slide during Beach Bash at Lanier Olympic Park in Gainesville on Saturday, July 13. **Left:** Chaniya Segar, 3, left, and Aubrey Summerour, 5, play in the sand. **Below:** Deb Gravitt hands out leis to attendees.

Bad weather holds off for fifth-annual summer event

BY **LAYNE SALIBA**
lsaliba@gainesvilletimes.com

Alisa Grayson and Angela Riddle watched their grandchildren play in the sand Saturday, July 13. They weren't at the beach, but they were at the fifth-annual Beach Bash with hundreds of others in Gainesville at the Lanier Olympic Park.

"It's a family thing," Grayson said. "It's a beautiful day, even though it's overcast. We're not near a beach, so we wanted to come out and let the kids feel the sand, enjoy the sand. It's a staycation."

Grayson's grandchildren, Chaniya Segar, 3, and Charles Segar Jr., 2, were playing in the 100 tons of sand that was trucked in for the event. They've never been to the beach, so they were getting a little taste of it at home in Gainesville.

Riddle, who lives in Lawrenceville, tries to come out to as many events in Gainesville as she can. She was happy to be there with her granddaughter, Aubrey Summerour, 5, for this year's Beach Bash.

"Every time they have something out here she invites us and we bring the family out," Riddle said.

Bringing the whole family to events like Beach Bash is the main goal. City spokeswoman, Nikki Perry, said they're always trying to find ways to give families new opportunities to get out and enjoy what Gainesville has to offer.

"It's quirky and it's different," Perry said of the event. "It's summertime, and everyone wants to go to the beach. They're in that kind of mood anyway. This is fun, and it's just kind of a quirky, different type of event."

Even with the new location — past Beach Bash events were held on the downtown Gainesville square — Perry said people seemed to enjoy the event.

"From what I've been told, the crowd seems to grow and

■ Please see **BEACH, 5C**



BEACH

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grow," Perry said.

One of the perks of having the event at the Lanier Olympic Park is that all the sand will be taken across the street to replenish the beach area of Clarks Bridge Park.

More and more children played in the sand as the event went on and others waited in line for shaved ice, barbecue or drinks. There was a limbo competition as everyone waited for the concert to start.

Another crowd stood in line for the blow-up water slide.

Liliana Soto was there with her children, Jowell, 6, and Aydelyn, 4. They had already been down the slide

a few times and were waiting for another turn.

Soto had just gotten off work and decided to take her children out for a little evening of fun.

