

Finance director resigns as troubled
FY '27 financial plan is reworked

By KATHRYN CROCKETT
Staff Reporter

Dawson Finance Director Dawn Williford resigned from her position Friday as city officials work to revise the financial report presented to the City Council earlier this month and prepare a final Fiscal Year 2027 budget for public review.

A high-ranking city official confirmed Williford's resignation Friday. Additional details about the circumstances of her departure were not immediately available.

City Manager Roxie Powell also confirmed Friday that changes will be made to the financial report presented to council at its Aug. 13 meeting.

Powell said the city anticipates having a final proposed budget ready for public review after the next regularly scheduled City Council meet-

ing. She said she also plans to ask the council to extend the city's budget public hearing until Sept. 24.

The developments come one day after The Dawson News reported that the financial report presented to council showed revenues and expenditures balancing at approximately \$6.18 million but included a \$300,000 transfer from the city's utility funds that was not reflected as an expense within those funds.

The report showed the utility funds generating a combined surplus of approximately \$291,000 even after the \$300,000 transfer was counted as general fund revenue, effectively leaving the financial plan about \$300,000 out of balance when the transfer is accounted for on both sides of the city's finances.

The documents also did not identify how the city planned to address as much as \$350,000 in short-term borrowing already authorized this year or approximately \$4.4 million in Georgia Environmental Finance Authority loans associated with the city's wastewater treatment project.

The city entered the new fiscal year without an adopted budget. Council previously approved temporary spending authority acknowledging that a final budget would not be adopted before the beginning of the fiscal year.

No final proposed budget has yet been presented to the public for review.

Williford's departure and the planned revisions to the financial report come as city officials work to complete that process ahead of the anticipated Sept. 24 public hearing.

\$10.2 million sewer
project leaves major
financial questions
unresolved for city

By KATHRYN CROCKETT
Staff Reporter

As Dawson's finance director resigns and operating pressures mount, records show \$10.2 million in sewer funding, frozen loans, missing audits and gaps in the public accounting of project money.

The resignation of Dawson's finance director Friday adds new urgency to understanding a city financial picture that has become increasingly difficult to reconcile.

Dawson has struggled to bring recurring revenues in line with the cost of normal operations. At the same time, millions of dollars in federal grant and state loan money have moved through the city for one of the largest infrastructure projects in its recent history.

FINANCES
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Terrell Academy's Lily Addison watches as the pitch goes by during Monday's game against Calvary Christian. Addison and the Lady Eagles stayed close to the highly ranked Lady Knights until things moved their way late in the game/JOE WHITFIELD

Lady Eagles battle
with nationally
ranked Calvary
Christian of Columbus

By JOE WHITFIELD
Sports Editor

Ashley Walker isn't particularly interested in making Terrell Academy's schedule easy. He wants the Lady Eagles ready when the games become considerably more important.

Monday provided another test.

Terrell Academy stayed within striking distance of nationally ranked Calvary Christian of Columbus for five innings before the Lady Knights pulled away for a 12-4 victory.

Calvary improved to 11-2 and entered the game ranked No. 7 in Georgia and No. 11 nationally. Its only losses have come against Lee County, currently No. 3 in GHSA Class 6A, and Tattnall Square Academy of Macon by one run.

Yet Terrell Academy trailed just 6-4 entering the sixth.

"I thought we held our own and played really well," Walker said. "Hats off to them, they are a very talented team, and I thought we were able to rise to the occasion and show that we can play good softball too."

Calvary scored in the first, but Terrell Academy answered with two runs on a wild pitch for a 2-1 lead. The Lady Knights regained the advantage with three runs in the second.

Caroline Presley kept Terrell Academy within striking distance, working five innings and allowing eight runs, seven earned, on 11 hits without issuing a walk.

"Caroline did a really good job of keeping them off balance at the plate, and she missed a lot of barrels today," Walker

LADY EAGLES
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TCBOE bring in outside financial team after CFO departure

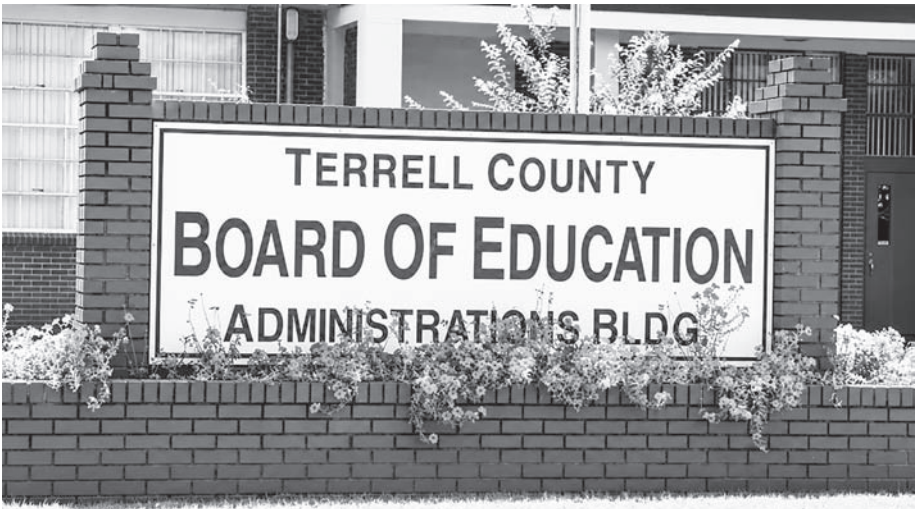
By KATHRYN CROCKETT
Staff Reporter

The Terrell County Board of Education has approved an agreement with the Mauldin & Jenkins CPA firm to provide CFO-level consulting and financial support as the school system continues rebuilding its finance department following months of turnover and identified longstanding weaknesses in its financial processes.

The board approved the agreement during a special called meeting Tuesday, after Superintendent Shereca Harvey walked members through the scope, cost and terms of the contract.

The agreement comes after the departure of former Chief Financial Officer Tony Lowe, who left Terrell County Schools after about six months to take the CFO position with Sumter County Schools.

Harvey previously told The Albany Herald that Lowe joined the district in February during a particularly difficult period for its finance department, with staff turnover,



The Terrell County Board of Education has approved an agreement with the Mauldin & Jenkins CPA firm to provide CFO-level consulting and financial support as the district works to strengthen its financial operations and internal controls/KATHRYN CROCKETT

unresolved vendor payments, payroll and benefits issues, two outstanding audits and the development of the Fiscal Year 2027 budget all happening at once.

Rather than immediately placing another CFO into that environment,

dent's position.

"I'm bringing in a group so that the next CFO will not be overwhelmed," Harvey said. "They're going to clean things up, get us where we need to be."

At Tuesday's meeting, Harvey said Mauldin & Jenkins representatives visited the district Aug. 20 to assess its needs before developing the proposal presented to the board.

The agreement is not for basic bookkeeping or data-entry services. Instead, Harvey said the district selected higher-level "controlling" and CFO services designed to improve financial oversight, reporting and internal controls.

Under the agreement, Mauldin & Jenkins will review the district's budget status and projections monthly, monitor grant activity, help prepare monthly financial information for the board and consult directly with Harvey.

The firm also will provide support to the Finance Department.

TCBOE
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YSYM’s first official meeting will be held on Tuesday, Sept. 8, at Barnes Soulfood/SPECIAL PHOTO

Rebirth of Young Sisterhood Youth Ministry

SPECIAL TO THE DAWSON NEWS

The Rebirth of Young Sisterhood Youth Ministry, Inc. was first established on July 28, 2007, under the leadership of Mrs. Allison Harvey. YSYM, is dedicated to mentoring girls ages five and up by fostering academic excellence, personal growth, leadership, self-esteem, spiritual development, and essential life skills in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment. As the organization begins this new chapter, the first Advisory Board meeting was held on Thursday, Aug. 20, and registration was held on Monday, Aug. 24, at Barnes Soulfood

Restaurant in Dawson, Georgia. The upcoming Advisory Board members are Mrs. Allison Harvey – Director, Dr. Valencia Gardner – Assistant Director, Mrs. Sander Cody – Secretary, Mrs. Tammie Duck-Thomas – Treasurer, Ms. Sonji Harvey – Chief Financial Officer, Mrs. Cynthia Oxford – Advisor, Mrs. Dollie Blackshear – Advisor, Mrs. Antoinette Jones – Advisor, Mrs. Lisa Harvey – Advisor During registration, 32 girls joined the Young Sisterhood Youth Ministry, with an expectation that additional girls will enroll as the program continues to grow. This tremendous response demonstrates the need for programs that provide positive mentorship, encouragement, guidance, and opportunities for young girls in our community. Young Sisterhood Youth Ministry, Inc. looks forward to building upon its strong foundation and continuing its commitment to empowering young girls to become confident, responsible, successful, and well-rounded young women. YSYM first official meeting will be held on Tuesday, Sept. 8, at Barnes Soulfood.

OBITUARIES



Joyce Settles Scarborough

SHELLMAN – Joyce Settles Scarborough, 87, of Shellman, Ga. passed away on Saturday, Aug. 29, 2026, in the Evergreen Assisted Living in Albany. Graveside funeral services were conducted at 11 a.m. on Monday, Aug. 31, in the Shellman Eastview Cemetery with Rev. Chet Anderson officiating. Joyce was born on Nov.

10, 1938, in Cuthbert, Ga. the daughter of the late Earl Settles and the late Verlie Durrance Settles. She was a graduate of Cuthbert High School, member of the Shellman First Baptist Church and was retired as the office manager for Peerless Manufacturing. She was preceded in death by her parents, husband, Aubrey Scarborough and a son, Michael Linwood Scarborough.

