

>> BALDWIN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

BCSD announces new deputy superintendent



Dr. Rodney Tyson Sr.

Bailey Ballard
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The Baldwin County School District hired Dr. Rodney Tyson, Sr. as its new deputy superintendent. Tyson will be working under the new Superintendent Dr. Kristina Brooks.

Tyson has over 18 years of experience in K-12 education serving in roles such as high school principal, alternative school principal, assistant principal and Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps director. Tyson was a commissioned officer in

the U.S. Army, so his introduction to the education field was through JROTC, where he took his leadership capabilities from his service and developed them to create new leaders.

"I started out as a classroom teacher as the JROTC director and began the program at Grovetown High School in Augusta. I did that for eight years and after that I became an assistant principal in high school and a high school principal before transitioning to the role prior to this one as principal of an alternative school," said Tyson.

Tyson saw the opportunity to work in Milledgeville through an online application on Teach Georgia. However, his first experience with the Baldwin County School District was during a visit as an assistant principal at a rival high school.

"We came down on a Friday night for a football game and I saw the outpour of community support. I told the principal at the time I was with that I did not believe we were in the right place because it looked more like a college

MORE BCSD>> A7

>> GEORGIA MILITARY COLLEGE



COURTESY OF GMC

(L-R): Brandon Burgess, president of Landmark Construction & Development, LLC, Millie Parke, GMC vice president of Auxiliary & Facility Operations, Pam Grant, GMC vice president of the Office of Advancement, Barb Rion, GMC Foundation chair, Lt. Gen. William B. Caldwell IV, USA (Ret), GMC president, GMC Col. Amy Lee, GMC Prep School principal, George Hogan, GMC Board of Trustees chair, Mary Parham-Copelan, mayor of Milledgeville, Rusty Courson, GMC Prep School athletic director, and Kayla Waddell, GMC Prep school alumna class of 2020, break ground.

GMC breaks ground on Waddell Dunn Athletic Facility

Georgia Military College Prep School broke ground on its new 9,180 sq. ft. athletic complex, marking a major milestone for the school's athletic program. The ceremony, held at 330 S. Warren St., welcomed GMC leadership, coaches, student-athletes, and supporters to celebrate a step forward in athletic excellence.

Unveiled during GMC's annual Casino Night Auction in March, the complex represents a

significant investment in the future of student-athletes at GMC Prep. The facility will include a top-tier weight room and turf training area, a team meeting and film room, sport-specific locker rooms for football and soccer, modern shower and restroom facilities, ample storage, and year-round access to coaching staff and a coaches' conference room.

"This project is a game changer," said Rusty Courson, GMC Prep School athletic director. "It's more

than just a building — it's about giving our student-athletes the tools, facilities, and confidence to train at a higher level and become stronger leaders on and off the field."

GMC President Lieutenant General William B. Caldwell, IV, added, "Athletics at GMC Prep are not just about competition; they are about building character, leadership, and resilience. This new

MORE FACILITY>> A2

>> GCSU



Nolan Belcher

Belcher steps down as GCSU baseball coach

Georgia College & State University Director of Athletics Wendell Staton announced that baseball coach Nolan Belcher has stepped down to accept the University of North Georgia head coaching position.

"From my seat — and this is not hyperbole for me — Nolan Belcher is the best combination of baseball coach and person in the country," said Staton. "Nolan took our baseball program to even greater heights in every way possible. However, his impact on our program and our culture is much deeper than the outstanding record. Nolan is the culture carrier in the department. Nolan always puts the needs of the university and department ahead of his or the

MORE BELCHER>> A2

>> CITY COUNCIL

Milledgeville council considers P&Z concerns

Bailey Ballard
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City council held its second monthly meeting May 27 to discuss appointments to the planning and zoning board and a single ordinance and resolution.

City Manager Hank Griffitheth

reported utility customers called and reported they received a letter from American Water Resources offering to purchase a water service line repair contract.