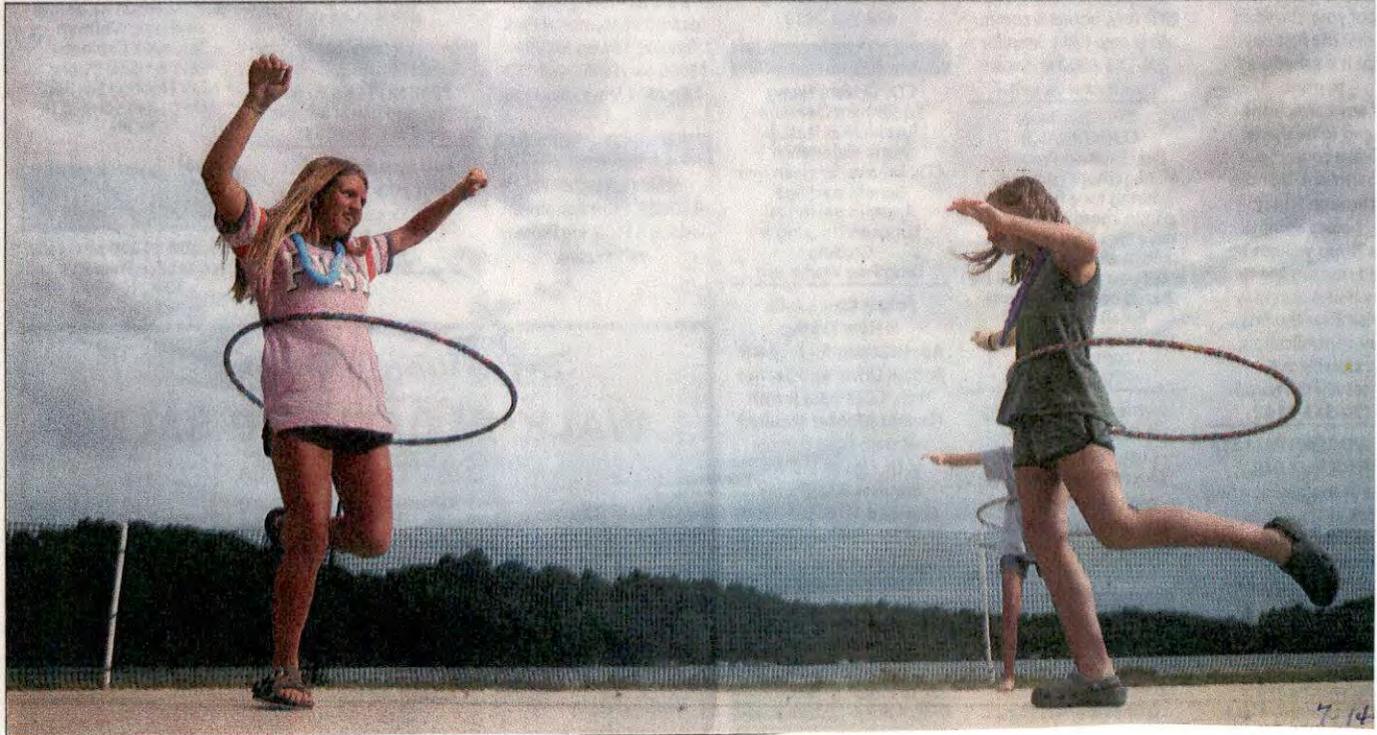
"It's the first time I've ever seen this, so I said, 'Why not?'" Soto said. "They love the beach. They love anything that has to do with water."

As she stood in line with Jowell and Aydelyn, she looked around, thankful for time with her children. She said events like Beach Bash are important, especially to working moms.

"It's a free event where you don't have to pay anything," Soto said. "It's somewhere safe where they can enjoy themselves and meet other kids. And for me too, so I can see my community and gather with them. I like it."

Photos by AUSTIN STEELE | The Times

Right: Kendal Grattan narrowly makes it under a pole while competing in a limbo competition during Beach Bash at Lanier Olympic Park in Gainesville on Saturday, July 13.
Below: Kalista Martin, 15, left, and Abigail Self, 12, from Lafayette compete in a Hula-Hoop competition.



7-14

Georgia's cursed lake?



BEACH RULES

• Beach Closes at Sunset

NO LIFEGUARDS on duty...
Swim at your own risk.

Alcohol and drugs of any kind are prohibited.

Pets not allowed.

Proper attire required.

AUSTIN STEELE | The Times

A sign listing beach rules stands at Clarks Bridge Park on Thursday, June 6.

We look into the data to see if Lanier is exceptionally deadly

KELSEY RICHARDSON

krichardson@gainesvilletimes.com

Each year Lake Lanier collects more names on its list of drownings and boating fatalities.

With 11.8 million visitors annually, according to the Army Corps of Engineers, Lanier holds the title of Georgia's most popular lake. Population size factors into the deadly reputation of the lake that dominates other frequently visited lakes like Allatoona, Oconee and Sinclair when it comes to deaths.

The Law Enforcement Division of

the Georgia Department of Natural Resources keeps tabs on all of its major lakes, providing public access to the number of boating fatalities, drownings, boating incidents and boating under the influence cases.

The department reported a total of 145 drownings and 57 boating fatalities at Lanier from 1999-2018. Boating fatalities may include drownings, but only in connection with a moving boat.

Lake Lanier had two boating fatalities in 2015, eight in 2016, two in 2017 and two in 2018. Seven drownings took place on Lanier in 2015, nine in 2016, five in 2017

and eight in 2018.

The Army Corps of Engineers estimates that Lake Allatoona, in northwest Georgia, hosts 7 million people annually. From 2015-2018 Allatoona has accumulated a total of 16 lake-related deaths, compared to Lanier's 43.