Survivors include her son, Tony (Teresa) Scarborough of Leesburg; two granddaughters, Hannah and Haley Scarborough of Albany; two step-grandchildren, Olivia Bevel and Dawson Bevel; and several nieces and nephews.

Memorials may be made to the Alzheimer’s Association 5156 River Rd. Columbus, GA 31904 or Alz.org. Lunsford Funeral Home, Cuthbert, Ga. (229) 732-2148.

Terrell County Fall Festival set for Saturday, Sept. 26

STAFF REPORTS

Fall festivities are returning to downtown Dawson later this month with an afternoon of food, games, arts and crafts and family activities. The Terrell County Recreation Department will host its Fall Festival from 3 to 6 p.m. Sept. 26, behind the historic courthouse at 235 E. Lee St. Vendors are also being invited to partic-

ipate. Vendor registration is \$20, with booth categories including arts and hand-made items, home businesses, direct sales, and food or concessions. Vendors must be set up no later than 2:30 p.m. on the day of the festival. The festival is open to the public. Those interested in participating as a vendor or seeking additional information may contact Joe Williams at (229) 537-9501.

Lawmaker exploring legislation to curb Flock camera misuse

By TY TAGAMI
Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — Growing public concern about license plate reader systems has led a key state senator to consider legislation to limit abuses by police. After nearly weekly news reports of law enforcement officers accused of misusing license plate reader data for personal purposes, such as spying on friends and family, Sen. John Albers, R-Roswell, said on Tuesday that he was joining a new task force to explore whether legislation is needed.

He said other lawmakers also were invited to join. "Like every citizen in our state, we're concerned about the abuses that have taken place," said Albers, who, as chairman of the Senate Public Safety Committee, has influence over law enforcement legislation.

News reports about police misuse of the camera systems in Georgia increased this year, as more local departments started auditing use and reporting potential abuses to the Georgia Bureau of Investigation. As recently as last week, three former officers in Savannah were charged with misuse of a license plate reader system and violation of oath of office, WSB-TV reported Monday, noting that a fourth employee also was charged with misuse of the system.

In separate Georgia cases, former law enforcement employees also have been charged with misuse, as well as stalking and computer invasion of privacy.

Atlanta-based Flock Safety is one of the leading companies in the license plate reader industry. The company told Atlanta News First in 2023 that its cameras were watching in at least 70% of Georgia's cities.

The proliferation of its cameras has been accompanied by concerns about privacy. At least 30 localities across the country had deactivated their Flock cameras or canceled their contracts with the company since the beginning of 2025, NPR reported in February. That report noted that Flock CEO Garrett Langley had criticized DeFlock, a crowdsourced mapping project.

As of Tuesday, DeFlock's website reported that more than 130 cities had canceled Flock contracts, deactivated their cameras or otherwise rejected the systems. But the website said there were still at least 135,000 license plate readers in use.

In mid-August, Flock announced new accountability and privacy measures. The company said it was reducing its recommended default data retention period from 30 days to seven. It also said it was letting cities control the types of offenses that external law enforcement agencies could search their data for.

"People have concerns and public trust is paramount," he said.

Raines Baptist Church to celebrate 33rd anniversary

STAFF REPORTS

Raines Baptist Church will celebrate its 33rd church anniversary Sept. 13 with morning and afternoon worship services centered on the theme, "A Legacy of Faith ... A Future of Hope." Morning worship will begin at 11 a.m. at the 577 Orange St. church in Dawson. An afternoon anniversary service will begin at 2 p.m. at the ARJAGZ Cultural Center, 1051 Augusta St. NE. Mt. Pilgrim Baptist Church will serve as the guest church for the afternoon service. Raines Baptist traces its beginnings to a mission effort associated with First Baptist Church of Dawson. According to a history of the congregation, the church held its first Sunday worship service Nov. 28, 1993, with 23 people in attendance, most of them children. The congregation later became a fully constituted church in September 1999.

Over the years, Raines has expanded its ministry beyond regular worship to include community events, scholarships, outreach efforts and partnerships with organizations serving local families. The anniversary celebration will recognize the church's history while looking toward its continued ministry under the theme, "Celebrating God's Faithfulness: Honoring Our Past ... Embracing Our Future."

Raines Baptist Church to host breast cancer, domestic violence awareness event

STAFF REPORTS

Raines Baptist Church will host its 28th annual Breast Cancer and Domestic Violence Awareness Event on Oct. 3, bringing health information, community resources and support services together in downtown Dawson. The event will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at The Log Cabin, 293 Stonewall St. NE. Organizers say the event is designed to promote awareness, education, prevention and support surrounding both breast cancer and domestic violence. Activities are expected to include health screenings, community resource information, vendors and door prizes. This year's event carries a baseball theme: "A Home Run Is Made Every Time," with organizers encouraging the community to come together to "hit it out of the park" in supporting those affected by breast cancer and domestic violence. Community outreach has long been part of Raines Baptist Church's ministry. Church historical records list domestic violence and breast cancer awareness efforts among its recurring community programs. The event is open to the community.

Macedonia Parrott to host Youth Day

STAFF REPORTS

PARROTT – Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church in Parrott will celebrate its annual Youth Day observance on Sept. 6, during its regular worship service at 11 a.m. Minister Jesse R. Thompson II of Atlanta will bring the message. Thompson is a member of Mount Ephraim Baptist Church, where his spiritual foundation was nurtured and where he continues to serve as associate minister. His academic background includes a Bachelor of Arts degree in Religion from Luther Rice University, a Master of Arts degree in Religion/Biblical Studies, and a Doctor of Ministry degree from McCormick Theological Seminary. Thompson brings a humble spirit and a sincere heart for serving God's people. Macedonia pastor the Rev. Lucious Mitchell and the entire Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church family extend an invitation to the general public to come out and support this special Youth Day celebration.

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Tickets, Hotel Specials, Festival Details
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RELIGION DIGEST

Dawson Methodist Revival
Dawson Methodist Revival, led by Global Ministries will be on Friday, Sept. 11 at 7 p.m.; Saturday Sept. 12 at 7 p.m.; and Sunday, Sept. 13 at 10:30 a.m. at Dawson Methodist Church, located at 306 Stonewall Street NE.

COMMUNITY NEWS

City of Bronwood Work Sessions
Work sessions for the City of Bronwood is having on every 1st Tuesday of each month starting Sept. 1 at 4 p.m. The location will be at the city hall.



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DID YOU KNOW...?

Was a well-known American general nominated three times for the Medal of Honor?

By JACK BAGLEY
Georgia Trust For Local News

Good grief, where is the time going so quickly? I mean, here it is September already!

You know what that means, right? (Well, you do if you're a regular reader of this silly stuff.). It means that later on, just three more weeks or so, I have another one of those silly events called "birthdays."

This month, I'll turn 68 years old. While I ruminate on what all that could possibly mean, I'll turn over the trivia column and let you enjoy some things that don't cause me to feel older.

Did you know...
... two separate attacks on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii took place during World War II? We are all familiar with the "day of infamy" attack which happened on December 7, 1941, and which brought the United States into the war. A second attack, on March 4, 1942, is lesser known. Dubbed "Operation K," this involved two Japanese flying boats attacking Oahu Island once again, specifically targeting a dock. Bad weather and even worse navigation caused the bombers to miss the dock, dropping their ordinance harmlessly near a high school. (Thanks to Terry for the tip!)

... an astronomer once designed a super-telescope? Adrien Auzout (1622-1691) drew up a design for a 1,000-foot-long refracting telescope. He thought that the telescope would have a magnification so great that he would be able to see animals on the Moon. The telescope would not be contained in a tube, but instead would have been an "aerial" telescope which uses lenses mounted high in a tree or on a pedestal, and the observer holding the eyepiece lens. (Now that would be a heavenly view.)

... a man can make a sound humans can't hear, but elephants can? Tim Storms (born 1972), a singer said to have the "world's deepest voice," holds the world record for the lowest note produced by a human. The note is eight octaves below the lowest G on a piano, and cannot be heard by the human ear – but elephants can hear it, scientists say. Storms himself cannot hear the note, but he says he can "feel" it in his head. His vocal abilities arise from the fact that his vocal cords are twice as long as most peoples'. (What the elephants think of Mr. Storms' ability has not been recorded for posterity.)

... a famous American general was nominated three times for the Medal of Honor? Douglas MacArthur (1880-1964), one of the most well-known and controversial Army officers in American history, was nominated for the Medal of Honor on three separate occasions. The first was in 1914, when then-Captain MacArthur conducted long-range reconnaissance behind enemy lines in Mexico as part of the Veracruz expedition. The award was submitted by General Leonard Wood (1860-1927), but was rejected by a board convened to review the award, which said awarding the Medal of Honor might encourage staff officers to ignore their commanders and go off on their own missions. The second recommendation came during World War I, when then-Brigadier General MacArthur led another reconnaissance patrol, this one into a gap in German barbed wire fencing and was wounded, ending up the sole survivor of the patrol. This award was submitted by General Charles Summerall (1867-1955), but was downgraded to a Distinguished Service Cross. MacArthur did receive the Medal of Honor in 1942, during World War II, but not for any specific moment of gallantry. Rather, MacArthur was awarded the Medal to offset Japanese propaganda about him supposedly "deserting" his command in the Philippines after he was ordered to leave for Australia. (Thanks to Dave for the tip!)

... filming of one movie caused another movie to shut down for a day? When the 2007 movie No Country for Old Men was being filmed in Marfa, Texas, a cloud of smoke from the set of another movie being filmed there, There Will Be Blood, caused the production to shut down for a day. What makes this a very interesting coincidence is the fact that There Will Be Blood filmed in Marfa for months, but No Country for Old Men only worked in the town for two weeks. (I guess nobody ever heard of coordinating schedules.)