"This is nothing coming from the city or a recommendation from the city," Griffitheth said. "So far the only thing we've gotten is

a photo of the letters, but I want to make sure the public is aware that it is a private company and the city does not endorse it."

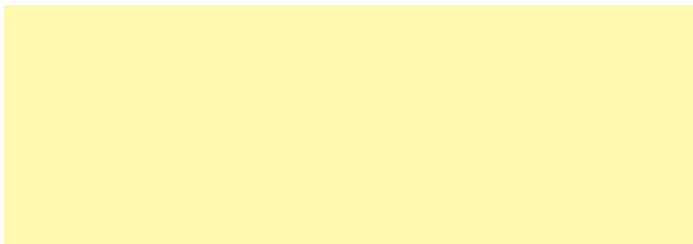
Council heard the first reading of an ordinance amending the Land Development Code at 560 W. Martin Luther King Dr. The owner wishes to change zoning to

community commercial in order to allow placement of boutique residences. The intent for the property is to provide long-term boutique rentals for visitors coming into the community, according to Griffitheth.

The ordinance moved onto the planning and zoning board.

Council moved into discussion of a resolution to authorize the conveyance by Quitclaim Deed of egress/ingress easement for 111 N. Wayne Street LLC. Council member Steve Chambers expressed concern of intent as well as parking.

MORE ZONING >> A7



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WEATHER

88 HIGH

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Chance
T-storms

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>> GEORGIA COLLEGE

GCSU baseball players named to ABCA All-Southeast first team

Georgia College & State University infielder Braeden Smith and starting pitcher Bradley Wilson were named to the American Baseball Coaches Association's NCAA Division II All-Southeast Region first team.

This is the first all-region nod for Smith this season and the third for Wilson, who was named to the first team by the Division II Conference Commissioners Association and the second team by the National Collegiate Baseball Writers

Association.

Smith, a sophomore first baseman from Statham, led the Bobcats in hitting (.379, 74-of-195), doubles (18), home runs (12), RBI (67), slugging percentage (.656), walks (49) and on-base percentage (.516) and was second in hits and run scored (59).

Smith is ranked 12th in NCAA Division II statistics in walks, 17th in walks per game (0.91), 24th in on-base percentage, 33rd in RBI, and 44th in RBI per game (1.24). Smith, who has 21 multi-hit and

18 multi-RBI games, is first in the PBC in on-base percentage, second in walks and walks per game, third in RBI, fourth in batting average, doubles, doubles per game (0.31), RBI per game, slugging percentage, fifth in home runs and home runs per game (0.22), sixth in total bases (128), seventh in runs, eighth in hits and 10th in hits per game (1.37).

Wilson, from Irwinton, went 9-2 this season with a 2.50 earned-run average. He is ranked 24th in NCAA Division II

statistics in ERA, 32nd in wins, and 54th in games started (14). Wilson led the conference in ERA, third in wins and sixth in games started. Wilson was even more impressive in conference games during the regular season, lowering his ERA to 1.35 and going 8-0 against league opponents. Named the PBC Pitcher of the Week twice during the season, Wilson threw two complete games and was a part of two shutouts.

— Courtesy of University Communications



>> LAKE SINCLAIR

Lake Sinclair's Aquapalooza returns to kick off summer fun



Stacey Blanton

Hudson Taylor
The Baldwin Bulletin

Aquapalooza returned to kick off the summer on Lake Sinclair this past weekend. Hosted by Wide Open Entertainment, the annual event brought hundreds of locals by boat and land to enjoy live music and great food.

The free event began at noon on Saturday, May 31. Some of the performers included Stacey Blanton and Ashton Jones. Milledgeville's Damn Yankee

Sauce and BBQ was on site to offer meal options throughout the afternoon.

"Aquapalooza is a free event that is so much fun," said Blanton. "You can bring your boat up and enjoy the live performances all day."