How locals and visitors feel about Lanier

Richard Stever can trace his family's Gainesville roots back to the 1800s. Over the 32 years he has spent visiting Lanier,

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LANIER

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Stever said he has never had family members or friends die on the lake.

However, this is not the case for the number of accidents he has witnessed.

"For some reason this lake seems to claim a lot of people every year regardless of the season," Stever said. "Fishermen have gotten hurt, boats have been capsized."

Stever remembers one person in particular who got into a boating accident around 10 years ago. He said his friend was traveling on the lake at around 60 mph and crashed into a boat that didn't have its lights on.

"Nobody died or got hurt, but this was all because of poor practice in boating," Stever said.

From 2015-2018, Georgia DNR reported a total of 128 boating incidents. During the same span Allatoona had 66 boating incidents, Oconee had 19 and Sinclair had 16. Both Lake Oconee and Sinclair don't have visitor centers, making it difficult to track the amount of lake-goers.

Jay Weems, Georgia Power's land management specialist for Lake Sinclair, said he estimates that around 8,000 people live around Sinclair and 5,000 reside around Oconee.

Hannah Wilcher, executive director of Visit Lake Oconee, said Oconee is the second largest lake next to 38,000-acre Lanier, covering 19,000 acres. While incidents do happen on Oconee, Wilcher said it's not to the same scale as Lanier.

"One thing that makes us different from Lake Lanier is that we never feel overcrowded," she said. "It does feel safer out here and there's not a ton of boats backed up on the water."

During a typical week, Kim Martin, day camp director at Lake Lanier Canoe Kayak Club, can usually be found on the lake or near it. LCKC is located at the Lake Lanier Olympic Park on the north end of the lake near the mouth of the Chattahoochee River. When she married her husband 27 years ago, the two lived on a sailboat for a year at Aqualand Marina on Lanier.

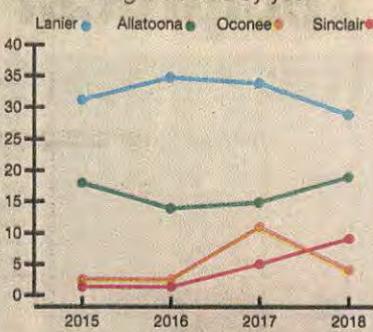
Martin has held water sports-related jobs, including working as the aquatics director of the University of North Georgia, for 47 years. Both of her children have served on LCKC's national teams. She describes her time on Lanier as "magical and phenomenal."

"They've (club members) been racing and had some boats come in at high speeds, but for the most part, they feel safe here," Martin said. "Most people are very conscientious and courteous out here on the lake."

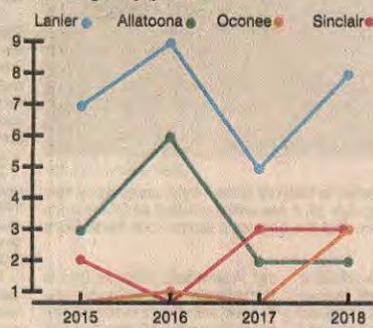
Ben Barnes, who is training with the LCKC high performance team, spends three hours on the lake every day. He traveled from Wake Forest University to undergo training for nationals during the summer.

Before he visited the lake, Barnes said he had heard the stories about the lives it claims every year. However, after a couple of months on Lanier, his worries went away.

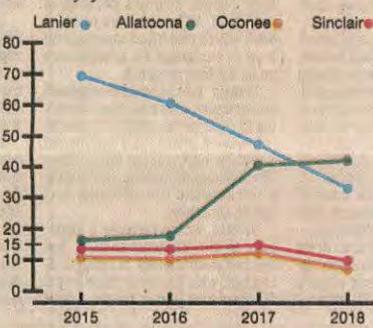
Total boating incidents by year



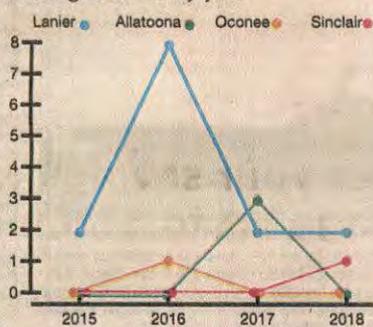
Drownings by year



BUIs by year



Boating fatalities by year



Graphs compiled from information provided by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

"Boats come through all the time, and I haven't had an incident," Barnes said. "I feel super safe on the lake, there's nothing wrong with it. I haven't seen anything or witnessed anything."