... two rival Mexican religious groups are based on soft drinks? In the town of Chamula, located in the southern state of Chiapas, Mexico, shamans in a religious group began using Coca-Cola™ in their rituals to heal worshipers. When word of this got back to rival Pepsi-Cola™, that company began giving commissions to shamans to get them to recommend Pepsi instead. Coke did the same thing, and now in Chamula there's the Coca-Cola group and the Pepsi group. The "Coca-Cola Church" is actually a tourist attraction. (I got nothing here, folks.)

... engagement rings are expensive because of a marketing ploy? The "standard" value of an engagement ring is said to be two months' salary for the prospective groom. This arbitrary standard was created by the DeBeers Diamond Company's advertising agency. Additional trivia note: Diamonds are only valuable, some sources say, because of DeBeers. The company keeps millions of dollars worth of diamonds hidden in order to drive up the price of those on the market, or so it is alleged.

Now... you know!

Too many flavors of toothpaste

While doing a little light housework the other day, I discovered a glob of fluorescent blue gel at the bottom of the sink.

My daughter, like most little girls, is enamored with all things squishy or made of clay and slime, and she, like seemingly everyone in her circle of influence, loves to play mad scientist with these gooey toys, creating their own out of plastic wrap and balloons or dissecting the ones I spent my hard-earned money on. I have spent too much of my life unclogging drains congested with the leftovers of her experiments At first I believed my afternoon was going to be booked up taking apart another obstructed P-trap.

I tried to wipe away the substance with the rag clutched in my fist and the azure sludge only smeared across the white ceramic surface. My initial fear was assuaged; it wasn't slime, it was toothpaste.

I had two thoughts as I continued to scrub away at the ever-spreading smudge: Why does something meant to clean your teeth make such a mess everywhere else and how well are the members of my household, particularly the youngest ones, brushing their teeth when most of the toothpaste ends up at the bottom of the sink?

There are two kinds of people in this world - those who are shrewd practitioners of oral hygiene and those who take a lackadaisical approach to brushing and flossing. I've been on both ends of this spectrum and both sides keep the dentist office busy.

I'm always surprised at the variety of flavors toothpaste comes in



THE NEW SOUTHERN DAD

By KYLE DOMINY

these days. For decades of my life I believed there was mint and cinnamon, the latter being only for old people. At every visit for a cleaning the list grows longer and longer. It takes the poor hygienist more time to rattle off the options than it does to actually brush my teeth. Among the popular offerings, I'm told, is birthday cake.

It seems counterintuitive, yes, but maybe the good people at Colgate are getting desperate.

The Egyptians were the first people to develop an oral hygiene routine. Some 5,000 years ago, the first tooth cleaner was concocted out of the ashes of burnt ox hooves, pumice and egg shells. The Greeks and Romans improved on the recipe, if you can call it that, by adding crushed bones and oyster shells. Apparently garbage is good for the teeth.

Ironically, the toothbrush didn't come along until more than 3,000

years later. A clever soul living in China during the Tang Dynasty, attached hog hair bristles to a piece of bamboo. Rumor has it that the inventor was known for his less-than-stellar good looks and was trying to find a way to impress the ladies.

Fluoride wasn't clinically proven to benefit teeth until the 1950s, though the chemical was added to the drinking water supply of Flint, Michigan in 1945. An attendant was stationed at all municipal water fountains to ask thirsty partakers if they wanted mint or cinnamon. The latter being only for the elderly, of course.

Back in the confines of my own home, with a freshly cleaned sink, at least until the next tooth brushing session, I'm just thankful that toothpaste evolved from animal parts and bone meal.

The next time I'm at the dentist, I think I'll give birthday cake a try.

COUCH THEATER



Gal Gadot stars in "The Runner"/Photo courtesy of MovieStillsDB

By DEMI TAVERAS
King Features

Star Wars: The Mandalorian and Grogu (PG-13)
Sometimes a film can have a notable director such as Jon Favreau ("The Lion King"), popular lead stars like Pedro Pascal ("Fantastic 4: The First Steps") and Jeremy Allen White ("The Bear"), and even a score composed by an Oscar winner like Ludwig Goransson ("The Odyssey") -- and still not meet box-office expectations! It certainly didn't meet Disney's, as it was the lowest-grossing live-action "Star Wars" film of all time. This sci-fi film is a continuation of the three-season series "The Mandalorian" (2019-2023), which follows bounty hunter Din Djarin (Pascal) and his foundling, Grogu. Instead of a fourth season, its creators decided to move toward a feature film about the duo, who get recruited by the New Republic to rescue Rotta the Hutt (White). Stream it on Sept. 2! (Disney+)

Mayday (PG-13)
Ryan Reynolds is back on our screens after the successful third installment of his "Deadpool" franchise! Trading in his skintight red suit for a United States Air Force uniform, Reynolds plays pilot Troy "Assassin" Kelly in this action-comedy film out on Sept. 4. After ejecting himself from his plane to survive a head-on collision, Troy lands in the Russian wilderness and quickly encounters ex-KGB carpenter Nikolai Ustinov (Kenneth Branagh). Nikolai, who greatly admires the American government and culture, agrees to help Troy get outside of enemy lines. Of course, even with their combat skills and the power of their two heads combined, it won't be an easy feat. (Apple TV)

The Runner (PG-13)
Having gone under the radar for a bit after the catastrophe that was "Snow White" (2025), Gal Gadot has found herself in a new lead role for an action thriller that's way more up her alley. Gadot portrays Maia, an attorney, mother and running enthusiast. In the middle of her normal run after dropping her son, Noah, off to school, she receives what she assumes is an ordinary call from him, until she hears a man on the other end of the line. Startled, Maia listens intently as the caller tells her that he has abducted Noah, and only if she follows each of the caller's rules will Noah get to live. Damian Lewis ("Pressure") and Alfred Enoch ("The Critic") co-star. Premieres Sept. 2. (Amazon Prime Video)

The Man Will Burn (TV-MA)
This four-part documentary series that's out now on streaming takes on the radical weeklong desert festival known as Burning Man. Originating in 1986 on Baker Beach in San Francisco, Burning Man has since evolved into a large-scale event consisting of more than 70,000 participants. Now held at its iconic venue of Black Rock City, Nevada, the festival brings together people from around the world with a foundation of 10 main principles: radical inclusion, gifting, decommodification, radical self-reliance, radical self-expression, communal effort, civic responsibility, leaving no trace, participation, and immediacy. The series explores its history, the nonprofit that organizes the festival, and how celebrity culture has infiltrated Black Rock City. (HBO Max)
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Friends of Georgia radio

SANDY SPRINGS – The friends of Georgia Radio Hall of Fame gathered here for its annual awards banquet last weekend. The event drew old friends and honorees, new faces, and a litany of supporters who appreciate local radio.

The “friends” also inducted five radio personalities into its Hall of Fame, including Dallas McCade, the robust personality of Kicks 101.5; Greg Street, V103 (VEE); Marcy Williams, a trailblazing female anchor at WSB’s 95.5 FM; and Joel Williams, perhaps Northeast Georgia’s best-known radio morning host on WCON’s My Country 99.3 in Cornelia.

Dallas McCade is not only known for her love of country music, she, if she could afford it, would take in every stray animal in the

state. Greg Street, a fishing buddy of Georgia’s Jonas Jennings, still working with the Dawgs, has been a mainstay on WVEE since the 90s, an afternoon anchor with his 6:00 p.m. theme: “It’s 6:00 o’clock, it’s 6:00 o’clock. It’s time for Greg Street to Rock.” He has entertained Atlanta audiences for years and has never met a charity he didn’t like.

Marcy Williams, a graduate of Princeton, is the only Ivy Leaguer in the group. She is an iconoclast who has gone where women have never gone before. She had gigs in Los Angeles and San Francisco before settling in with WSB’s 95.5 FM in 1993.

Joel Williams has reached “beloved” status with his morning show, which he co-hosts with Rebecca Biddy at My Country,



LORAN SMITH

99.3 WCON, Cornelia.

I know Joel best among the inductees, and beyond our on-air conversations each week in the fall, I enjoy the occasional interludes with his family, including his charming wife, B.J., who also has a long on-air relationship with WDUN in Gainesville.

When you preview the resumes of these local stars, you find them all keen on community support and

making people feel good when they might be having a bad day.

They initiate and throw their support for the communities they serve. They never take their status for granted, and they are all about reaching out to others, underscoring charity and having fun.

When on air, they are proponents of goodwill, and if they could they would build a campfire and invite the whole world to embrace and sing kumbaya.

One of the things I have always enjoyed about local radio stars is that, in addition to entertaining the constituency, are keen on extending a helping hand. I was taken by the selflessness these local stars have in their communities and the goodwill that comes from what they do in their respective neighborhoods.

With this group, you have a rap star, country music stars, and the con-

summate storyteller who has been a breaker of icons for women in radio, whose theme is to put the listener first.

Neil Williamson, longtime sports executive at WSB and who has for decades been the host of the UGA Tailgate Show, was the emcee. He brought levity and insightful remarks relating to the inductees, which made it a lively evening.

When these exceptional radio personalities have a guest on the air with them, you feel you are sitting in on a fireside chat. I remember growing up when country singer Eddy Arnold did those Purina commercials, I felt that he was talking to me personally. I certainly wanted to buy Purina Dog Chow for the family hound dog.

The Friends of Georgia Radio, led by Dr. Dale Van Cantfort, are enterprising in one very special way. They

raise money and donate scholarships to aspiring college undergraduates who are interested in pursuing a radio career.

Those honored many very well become a star of tomorrow trying to make the day of their peers and generation as the aforementioned Hall of Famers have done in their time.

To make everybody’s day, how about these Internet radio quips?

What do you call the average radio? Stereo-typical.

How do radios say goodbye? They wave.