This was Blanton's second year singing at the event and she stated that she loved the environment. She brought down the house with her powerful rendition of Chris Stapleton's "White Horse," electrifying the

lake as hundreds cheered her on.

"This is the fifth time we have done this," said Greg Parker. "It all started with my band on the deck playing songs and having fun, but when boats started to show up,

we thought it would be a great idea to start this."

Last year the event had over 50 boats and 400 people, and this year they had even more attend. There was a raffle going on throughout the day through donations

given by local businesses. Attendees could win prizes such as a Yeti cooler.

It was another success for Lake Sinclair's Aquapalooza event, and looks to be even bigger next year.

BELCHER

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baseball program.

"His teams reflect his personality — humble, gracious, helpful to others, never complains, friendly, family first, and on top of that, he produces results that set the bar for everyone else follow," added Staton. "He just keeps his head down and grinds and success follow him everywhere he goes. Our deep friendship will continue throughout our lives, but he will be greatly missed personally and professionally. I wish Rachel and Nolan and their children all the best as they make a move that is right for their family."

Belcher completed his fifth season and led the Bobcats to a 142-108 (.568) overall record, including a 91-53 (.632) ledger in the Peach Belt Conference. During his time, the Bobcats, who won at least 18 PBC games every season, won the 2024 Peach Belt Tournament title and earned their 15th trip to the NCAA Division II Tournament. The Bobcats earned the

program's first-ever trip to the NCAA Division II Southeast Super Regional in 2024.

During his time in Milledgeville, 25 Bobcats have earned All-Peach Belt accolades and 22 have been named to the PBC Baseball Team of Academic Distinction. Belcher also coached 2024 PBC Freshman of the Year Braeden Smith and 2025 PBC Pitcher of the Year Bradley Wilson.

"Serving at Georgia College & State University has been one of the greatest blessings of my career," said Belcher. "I'm deeply thankful to Director of Athletics Wendell Staton for his leadership, trust, and support throughout my time here. He gave me my first head coaching job and I'll always be appreciative for that opportunity. I also want to say thank you to President Cathy Cox for her incredible leadership and vision for the university and the athletics department.

"As I accept the position of head baseball coach at the University of North Georgia, I leave with a full heart, lifelong friendships, and a deep appreciation for what this community has given me," added Belcher. "I'm excited for this new chapter, but Georgia College will always be hold a special place in my heart."

Belcher previously spent two seasons in the GCSU dugout, serving as the pitching coach and recruiting coordinator for the 2017 and 2018 seasons. In Belcher's two seasons as an assistant, the Bobcats

won the PBC Tournament twice, and the 2018 PBC regular-season championship with a whopping 26 conference victories, the most by any school since 1998. Belcher guided a pitching staff that set a school-record with 468 strikeouts in 2018. During the two seasons, the Bobcats had four players drafted to Major League teams, five All-Americans and two Academic All-Americans. He coached a Region Pitcher of the Year and a PBC Pitcher of the Year as well.

A native of Augusta, winning has followed Belcher throughout his baseball career. He made three consecutive trips to the College World Series with the University of South Carolina, winning back-to-back national championships in 2010 and 2011 and finishing runner-up the following year. Belcher logged more than 250 innings over his career with the Gamecocks, making 38 starts while finishing his career with an 18-13 record and a 3.30 ERA.

Belcher's successes include three state championships in his high school days spent at Greenbrier High and Augusta Christian in Augusta.

"Our baseball program is extremely healthy as we were PBC Tournament Champions and advanced to the NCAA D2 Super Regional just a year ago," said Staton. "We are excited about finding the next leader for our program."

— Courtesy of University Communications

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FACILITY

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facility embodies our 'whole student' approach, and we are incredibly proud that this project will have a lasting impact on generations of young athletes. We are especially grateful to the Waddell

Dunn Family and all other donors for their generosity and belief in our mission. This wouldn't be possible without them."

The Waddell Dunn Athletic Facility is set to open Spring 2026 and will serve as a hub for training, mentorship, and team building for GMC Prep's athletic programs.