If only they had a life jacket

Life jackets might not be the most fashionable attire on the lake. But, they can be the determining factor between life and death.

Eight drownings and two boating fatalities have

taken place this year on Lake Lanier, according to Mark McKinnon, Georgia DNR's public affairs officer for the Law Enforcement Division.

Two recent incidents occurred back-to-back, in less than 24 hours on Memorial Day weekend.

The body of 30-year-old Reginald Whitehead of Perry was located around 10:45 p.m. on May 25, at Shoal Creek Park, followed by 61-year-old Michael Thompson just after midnight, near his boat dock in

the 5400 block of Pine Forest Road.

Capt. Brad Rounds oversees Hall County's Marine Patrol Division, which was recently placed under the Uniform Patrol Division. He said one of the most common trends he finds with lake deaths involves the victim's lack of a life jacket. Whitehead was reported by authorities as not wearing a personal flotation device and unable to swim.

"If you don't know how to swim, please always wear a life jacket," Rounds said. "We wouldn't be dealing with this many drownings if they just put on a life jacket."

Rounds said keeping Lanier safe is a group effort with his team, Georgia DNR, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Hall County Fire Services.

With the warmer months in full swing, marine patrol deputies have ramped up their presence on the lake.

"Many people think that they're just out on a boat on the lake, but there's a lot more to it," Rounds said. "There's so much traffic. We have a lot of the same calls on the street and water."

Rounds, who spent nine years on the Hall County Sheriff's Office dive team, describes the group as a recovery team, not a rescue team.

Hall County Fire Services' takes the role as the rescue team, arriving at a drowning scene as soon as possible. The Sheriff's Office deputies deal mostly with recovering the body.

Rounds said if someone spots another person drowning, he recommends calling 911, then throwing out a flotation device.

If the flotation device is out of question, he said the other most helpful action entails pinpointing the victim's location.

"It's hard because when you're out on the lake, you're floating," he said. "Location is big. If we have to go in and recover a body, having a last known point makes recovery a whole lot easier."

Water and alcohol, a deadly mixture

If a person chooses to consume alcohol while out on the lake, Rounds recommends having a designated driver.

"When you compound it with alcohol, it's a deadly mixture," he said.

From 2015-2018, Georgia DNR estimates 214 incidents of boating under the influence on Lanier. During the same time frame, Allatoona had 121 boating under the influence cases, Oconee had 40 and Sinclair had eight.

Martin said she has lots of discussions with her day camp members about safety and not boating when people are drinking alcohol or swimming when others are using drugs. Her campers range from age 7-12.

"Education around water is such a big thing," Martin said. "There are so many drownings, and those are preventable."

Protecting children from the silent killer

Shannon Parris, aquat-



AUSTIN STEELE | The Times

A lifejacket loaner station stands at Clarks Bridge Park on Thursday, June 6.

ics manager at the Frances Meadows Aquatic Center in Gainesville, oversees the facility's lifeguards in addition to her other duties.

She compares drowning victims to those who undergo a heart attack.

"Not everyone experiences it the same way, and it's kind of the same for drowning," Parris said.

"There can be a swimmer who doesn't appear to be struggling, but unfortunately they turn to breathe and there's a wall of water from other activity going on. All of a sudden they've gone to the bottom or have stopped moving."

Not all drownings happen in silence. The typical movie scene of someone flailing and screaming could also occur. Parris said the way someone drowns depends on how and why they began intaking water.

A mistake she said adults often make involves thinking shallow water is safe.

"Unfortunately this isn't always the situation," she said. "Just because they can touch the bottom, they can still slip and drown."

For parents with children, she encourages them to always remain vigilant because "kids can move especially fast." She recommends staying at an arm's length.