Why was the radio tired after work? It had too many watt hours.

It was a good evening, and reminded all in attendance that local radio

Is not just entertainment, it is the home of goodwill with an accent on giving back to their communities. How nice!

Dolly Parton was as good as it gets

Dolly Parton left us last week. She entered America’s hearts as a country music performer. She leaves us as one of our most iconic and beloved figures. Tributes to her indicate our hearts are broken yet full.

She earned everything required to be called a celebrity. She leveraged that title to be so much more. At every step of the way she gave back.

She was born into a dirt poor family in Appalachia, at least by monetary standards. As she made clear over the years in statement and song, it wasn’t money that mattered. Her song “Coat of Many Colors” summed it up with the lyrics “And oh, I couldn’t understand it for I felt I was rich and I told ‘em of the love my momma sewed in every stitch...But they didn’t understand it and I tried to make them see that one is only poor only if they choose to be.”

Many didn’t understand it, or a less charitable interpretation, is that she was still openly looked down upon for not giving up her

rural ways. A famous interview with Barbara Walters demonstrated grace and class while being called a hillbilly to her face.

She understood her roots, and refused to let how others viewed her shake her. When asked if it bothered her to be considered a dumb blonde, she said of course it didn’t because she knew she wasn’t dumb, and she knew she wasn’t blonde.

While many were content with underestimating her, she was making the most her many talents that seemed to outnumber the many colors in coat made from her mother’s love. Singer. Actress. Businesswoman. Philanthropist. Literacy Advocate. Evangelist. Those are just the broad professional titles for her many successful ventures. She had the full set of personal talents which included strength, resolve, perseverance, empathy, vision... and so many more.

She took care of her people. Dollywood was often described as a way to help get her family jobs. That enterprise alone now em-

ploys about 23,000 of her Tennessee family members, and provides an almost \$2 billion annual economic impact to a region that is now demonstrably richer for her contributions.

She didn’t like that her people were considered dumb by the elites she worked with in New York and L.A. so she started sending kids books. She’s now donated over 300 million children’s books to promote literacy. I have to think she smiled at all the recent studies showing Mississippi now has the highest literacy rates in the country for elementary school students...while still seeing that we still have so much work to do here.

She made direct contributions and efforts to fix graduation rates, support disaster victims, and medical research. Each has real, tangible results. It wasn’t about putting her name on buildings, it was about making positive changes in lives and lifting up entire communities.

She was an open advocate for her faith in word, deed, and song. If you’re building a playlist of her songs this week, make sure you include “He’s Alive”.

She even sang in my little home church’s choir – sort of. About 15 years ago she starred alongside Queen Latifah in a movie about a small church choir. The move production company used Bethany Methodist Church in North Fayette County as the principal set for the film. They even used members of our church as a lot of the extras.

It’s quite surreal to sit in a theater and watch the great Mrs. Parton sing behind the pulpit where you learned your most important life lessons and was the gathering place for those in life you’ve loved the most. Even more so when the shot pans to the pews and many of those faces are captured if but for a fleeting moment. For that I needed to add a personal thank you.

It was in that church I learned the parable of the talents from the 25th book of Matthew. I’ve confided to a few that this is the one passage that I find the most daunting at this stage of my



CHARLIE HARPER
GEORGIA POLITICS

life.

This is the story of a rich man leaving “talents” – pieces of his wealth – among three servants based on their abilities. The two with the greatest abilities, given 5 and 3 talents each, doubled theirs and presented the profits to him upon return. But the other hid the one talent and only gave it back upon the master’s return. It served no use while on loan, and returned no yield to anyone except what was given. It was a wasted opportunity.

Dolly was given so many talents – yet none of the obvious paths to unlock them and almost every barrier

that prevents most of us from even trying. There is no doubt when she returned her talents last week she was told “well done my good and faithful servant.”

With all the well-deserved complements flowing her way last week a scene from As Good As It Gets seemed to frame most of the responses. During an argument in a restaurant, Helen Hunt’s character demands Jack Nickelson’s character pay her a complement. He pauses before blurting out “you make me want to be a better person.”

Many reflections on her life indicated Dolly made us want to be better people. That’s a nice feeling, yet also an empty platitude.

Her formula was to act with purpose and have tangible and attainable goals in mind. Random acts of kindness make us feel good, but they don’t employ 23,000 people, teach a generation how to read, or lift graduation rates.

If you want to live like Dolly, inventory your talents. Dig them up if you need. Put them to work, with purpose. That’s how we become better people – by helping others become their best. I’m pretty sure that’s as good as it gets.

Son-in-law not helpful in Mike Collins senate campaign

I have warned my two kids that if they ever contemplated divorcing their spouse, I was keeping the one they brought. My son-in-law is a retired public schoolteacher with a PhD, a coach and was named Georgia’s Teacher of the Year. He can build anything, including the house they have occupied for the past 35 years.

He is kind and thoughtful and smart as a whip.

My daughter-in-law is a nurse who spent most of her career in hospital nursing and retired as a hospice care nurse, one of the toughest jobs I can imagine. As I have stated on previous occasions, she is credited with having saved my life (that, according to the doctors)

when she saw how pale I looked one evening and got me to an emergency clinic and then into the hospital. It was sepsis. She remains my go-to regarding matters of my health.

It’s a shame I’m not running for the U.S. Senate in Georgia. I could talk about the real issues facing our nation and not have to worry about dealing with the next harangue coming from an in-law. I’m afraid that is not the case for Republican candidate, Cong. Mike Collins. His race-ranting, antisemitic, misogynistic son-in-law doesn’t seem to have an off-switch or much interest in helping his father-in-law focus on the issues instead of having to talk about him.

David Alan Scheer II is identified as a social media influencer which is said to be “someone who uses their trust and credibility online

to shape attitudes, behaviors and decisions.”

According to various sources, Scheer has some 1.5 million followers on TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, Telegram and other channels. His misbegotten efforts to shape attitudes, behaviors and decisions are only serving to make his father-in-law’s campaign a lot more difficult than it already is where polls show him running behind incumbent Democratic Sen. Jon Ossoff.

On his Telegram channel, Scheer wrote, “We’re going to retake America for Christian White men!” I have a feeling God is going to zap whatever brains this guy may have (which can’t be a lot) when the time comes and will hopefully give the privilege of pulling the switch to Ray Charles Robinson, of Al-



DICK YARBROUGH

bany, Georgia, and Moses. In the meantime, I would suggest Scheer spend more time reading the Sermon on the Mount and less time on Telegram. He might learn what Christianity is really all about.

Scheer has called Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu a “Satanic war-mongering, Zionist piece of garbage” and in 2025 displayed a German Nazi Party propaganda poster from the 1930s with the text “I want to make babies, Not die for Israel.” Ask the Nazis how that turned out for them. He has also asserted that Jews have “captured American politics,” and that “Gen-Z doesn’t hate Hitler.” (Gen-Zer’s are defined as 14 to 29 years of age. What do they know about Hitler? Ask them instead about Taylor Swift or love bombing.)

As for women, Scheer has stated, “(R)epeal the 19th amendment and a lot of issues will resolve themselves.” The 19th Amendment guarantees women

the right to vote. I’m going to assume the women in the Collins household have no problem with being thought of as unworthy to vote. The women in the Yarbrough household would punch his sexist lights out. That would resolve a lot of issues, too.

I don’t know Mike Collins. I did know his daddy, the late Cong. Mack Collins, quite well. He was very helpful to us in the runup to the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games. And a good guy. His son may be a good guy, too, but if he can’t manage his family how can he manage the affairs of state?

Mike Collins either can’t or won’t get Scheer to shut his trap. How all of this can be a positive in his campaign is a mystery to me. He had to abort a press conference in Monroe County recently because reporters kept asking him to address the claims of his son-in-law’s ties to antisemitism and white nationalism, instead of letting him discuss his health care initiatives, which was the purpose of the press conference. You can bet it won’t be the last time this happens.

Watching this guy spew his verbal garbage on the Internet reminds me to say thank you to Ted and Jackie. You two may not be social influencers but you are great in-laws who have never embarrassed me or the family. Maybe I should have run for the Senate.

The Dawson News

GEORGIA TRUST

— for Local News —

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Georgia Press Association

1985-2025

Wm. Thomas Rountree

Editor and Publisher

Carl Rountree

Editor and Publisher (1946-1985)

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Legals

Legals

D-103

IN THE PROBATE COURT
COUNTY OF TERRELL
STATE OF GEORGIA

IN RE: LEON CLYDE JOHNS
DECEASED

ESTATE NO: 4142

PETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION NOTICE

To: ALL UNKNOWN HEIRS, INTERESTED PARTIES, CREDITORS

BESSIE ARDELLA SHATTLES has petitioned to be appointed Administrator of the estate of LEON CLYDE JOHNS deceased, of said County. The Petitioner has also applied for waiver of bond and/or grant of certain powers contained in O.C.G.A. §53-12-261. All interested parties are hereby notified to show cause why said petition should not be granted. All objections to the petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections, and must be filed with the court on or before SEPTEMBER 7TH, 2026.

BE NOTIFIED FURTHER: All objections to the Petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections. All objections should be sworn to before a notary public or before a probate court clerk, and filing fees must be tendered with your objections, unless you qualify to file as an indigent party. Contact probate court personnel at the following address/ telephone number for the required amount of filing fees. If any objections are filed, a hearing will be scheduled at a later date. If no objections are filed, the petition may be granted without a hearing.