— Contributed



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>> MILLEDGEVILLE MAIN STREET

First Friday Beach Bash celebrates 12th anniversary

Pull out the Hawaiian shirt and enjoy the night in downtown Milledgeville at the 12th anniversary Beach Bash event. Standard Sand & Silica Co. and Fowler Flemister have provided 80 tons of sand that will be dumped into the post office parking lot on June 6 to transform the area into a coastal oasis. Parents are encouraged to bring beach chairs because the kiddos will not want to leave. Main Street will supply a variety of beach toys for the event but also suggest First Friday patrons to bring their own. The Beach Bash will kick off at 5 p.m. and end at 9 p.m. Attendees are encouraged to stay late and get cozy with their feet in the sand dancing the night away to the sounds of Chasin' My Dreams DJ team which consists of CMD Styles a.k.a. DJ iPhone and DJ GoGetta. Both DJs are excellent performers and host within their own rights, but together they make the perfect pair to entertain and interact with any crowd. With a wide range of selections of music from most genres, they are guaranteed to make any function a memorable event for young and old. Who goes to the beach and doesn't get an airbrushed shirt? CMD styles of Artra-geous Airbrush is a fun loving and outgoing artist with over 25 years of experience. Creating smiles and memories throughout the United States by not only painting T- shirts, caps, and hoodies, but also through wall murals, automotive, art, and fine art designs on canvas for a wide range of customers and clients. Patrons can choose to dine in or carry out at one of the downtown restaurants or stay cool at the beach with a tasty treat from the famous Kona Ice truck. Tables, chairs, and a restroom will all be on-site during the event. Milledgeville Main Street will be giving out beach swag to the early arrivers. This event is made possible entirely through the generous donation of sand by Standard Sand and Silica Co., delivery by Fowler Flemister, and removal and clean up handled by City of Milledgeville Public Works Department. Special thanks go to Champion Sponsors Fickling Lake Country Realty, WMVG 104.5, 1800 Water Damage, Robins Financial Credit Union and Wright Heating, Cooling and Electrical. For more information on First Friday and the Beach Bash contact the Milledgeville Main Street office, 478-414-4014. — Contributed

>> SUMMER 2025

Downtown Milledgeville launches 'Ready. Set. Summer Giveaway!'

Downtown Milledgeville s launching a brand-new summer promotion designed to encourage local shopping and reward loyal customers. The "Ready. Set. Summer Giveaway!" runs through July 31, giving patrons nine full weeks of chances to win. Shoppers who spend \$5 or more at any downtown business are invited to scan a QR code, upload their receipt, and be entered into a weekly drawing for \$50 in Milly Money —, gift certificates redeemable at dozens of local businesses. Each Tuesday, starting June 10, one lucky winner will be chosen, for a total of nine winners in nine weeks. There is no limit to the number of receipts customers can submit; every purchase is another chance to win. "This promotion is a fun and simple way for local community members to support downtown merchants during the summer months," said Carlee Schulte, Main Street/DDA Director. "School's out, so there's parking and plenty of reasons to make downtown your go-to spot for shopping, dining, and fun." Milly Money helps keep dollars circulating within the community and can be used at a variety of beloved shops, restaurants, and service providers in the heart of Milledgeville. Downtown shoppers are encouraged to show their support, explore what's new, and make the most of the season. For more information call Milledgeville Main Street at 478-414-4014. — Contributed



>> GEORGIA COLLEGE



COURTESY OF GCSU
Georgia College & State University's 2024-25 men's basketball team is pictured on its home court in the Centennial Center.