A 10-year-old Hoschton boy was declared dead on Wednesday, July 17, after being pulled from Lanier near Margaritaville on July 11. His 30-year-old father died one day later. DNR Maj. Mike England identified the boy as Ethan Chen and the father as Libao Chen.

Capt. Zachary Brackett wrote that the father went

under the water to look for Ethan, after noticing that his son had not surfaced.

The incident is still under investigation from Georgia DNR.

Martin said she teaches parents about their role in watching children on the lake.

"You can't pick up a book, you can't be grilling burgers, you can't be doing anything," she said. "You need to be watching your children on the water and doing nothing else."

Parris has only worked at pools, never in open waters.

"I have saved people not to the point where they need CPR," she said. "People that, no pun intended, got in over their head."

The best advice she would give someone who spots a potential drowning victim includes "reach and throw, don't go."

She advises people to find a floatable object to throw and tell the victim to grab it. Parris said to most people, latching onto a flotation device may seem simple, but someone who is drowning may not notice it out of panic. This is why shouting instructions proves necessary.

With natural bodies of water, there are sudden drops in depth. Parris recommends staying informed about the topography before entering it and never swimming alone.

Above all, wear a life jacket.

"A mistake people make is thinking that they don't have to wear a life jacket on a boat or kayak, but they could accidentally hit their head and become unconscious," Parris said. "Even if you can swim, wear one."

7-21-19

A passion for thrashin'



Photos by **SCOTT ROGERS** | The Times

Above: Dale Struble has opened Thrasherville skate shop in downtown Gainesville catering to the needs of skateboarders. The shop features a wide selection of decks, trucks, wheels, bearings and hardware. **Below:** A selection of skateboard wheels are on display.

With park being built, veteran's store to promote skateboarding

BY KELSEY RICHARDSON
krichardson@gainesvilletimes.com

Dale Struble doesn't consider skateboarding a sport or a hobby — it's a way of life.

"The feeling it gives me is hard to answer," Struble said. "It's like me asking you how you feel when you wake up."

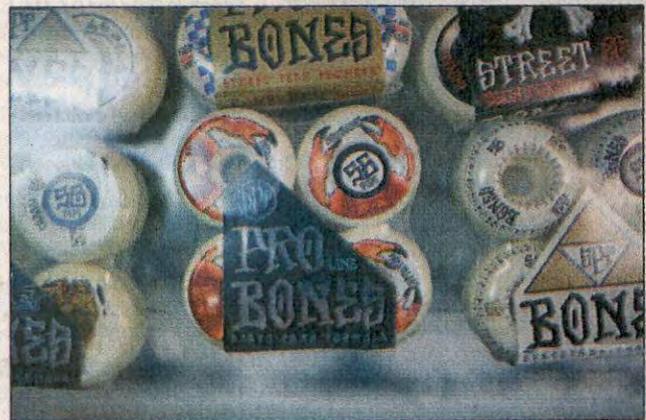
Struble has planted his passion for skateboarding on the square with the opening of Thrasherville Skate-shop, located at 119 Bradford St., a couple of storefronts

down from Imperial Records Cooperative.

The business sells all of the necessary equipment for someone to put together a skateboard, including decks, wheels, bearings and trucks. Thrasherville additionally has merchandise like hats, T-shirts, and boards reissued from the '80s.

Struble takes pride in his store. He said he doesn't want to sacrifice the quality of his products in order to sell cheap

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skateboard equipment.

The skateboards range from \$40-\$110, depending on the style.

"If I go out to a skate park and see my shop deck or shop board that somebody has bought from me, I want it to be good," Struble said. "Me being different heights and different weights, there's nothing here I wouldn't put in my own set-up."

Struble actively served in the U.S. Marine Corps for four years in San Diego, where he worked on airplanes. He stayed in the aviation field for 26 years and "hated every day of it."

His true love lies with skateboarding, a passion that started when he was 9.

After talking about opening a skate shop for years, Struble finally decided to take the plunge.