Carol M. Speir
Judge of the Probate Court
By: CINDY THOMAS
Clerk of the Probate Court
Address: P.O. Box 67
Dawson, Georgia 39842
229-995-5515

August 13, 20, 27, September 3, 2026

D-109

IN THE PROBATE COURT
COUNTY OF TERRELL
STATE OF GEORGIA

IN RE: WILLIE JAMES MITCHELL, SR.,
DECEASED

ESTATE NO: 4145

PETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION NOTICE

To: ALL UNKNOWN HEIRS, INTERESTED PARTIES, CREDITORS

WILLIE J. MITCHELL, JR. has petitioned to be appointed Administrator of the estate of WILLIE JAMES MITCHELL, SR. deceased, of said County. The Petitioner has also applied for waiver of bond and/or grant of certain powers contained in O.C.G.A. §53-12-261. All interested parties are hereby notified to show cause why said petition should not be granted. All objections to the petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections, and must be filed with the court on or before SEPTEMBER 28TH, 2026.

BE NOTIFIED FURTHER: All objections to the Petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections. All objections should be sworn to before a notary public or before a probate court clerk, and filing fees must be tendered with your objections, unless you qualify to file as an indigent party. Contact probate court personnel at the following address/ telephone number for the required amount of filing fees. If any objections are filed, a hearing will be scheduled at a later date. If no objections are filed, the petition may be granted without a hearing.

Carol M. Speir
Judge of the Probate Court
By: CINDY THOMAS
Clerk of the Probate Court
Address: P.O. Box 67
Dawson, Georgia 39842
229-995-5515

September 3, 10, 17, 24, 2026

D-110

NOTICE OF LOCATION AND DESIGN APPROVAL

P. I. 0019099

Terrell COUNTY

Notice is hereby given in compliance with Georgia Code 22-2-109 and 32-3-5 that the Georgia Department of Transportation has approved the Location and Design of this project.

The date of location and design approval is: August 27, 2026

The proposed project would consist of replacing the Category II dam with an updated multi-barrel box culvert and an upstream water control structure. The proposed construction will take place on and under State Route (SR) 55. Additionally, this project proposes to add an upstream embankment armoring to resist wave action on the Clarks Millpond riparian pond, and the removal of the abutting gate house. The existing typical section of SR55 consists of two 12-ft travel lanes, one in each direction, with rural, dirt and gravel shoulders, on top of an earthen dam. The project site is approximately 0.4 miles south of Laing Crossroad and the project length is approximately 0.2 miles. The roadway will consist of two 12-ft lanes with 8-ft shoulders (2-ft paved). The bridge culvert will be a triple 10' X 8'. The project will be constructed with an off-site to maintain traffic. The project is located within in Land Lot 270, Land District 4, Georgia Military District 909 and is approximately 9 miles South of Dawson. The estimated construction duration will be 24 months. Georgia Department of Transportation would be responsible for acquiring property rights for this project. Drawings or maps or plats of the proposed project, as approved, are on file and are available for public inspection at the Georgia Department of Transportation:

Contact Name, Sean F. High/Area Manager District 4, Area 5
E-mail Address: SHigh@dot.ga.gov 2060 Newton Road
Albany, GA 31701
Telephone number: (229) 430-4198

Any interested party may obtain a copy of the drawings or maps or plats or portions thereof by paying a nominal fee and requesting in writing to:

Kimberly Nesbitt, State Program Delivery Administrator GDOT Office of Program Delivery
Attn: Athony Tate atate@dot.ga.gov
600 West Peachtree St NW Atlanta, GA 30308
(404) 807-7692

Any written request or communication in reference to this project or notice SHOULD include the Project and P. I. Numbers as noted at the top of this notice.

September 3, 10, 17, 24, 2026

D-107

NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS GEORGIA, TERRELL COUNTY

All creditors of the estate of TIMOTHY DEWAYNE BARTLOW deceased, late of Terrell County, Georgia are hereby notified to render in their demands to the undersigned according to law, and all persons indebted to law, and all persons indebted to said estate are required to make immediate payment.

This 12TH day of AUGUST, 2026

RUN: AUG. 20TH, 27TH, Sept. 3rd, 10TH

WENDY GLEATON, ADMINISTRATOR

TIMOTHY DEWAYNE BARTHLOW, DECEASED

COLLIER & GAMBLE, L.L.P

EDWARD R. COLLIER

P.O. BOX 577

DAWSON, GA. 39842

August 20, 27, September 3, 10, 2026

D-104

NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS GEORGIA, TERRELL COUNTY

All creditors of the estate of MELVIN SHERMAN deceased, late of Terrell County, Georgia are hereby notified to render in their demands to the undersigned according to law, and all persons indebted to law, and all persons indebted to said estate are required to make immediate payment.

This 6TH day of AUGUST, 2026

BARBARA ALSTON SHERMAN, EXECUTRIX

MELVIN SHERMAN, DECEASED

1174 HEROD HWY

DAWSON, GA. 39842

August 13, 20, 27, September 3, 2026

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GSW's Info Tech program earns prestigious ABET accreditation



Georgia Southwestern State University’s Bachelor of Science in Information Technology has been accredited by the Computing Accreditation Commission of ABET/Georgia Southwestern State University, Special Photo

STAFF REPORTS

AMERICUS — Georgia Southwestern State University’s Bachelor of Science in Information Technology has been accredited by the Computing Accreditation Commission of ABET, a nonprofit, ISO 9001-certified quality assurance organization. Through the accreditation of academic programs, recognition of credentials and assessment of student learning, ABET supports excellence in education worldwide.

ABET accreditation assures that programs meet standards to produce graduates ready to enter critical technical fields that are leading the way in innovation and emerging technologies and anticipating the welfare and safety needs of the public.

“We are honored to receive accreditation for GSW’s Informa-

tion Technology program,” Gaynor Cheokas, dean of the College of Business and Computing, said. “The Department of Computing has dedicated faculty who are committed to the standards of continuous improvement. This endorsement aligns perfectly with our mission of producing well-educated and skilled graduates who are prepared to meet the demands of the ever-changing field of technology.

“An IT degree opens doors to countless career opportunities, and ABET accreditation reinforces the quality and workforce readiness of our students. I am proud of our program and proud to be associated with ABET.”

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most importance.

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ABET currently accredits 4,773 programs at 930 colleges and universities in 41 countries and areas as of Oct. 1, 2024.

More information about ABET, its member societies and the accreditation criteria used to evaluate programs can be found at www.abet.org.

For more information about GSW’s Bachelor of Science in Information Technology, visit gsw.edu/IT.

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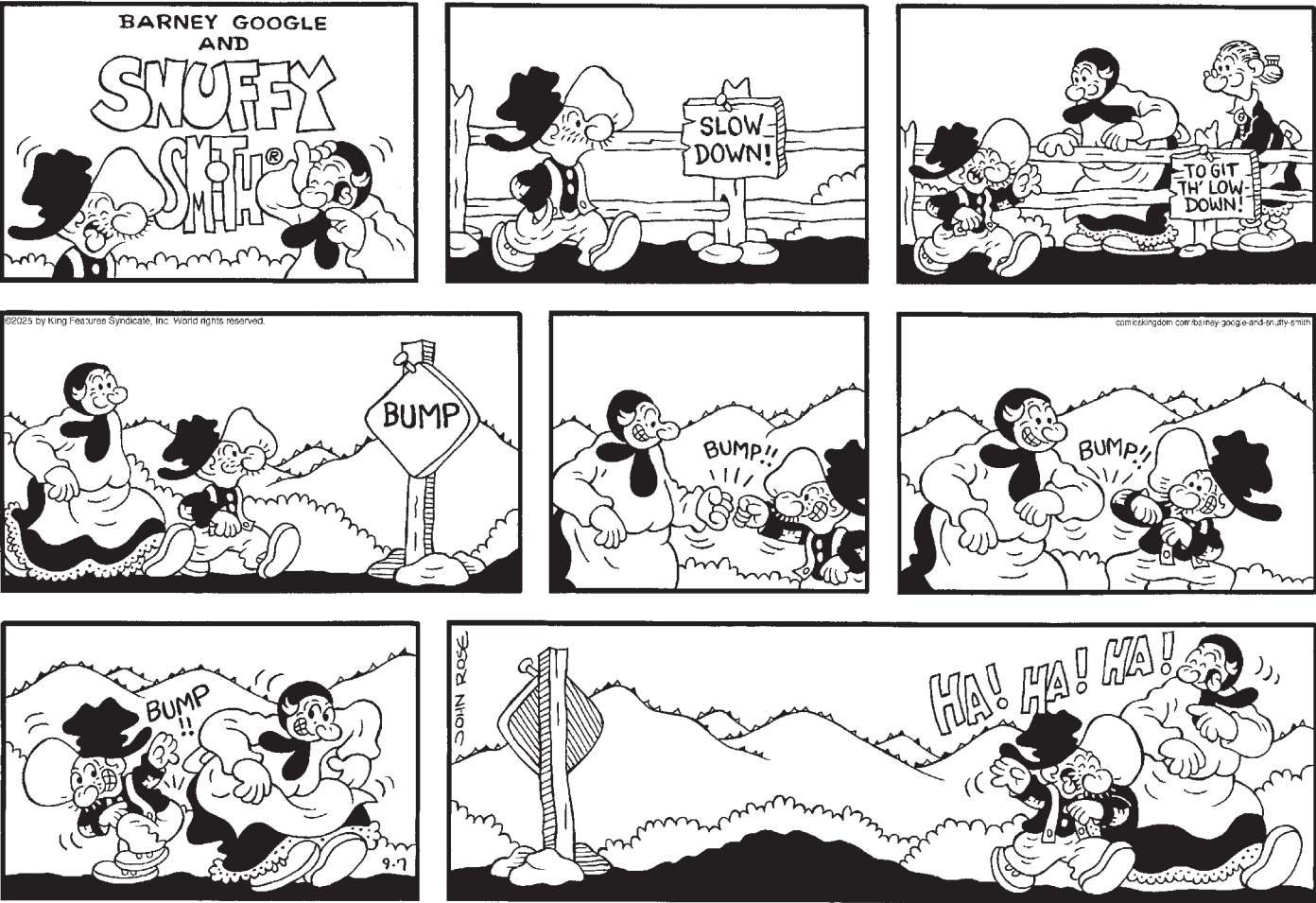
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for all stories, advertisements and classifieds for *The Dawson News* is **Fridays at 12:00 p.m.** for the next week’s edition.