Bobcats earn PBC Team Sportsmanship Award

The Peach Belt Conference has announced that Georgia College & State University has won the 2024-25 Men's Basketball Team Sportsmanship Award. The PBC began its Team Sportsmanship Award program in the 2008-09 season. The program presents an award following each championship season to the team in that sport that best exemplifies the spirit of sports-manship and generally conducts itself with a high degree of integrity, character and class. The team award is selected by other teams who compete in that sport. Points are awarded based on how each team finished in the voting and in June, the institution with the highest totals will receive the PBC Institution of the Year Sportsmanship Award. GCSU won the men's basketball award for the fifth time in the last six years with its third in a row. The award is the 31st overall, second most among all PBC institutions, for the Bobcats athletics program. The PBC senior woman administrators council oversees the program. — Contributed

>> BALDWIN HIGH SCHOOL



CONTRIBUTED
Baldwin High School Principal Markeeta Clayton (center) accepts the 2024 Platinum Award for Greatest Gains.

BHS earns 2024 platinum award for Greatest Gains in Student Achievement

Baldwin High School was awarded the 2024 Platinum Award for Greatest Gains by the Governor's Office of Student Achievement. This recognition places Baldwin High in the top 1% of all Georgia schools for academic growth over the past three years. The Platinum Award represents the highest tier in the Single Statewide Accountability System and is given only to schools that demonstrate exceptional progress in student achievement. Baldwin High School is one of just 15 schools statewide to earn this honor in 2024. To receive the Platinum designation in the Greatest Gains category, schools must place in the 99th percentile or higher statewide in average College and Career-Ready Performance Index Progress Scores over the past three years, maintain a 2024 CCRPI score that is no more than 10 points lower than the 2019 score, and not appear on the GOSA 2024 Georgia Promise Scholarship Public School List or the Georgia Department of Education's 2024 CSI or TSI lists. "This award is a reflection of the collaborative effort of our students, teachers, administrators, and families," said Superintendent Dr. Norris Price. "It demonstrates the excellence we've worked so hard to cultivate in Baldwin County, and we could not be more proud." Baldwin High School's Platinum Award marks a major milestone in the district's ongoing mission to provide a world-class education to every student. For more information about the awards, visit the Governor's Office of Student Achievement website at gosa.georgia.gov. — Contributed

>> BE SAFE

Georgia WRD says 'Hey Georgians, Let's Get Gatorwise'



COURTESY OF BCSD OFFICE
On May 15, Baldwin County deputies responded to a call about an alligator in the roadway on Vinson Highway near the Fall Line Freeway.

Georgia is home to an estimated population of around 225,000 alligators. So, no matter where you live, it's time to get GatorWise, says the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Wildlife Resources Division. "As the weather warms up and people are spending more time outdoors, it's a great time to remind everyone that it is normal to see alligators moving around and basking in rivers, ponds and lakes in the southern part of the state," said Kara Nitschke, WRD's state alligator biologist. "Alligators are native to Georgia and are critical to the health and balance of our ecosystems, so being GatorWise means

we know how to modify our behavior to minimize any potential conflict."

Learn the GatorWise basics:

- Alligators can live in any water body in their range. They are good at hiding and may be found in places where you have never seen them, especially after storms or floods. Keep your distance.
- Feeding alligators on purpose or by accident is illegal in Georgia. This can cause alligators to associate people with food and lose their natural fear of people.
- Throwing fish scraps in the water is one of the most common ways people

unintentionally feed alligators. Properly dispose of bait, fish scraps, and food items.

- Approaching, capturing or handling alligators puts you at risk. View and photograph alligators from a distance.
- Alligators do not know the difference between pets and prey. Keep pets on a leash and away from the water's edge. Supervise small children near the water.
- Observe alligator warning signs. Stay away from the water if you see an alligator. Avoid swimming in areas with dense vegetation and only swim during daylight hours.

GatorWise promotes realistic public perceptions about alligators and provides guidance on responsible human behavior to minimize conflict between people and alligators. GatorWise was developed with cooperation from state fish and wildlife agencies of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas, all states within the range of the American Alligator. To learn more visit gatorwise.org and to learn more about Georgia alligators visit georgiawildlife.com/alligator-info. — Contributed