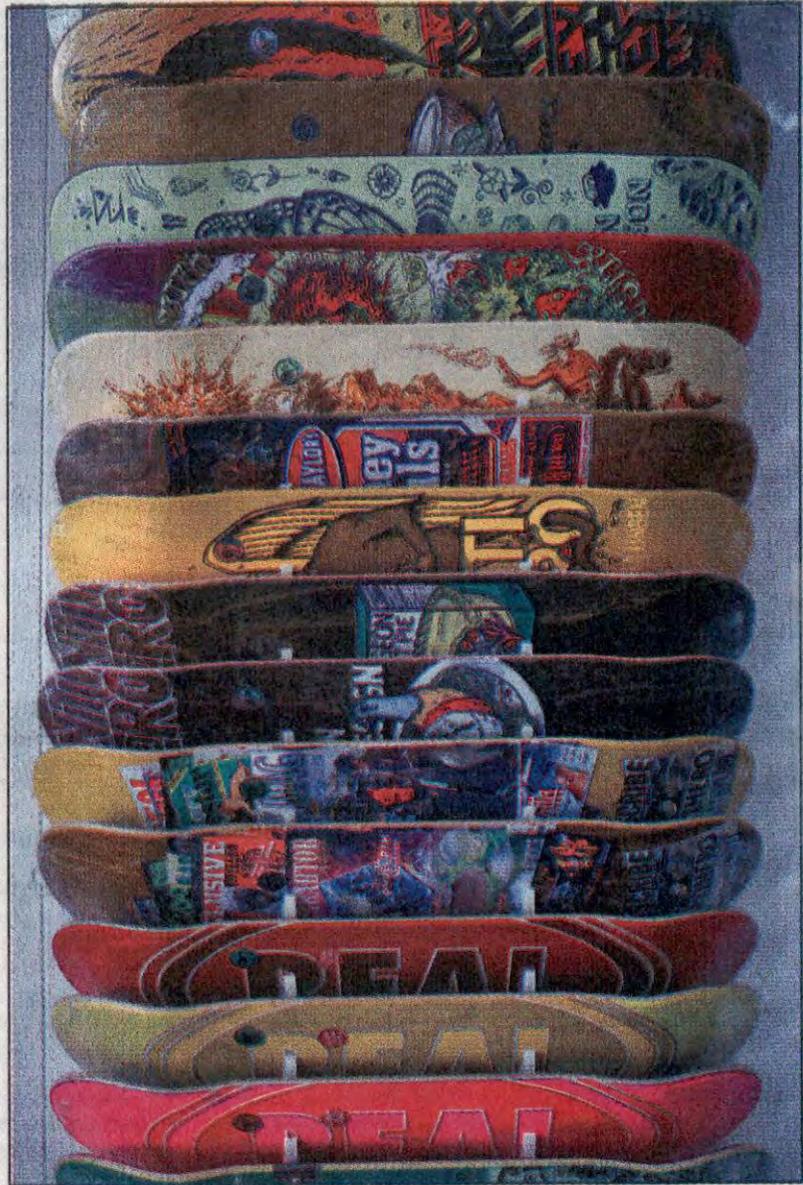
Struble said he couldn't have done it without his wife, Jacquelyn. She helps with the business side of the store, and came up with the idea to place astro-turf on the floor.

The name "Thrasherville" pays homage to Struble's connection to Atlanta. The city served as his skateboarding stomping grounds for over 12 years.

Struble, who lives in Flowery Branch, plans to foster a skateboarding community in Hall County. He envisions his shop as a place where kids and adults can hang out and feel comfortable.

"Skate shops bring the community and skateboarding together," Struble said. "People get to actually know the skateboarders and they realize these people aren't that bad, they're just trying to do what they're passionate about."

The new skate park coming to midtown Gainesville will add more fire to Struble's goal of building a skateboarding community. It's set to go near the water tower on



SCOTT ROGERS | The Times

A rack shows skateboard decks for sale Wednesday, July 24, at the newly opened Thrasherville skate shop in downtown Gainesville.

the corner of High Street and Pine Street.

Julie Butler-Colombini, spokeswoman for Gainesville Parks and Recreation, said the 20,000-square-foot skate park will be finished in early 2020.

"Fencing is going up now and there's movement on the site," she said. "This is very exciting and the community really needs this."

Thrasherville Skateshop's hours are 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Saturday.

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