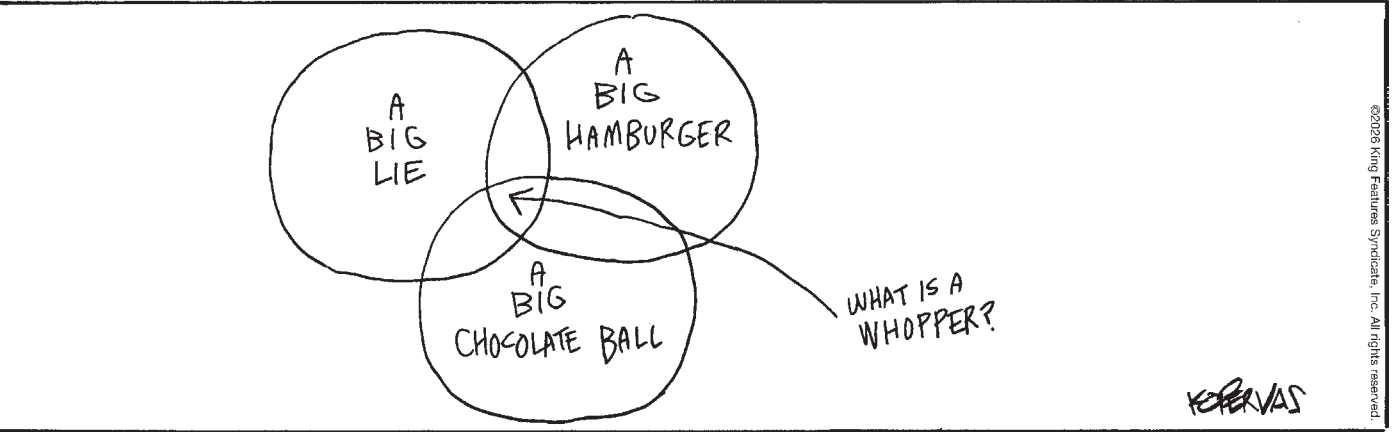
The Dawson News



The Spats



Out on a Limb



King Crossword

— King Crossword —

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

MAGIC MAZE ANSWERS

6 FEET TALL

King Crossword

ACROSS

1 Actor Sharif

5 "Humbug!"

8 JFK guesses

12 Cape —, Portugal

13 In the style of

14 Seniors' gp.

15 Manhattan, for one

17 China (Pref.)

18 "The Sopranos" restaurateur

19 Brunch fare

21 Thick chunk

24 TV spots

25 Ancient invader

28 Uber competitors

30 Mas' mates

33 Chef Garten

34 Bo of "10"

35 Pen filler

36 — chi

37 Location

38 — B'rith

39 Young fellow

41 "Absolutely!"

43 Texas city

46 Caravan stops

50 Big rackets

51 Pulled-back hairdo

54 Icelandic epic

55 Chang's brother

56 "Andor" actor Diego —

DOWN

1 Sea predator

2 Heath

3 Ad agcy. client

4 Debonair

5 Sheep call

6 Boxer Laila

7 Angelic light

8 Allayed

9 Severe decline

10 "Rule, Britannia!" composer

11 Espy

16 Aviv preceder

20 Mardi Gras wear

22 Computer brand

23 Exposés

25 "Shool"

26 — tear (ragging)

27 Hindmost parts

29 Boyfriend

31 Comic Gasteyer

32 Enjoy Aspen

34 June honorees

38 Ringo, for one

40 Analyze

42 Trigger's rider

43 Baltic feeder

44 Queen of Carthage

45 Pinnacle

47 Biblical king

48 Aachen article

49 Serb or Croat

52 Musician Yoko

53 Private aid gp.

PRESIDENTS OVER 6 FEET TALL

MAGIC MAZE

P B Y W T R O L Y J G E B Y W

U R P N K I G D B D Z J X N V

T S Q N L O C N I L E O M A K

I L G E C A G Y W F P N U G N

S Q E P N N L J F H M F N A O

E C A V I Y O E X V U U O E S

F O R D E A R T H U R S S R K

Q B R W A S H I N G T O N E C

P A N M O K O J H I F E H L A

H M C N B Z Y O X V L U O Y J

T A R D L E I F R A G C J T Q

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally

Unlisted clue hint: TALLEST PRESIDENT

Arthur	Harding	Kennedy	Trump
Clinton	Jackson	Obama	Tyler
Ford	Jefferson	Reagan	Washington
Garfield	Johnson	Roosevelt	

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Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps

YEAH RIGHT, I KNOW YOU'RE NOT SLEEPING. OTHERWISE THE WINDOWS WOULD BE RATTLING.

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Arm is not showing. 2. Hammer is longer. 3. Box is moved. 4. Cap is tilted back. 5. Lightbulb is smaller. 6. Stripe on sleeve is smaller.

It pays to advertise in your local paper!

First-year grants to bolster rural hospitals completed

By TY TAGAMI
Capitol Beat News Service

The federal government announced the delivery Thursday of the rest of a \$218 million award to Georgia to support rural hospitals.

The \$93.3 million completes the first fiscal year of a five-year, \$50 billion national funding program approved by Republicans in Congress last year in President Donald Trump's One Big Beautiful Bill Act.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services said the money will pay for technical innovations at rural hospitals, such as surgical robotics and telehealth, plus medical training and recruitment, maternal and behavioral services, and newborn screening.

It will also help 87 rural Georgia hospitals prepare to provide what the federal agency is calling "value-based" care.

Dr. Dean Burke, the physician who leads Georgia's Department of Community Health, said in a statement Thursday that the program will "have decades of positive impact" on rural healthcare.

U.S. Rep. Mike Collins, R-Jackson, thanked the Trump administration for "prioritizing rural communities."

Collins, who is running to unseat Democratic U.S. Sen. Jon Ossoff, also attacked his opponent for voting with all other Democrats against the funding, which was part of the One Big Beautiful Bill and its budget and tax cuts.

Democrats had instead wanted to preserve funding for Medicaid, which the bill slashed by hundreds of billions of dollars.

Democrats have been attacking Collins and the GOP for their approach to healthcare, blaming it for rural hospital funding shortfalls.

For instance, the state Democratic Party asserted in late-July that Collins' vote to pass "massive Medicaid cuts" had "solidified" St. Mary's Sacred Heart Hospital's decision to close its labor and delivery unit.

The Democratic Party has portrayed healthcare in Georgia as a crisis caused by Republicans and their refusal to expand Medicaid in the state.

A recent survey conducted by the University of Georgia for the Georgia Health Initiative found rising healthcare costs to be a potent political issue, especially among Democrats.

Concerns about rising costs cross party lines, according to the UGA survey, with 54% of Democrats and 38% of Republicans saying they were very or somewhat worried about being able to afford their monthly premiums over the next year.

The federal Rural Health Transformation Program that emerged from the One Big Beautiful Bill is sending \$10 billion a year to the states over five years in the form of grants.

Georgia's application last year netted the seventh-largest sum nationally.

The state Department of Community Health said less than 10% of the first year of funding will go toward administrative costs.

The state budgeted \$15.6 million to help seven hospitals prepare for the new federal efficiency and accountability program, along with 80 other hospitals that were awarded money previously.

Another \$6.2 million will support a "continuum of care," such as medical transportation, school-based health services and newborn screening.

Eight hospitals will split a portion of nearly \$10.4 million for a dozen "telepods" for telehealth and for pediatric "telepsychiatry" training. The money will also cover other initiatives to improve healthcare access.

The second largest amount, \$23.6 million, will go toward medical workforce development efforts, including training and nurse faculty recruitment at Georgia's public universities.

More than a third of the funding, \$37.5 million is for technological innovations, such as surgical robots at 13 hospitals that will also get funding for surgeon recruitment and retention. The funding will also cover a grant to Equifax for "eligibility system enhancements" to expedite "eligibility determinations."

Georgia Farm Bureau Commodity Award 2026 awarded

SPECIAL TO THE DAWSON NEWS

MACON – Georgia Farm Bureau (GFB) presented Rep. Lynn Smith its 2026 GFB Commodity Award during the annual GFB Commodity Conference held Aug. 13 at the UGA Tifton Campus Conference Center.

The GFB Commodity Award, one of the organization's highest honors, is given to individuals who have supported and promoted Georgia agriculture. The GFB Board of Directors selects the award recipient from nominees submitted by the organization's commodity advisory committees.

"Lynn always kept the interest of farmers' success in the forefront of policy decision that came before her committee," said GFB President Tom McCall. "Her leadership and passion for Georgia and the state's invaluable and varied natural resources will be carried into the future for generations to come."

A Florida native, Smith is a University of Georgia graduate, a former educator, business owner who completed her 30th year in the Georgia House of Representatives earlier this year representing Georgia District 70.

Since being elected to the Georgia House of Representatives in 1996, Smith has been a trusted champion for Georgia's farmers, foresters, and rural communities. She served as chairwoman of the House Natu-

ral Resources and Environment Committee beginning in 2005. During her tenure, she led efforts to protect Georgia's natural resources while supporting the continued growth of the state's agricultural economy.

Smith helped establish Georgia's regional water planning framework. Beginning with the Flint River Drought Protection Act and legislation introduced in 2002 and culminating in the successful implementation of regional water planning in 2008, she helped create what she described as "the bridge" that provided state agencies with the tools needed to develop long-term, science-based water management solutions for Georgia's future. During her three decades in the House, she also served on the Appropriations, Rules, and Reapportionment committees.

In addition to her service in the Georgia House, Smith served as chair of the Southern Legislative conference Energy and Environment Committee and is a member of the Southern States Energy Board.

After earning her degree from UGA in 1968, Smith worked as a teacher, including a stint at Newnan High School, where she taught French, history and civics. She and her late husband, Charles, were married more than 52 years. A master gardener, Smith lives in Newnan, attends Central Baptist Church and enjoys spending time with her children and grandchildren.



Georgia Farm Bureau President Tom McCall, right, and his wife, Jane, left, present Rep. Lynn Smith with the 2026 Georgia Farm Bureau Commodity Award during the organization's annual commodity conference held Aug. 13 in Tifton /Photo courtesy of the Georgia Farm Bureau

Edreka Coleman named first female drum major of ASU Marching Rams Band

STAFF REPORTS

ALBANY – Albany State University's Marching Rams Show Band will make history this fall when Edreka Coleman, a senior music education major from Macon, becomes the university's first female head drum major.

Coleman, who previously served as a drum major during the 2025–2026 academic year, will lead the Marching Rams' three-drum-major team during the 2026–2027 academic year. Her appointment marks a significant milestone in the band's history and builds on a legacy of women who have served as drum majors at Albany State.

Previous female drum majors include Chasity Johnson (2003–2004), the late Ashley Pickney (2006–2007), Fayola Braithwaite (2011–2012) and Desiree Wesson (2016–2017). Coleman now becomes the first woman to serve as the ensemble's head drum major, taking on the lead role among the band's three drum majors.

"Being the first female head drum major at Albany State University is an incredible honor, but more than anything, I see it as a responsibility and a blessing from God," Coleman said. "I understand that I am standing in a position that represents more than just me. I am representing every woman and every young girl

who has ever dreamed of stepping into a leadership position.

"I hope my leadership shows that with faith, hard work, preparation and perseverance, there is no limit to what God can do through you."

As head drum major, Coleman will serve as the student leader among the band's drum majors, helping provide direction, coordination and leadership for the ensemble during rehearsals, performances and appearances. While all three drum majors serve as leaders and conductors of the band, the head drum major assumes the primary leadership role and works closely with the director of bands and other student leaders to help guide the ensemble.

Coleman's appointment comes at a pivotal time for the Albany State band, which continues to expand its presence on the national stage. This fall, the Marching Rams will make history as the first HBCU band to perform in America's Thanksgiving Parade in Detroit as part of the parade's 100th anniversary celebration. The band also is scheduled to perform in the 2026 Legends at Legion Field HBCU Battle of the Bands, adding to a growing list of high-profile performances.

Recognized as one of the nation's premier HBCU marching ensembles, the band is known for its dynamic performances, precision and electrifying sound.



Edreka Coleman, a senior music education major from Macon, will become Albany State University's first female head drum major this fall/ASU, Special Photo

Under the leadership of Director of Bands William Brooks, the program has experienced significant growth and increased national recognition since 2023, including appearances at the National Battle of the Bands and recognition as an ESPN "Band to Watch."

During Brooks' tenure, the band has grown from 26 musicians to 160 members, reaching a major enrollment goal in just four years.

"Edreka represents the leadership, discipline and excellence that we want to see throughout the Marching Rams Show Band," Brooks said. "We are extremely proud of her and the example she is setting for our students and for young women who aspire to lead. Her appointment comes at an exciting time for this program."

"We have grown tremendously, and our national opportunities continue to grow with us. As we prepare for historic performances this fall, having strong stu-

dent leaders like Edreka at the forefront is an important part of our continued success."

Coleman's journey as a drum major reflects both her individual accomplishments and the evolving leadership legacy of the Marching Rams Show Band. As a music education major, she is preparing for a career in music and education while gaining first-hand experience in leadership, performance and ensemble management.

Her appointment also underscores the continued opportunities for students to develop leadership skills through participation in Albany State's renowned band program.

As the Marching Rams prepare for a landmark 2026–2027 performance season, ASU officials said, Coleman will lead alongside her fellow drum majors as the band takes its signature sound and Golden Ram pride to audiences across the country.

GA Department of Public Health confirms measles case in state

SPECIAL TO THE DAWSON NEWS

ATLANTA—The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) has confirmed measles in an unvaccinated resident of metro Atlanta. At this time, there is no known travel history or exposure to someone infected with measles. DPH is working to identify anyone who may have had contact with the individual while the individual was infectious.

Measles is very contagious and spreads through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The measles virus can stay in the air or on surfaces for up to two hours after an infected person has left the room.

Measles symptoms typically appear 7 to 14 days after exposure, including high fever, cough, runny nose, and watery eyes. Then, a rash of tiny red spots appears. It starts at the head and spreads to the rest of the body.

The MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine can prevent measles and rubella. The vaccine is safe and effective, and parents with questions about the vaccine or the vaccination schedule can consult their physician. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that children receive their first dose of MMR vaccine between 12 and 15 months of age and a second dose between 4 and 6 years of age. For babies aged 6–11 months traveling internationally, the CDC recommends a single dose of the MMR vaccine before travel, followed by two additional doses after their first birthday.

More than 95% of the people who receive a single dose of MMR will develop immunity to all three viruses. A second dose boosts immunity, typically enhancing protection to 98%. Individuals who are vaccinated with the MMR vaccine also help protect others who are too young or medically unable to be vaccinated.

People with measles symptoms should contact their healthcare provider immediately. Do not go to the doctor's office, the hospital, or a public health clinic without first calling to let them know about your symptoms. Healthcare providers who suspect measles in a patient should notify public health immediately.

Including this case, there have been seven measles cases in Georgia in 2026. There were 10 confirmed measles cases in Georgia in 2025.

FINANCES

Continued from page 1

Those are separate sources of money. Funding tied to Dawson’s wastewater project is restricted and cannot simply be redirected to cover payroll, utilities or other routine city expenses.

But the distinction makes a complete accounting more important, not less.

State records show how much project funding was approved, how much Dawson requested or received and what the money was authorized to pay for. The records do not provide a complete accounting of what happened after every dollar reached the city.

The Albany Herald requested Dawson’s vendor-payment records as part of a broader request for financial documentation. Those records would show which contractors the city paid, how much it paid them and when. The city has declined to provide them.

Without those records, The Herald cannot independently trace every project dollar from the state and federal funding programs through the city to the contractors ultimately paid.

That uncertainty exists alongside a much older infrastructure problem.

Dawson’s documented sewer problems stretch back more than two decades. Georgia Environmental Protection Division complaint records reviewed by The Herald include a sewage overflow dating to approximately January 2002, followed by additional spills and overflows documented in 2010, 2013, 2017 and as recently as 2024.

The city’s current wastewater improvement effort was underway by 2022, when Dawson began securing grant and loan funding to rebuild its wastewater treatment plant and repair aging sewer lines.

Since then, Dawson has entered into three funding agreements totaling \$10.2 million — more than the city’s entire annual budget for all operations.

One is a \$5.82 million federal American Rescue Plan Act grant administered by the Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget. It does not have to be repaid. The other two are loans through the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority totaling \$4.38 million, although as much as \$2.08 million of that principal may eventually be forgiven.

No single city document presents the full financial picture. The Herald reconstructed it from grant agreements, amendments, state payment records, GEFA disbursement logs, contractor pay applications and written responses from the agencies administering the funds.

Dawson also has not completed outside audits for Fiscal Years 2023, 2024 or 2025. Its most recent completed outside audit covers Fiscal 2022. GEFA says some of its financial review depends on those audits being available, and the agency told The Herald it has not conducted a site inspection of the project, although it said project managers generally conduct site visits while construction is underway.

None of those facts establishes that project money was improperly spent.

They do mean that, with the records currently available outside City Hall, the full movement of the money cannot be independently reconstructed.

How the project is funded

Dawson was already pursuing the current wastewater improvements by 2022, more than two years before it signed a consent order with Georgia EPD.

The November 2024 order did not initiate the project. It imposed specific deadlines for correcting long-standing wastewater problems after years of violations and

sewage spills. Under that agreement, Dawson committed to completing sewer-line repairs by Dec. 31, 2025, and wastewater treatment plant work by March 31, 2026. Both deadlines have passed.

The funding supports two major construction contracts.

Southern Champion Construction of Savannah submitted the \$7.54 million low bid for modifications to the wastewater treatment plant. K-Dug Corporation of Patterson submitted the approximately \$1.24 million low bid for sewer-line improvements.

Together, the two construction contracts total about \$8.78 million.

The grant grew to \$5.82 million

Dawson’s ARPA grant began at \$1.2 million in 2022. A 2023 amendment increased the award to \$1.32 million. In late 2024, another \$4.5 million was added, bringing the total grant award to \$5.82 million.

The additional \$4.5 million came with restrictions. State records specify that it may be used only for cost overruns within the project’s approved scope and not for separate projects or additional project elements.

Dawson also was required to contribute toward the project, but its original \$1.2 million match was itself federal money.

The city received \$1.548 million in direct federal pandemic-relief funding and pledged \$1.2 million of that money toward the sewer project. When the required match later increased to \$1.32 million, records reviewed by The Herald did not identify the source of the additional \$120,000.

The grant also carries a deadline. Eligible costs must be incurred by Oct. 31, 2026, and supporting documentation must be submitted to the state by Nov. 30.

A review of the underlying contractor records provides a fuller picture of how much Southern Champion work has been submitted through the grant.

Southern Champion’s first 11 pay applications total \$3,855,624.72. Ten payment-request templates released by OPB total \$3,239,619.07. Pay Application 3, for \$616,005.65, was separately submitted to OPB under payment request PA-0023376.

Together, the two figures account for the full \$3,855,624.72 billed by Southern Champion through Pay Application 11. That distinction matters because the payment-request templates released by OPB do not, by themselves, represent the complete amount of Southern Champion work submitted to the grant.

Two state loans remain partly undrawn

Dawson’s first GEFA loan totals \$2.18 million, with up to \$1.09 million eligible for principal forgiveness. The city has drawn about \$765,111 from that loan. Its original draw period expired in June 2023 and repayment has not begun.

The second GEFA loan totals \$2.2 million, with up to \$990,000 eligible for forgiveness. Dawson has drawn about \$1.21 million from that loan. It expires in January 2027 unless the schedule is modified, and repayment could begin as soon as then.

Together, Dawson has received about \$1.98 million from the two loans.

If the city ultimately draws both loans in full and receives the maximum available forgiveness, roughly \$2.3 million in principal would remain to be repaid.

The exact debt cannot yet be calculated because the city has not drawn the full loan amounts and publicly released records do not show the interest rates, repayment terms or eventual annual payments.

Another \$369,338 in submitted loan requests remains unpaid because GEFA has placed both loans on hold while Dawson re-

mains on the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts’ noncompliance list for failing to submit annual audits.

The funding sources are no longer as clearly divided

The ARPA grant and GEFA loans finance different portions of the same sewer project. Until recently, available records showed a relatively clear division: Southern Champion’s wastewater treatment plant work was being submitted through the ARPA grant, while K-Dug’s sewer-line work was being funded through GEFA.

Dawson described that arrangement directly in a state filing, saying “all K-Dug construction costs are being paid by the city using GEFA funds” and that all payment applications submitted at that point were for Southern Champion.

The distinction mattered because Dawson was seeking to use the full \$5.82 million ARPA grant for Southern Champion’s portion of the project. Every eligible dollar paid with grant money is a dollar the city does not have to borrow and repay.

An Aug. 13 city record shows that division is changing. In the City Council work session packet, the city manager said a \$109,886 change order for two additional floating aerators on Southern Champion’s contract “will be funded through GEFA.”

The underlying document identifies the expense as Supplemental Work Allowance Draw No. 8. Supplemental Work Allowances are not a separate contract; they are part of a \$600,000 allowance contained within Southern Champion’s contract and billed through the company’s regular pay applications.

That matters because Southern Champion’s first 11 pay applications account for the ARPA submissions reviewed by The Herald, while the city is now identifying a Southern Champion expense for payment through GEFA.

The records reviewed so far do not show that the same expense was reimbursed twice. A comparison of available GEFA requisitions and ARPA payment records found no exact matching payment amounts.

But the change means future records will need to clearly distinguish which Southern Champion costs are being charged to the federal grant and which are being charged to GEFA loans — particularly because Dawson previously told the state that K-Dug construction was being paid through GEFA while Southern Champion payment applications were being submitted through ARPA.

How the money is reviewed

The grant and loan programs use different payment systems.

For the ARPA grant, Dawson’s engineer, Carter & Sloope, prepares payment requests and certifies that the billed work has been completed. RSM US LLP reviews those requests before OPB approves payment.

The released grant requests were processed as “Modified Payment Requests.” Under that system, the state may send money to Dawson before proof of payment to the contractor is submitted. Documentation showing that the contractor was paid follows with a later request.

GEFA uses a different process. The authority told The Herald its agreement is with Dawson, not with Dawson’s contractors.

“Our loan agreement is with the city,” GEFA officials said. “Disbursements are paid to the city, and the city is responsible for paying its contractors.”

That distinction is central to what the available records can and cannot establish.

GEFA told The Herald it conducts annual reviews of debt-service coverage and audited financial statements when those

audits are available.

The city’s missing audits leave the public without a single document showing how the city’s project debt fits into its broader financial condition. That issue takes on added significance as Dawson works to reconcile its operating finances.

The sewer grant and loan money remain restricted to the project and cannot simply be redirected to cover payroll, utilities or other ordinary city expenses. But millions of dollars in restricted funds have nevertheless moved through the same city government while its operating revenue has been insufficient to meet anticipated expenses.

The project remains years behind

Dawson has filed quarterly progress reports on the project since January 2023, but for nine consecutive reporting periods, from January 2023 through January 2025, the city reported the project as “Not Started.”

Beginning in April 2025, Dawson reported it as “Completed less than 50 percent” for six consecutive quarters through July 2026. The projected timeline has also moved substantially.

Construction was initially expected to begin in May 2023 but was later reported as beginning in June 2025 — 25 months later.

The treatment plant was originally projected to begin operating in May 2024. The latest reported date is December 2027 — 43 months later.

Those delays now intersect with several financial deadlines.

What still cannot be verified

State records reviewed by The Herald establish how much grant and loan funding was approved, how much Dawson requested or received and the purposes for which the money was authorized.

What they do not provide is a complete accounting of what happened after every dollar reached the city.

The Herald requested Dawson’s vendor-payment records as part of a broader request for financial documentation. Those records would show which contractors were paid, how much they were paid and when. The city has declined to provide them.

Publicly released GEFA logs also do not identify the invoices or contractors supporting each requisition. GEFA confirmed that it retains the underlying invoices, pay applications and related documentation. The Herald initially requested those records but narrowed the request after GEFA advised that retrieving the full set would involve significant additional costs.

While the records available so far do not establish that project money was improperly spent or that the same expense was reimbursed more than once, they also do not allow The Herald to independently trace every dollar from the state and federal funding programs to the city and then to the contractors, or independently confirm that all work billed to those programs was actually completed.

For a project involving \$10.2 million, two state loans, a federal grant, years of schedule changes and a city whose most recent completed outside audit covers Fiscal 2022, that remains a significant gap in the public record.

The project remains only slightly more than half complete. With the ARPA spending deadline approaching and both GEFA loans frozen, the unresolved question is no longer only how Dawson has financed the work already performed, but how the city will pay to finish what remains.

TCBOE

Continued from page 1

ment with bank reconciliations, unpaid invoices and aging accounts-payable reports, inter-fund transfers, budget evaluation, grant reimbursement requests, capital asset tracking and school activity accounts.

Harvey said the firm will assign two to three people to work with the district. Much of the work can be performed remotely, but consultants can come to the district when on-site work is necessary.

The agreement also gives the district access to additional services as needed, including financial process gap analysis, development of internal controls, procurement and purchasing-card policies, school activity training and internal audits.

Those controls have been a recurring focus of the district’s effort to reorganize its financial operations.

“This is important in order to keep the board in a strong financial position,” Harvey told board members Tuesday. “We have a strong fund balance. We have some processes, but we need strong internal control.”

Harvey said those controls are likely to remain an issue in the district’s audit process.

The work follows a broader financial cleanup already underway.

Harvey previously said district officials discovered unresolved payables involving benefit vendors and were notified of money

owed to the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia. Concerns over whether some payroll deductions had been properly remitted contributed to the district seeking an outside review of its payroll and financial practices.

Mauldin & Jenkins conducted that review earlier this year, examining payroll, deductions, employee benefits, contracts, tax and pension remittances, and internal controls.

Tuesday’s agreement gives Mauldin & Jenkins a broader role in helping the district manage those systems going forward.

One of the firm’s first priorities will be helping the district complete a required DE 46 state financial filing, a state-required financial report reflecting the school district’s adopted budget due Sept. 14. Harvey described the DE 46 to the board as the budget information school systems are required to submit to the Georgia Department of Education.

The consultants also will review the district’s existing financial policies and handbooks to identify gaps in procedures and internal controls.

Another area of focus will be school activity accounts.

Harvey told the board she expects those accounts to be noted in the district’s FY 2025 audit, although she stopped short of saying auditors would issue a formal finding.

“We pretty much know that there’s going to be — I won’t say a finding — but it will be noted in the FY ’25 audit about school activ-

ity accounts,” Harvey said.

The consulting agreement carries several different costs, depending on the services the district uses.

Harvey told the board the agreement includes a one-time \$5,000 onboarding fee to provide the consulting team secure access to district financial systems and familiarize it with district operations.

A closeout financial review is estimated at \$13,000 for approximately 55 hours of support. One portion of the monthly financial support services is priced at \$4,500 per month, while controller-level services are listed at an amount not to exceed \$8,000. Additional projects would be billed separately if the district chooses to use them.

Because some services are optional, Harvey said there is not a single fixed total cost for the agreement.

When a board member questioned how unbudgeted consulting expenses would be covered, Harvey said the district could reassign money within the existing budget or, if necessary, use the system’s fund balance.

The agreement took effect with the board’s approval and runs through June 30. It automatically renews for another 12 months unless terminated. Either party can end the arrangement with 30 days’ written notice.

Harvey said that provision gives the district the ability to end the consulting relationship once a permanent CFO is hired and the outside services are no longer necessary.

LADY EAGLES

Continued from page 1

said. “I thought we played as close to perfect as you can defensively, other than a few hiccups.”

The game turned in the sixth.

With Calvary’s lineup rolling back to the top, Walker made a pitching change. The Lady Knights responded with five runs on five hits to pull away.

Calvary finished with 16 hits, including a 5-for-5 performance from leadoff hitter Davis. Presley led Terrell Academy offensively, going 2-for-3.

Walker was also encouraged by his team’s approach against three Calvary pitchers.

“I thought our ABs were good against three quality arms, and we put some pressure on them to make a few pitches and plays,” he said. “It worked in our favor some.”

The loss is another step in Walker’s effort to have the Lady Eagles battle-tested before region play and a potential run toward the GIAA state playoffs.

Terrell Academy has one final non-region tuneup Thursday when it hosts Brookwood before beginning region competition next week.