

# GORDON Gazette

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Weekend, December 12, 2020

www.gordongazettega.com

Volume 3, No.19

Calhoun-Gordon County's #1 Source for News

## Gordon Prevention Initiative awarded Drug Free Communities Grant

**Brandi Owczarz**  
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The Council on Alcohol and Drugs has announced that the Gordon Prevention Initiative has been awarded the Drug-Free Communities grant from the Office of National Drug Control Policy. The Drug-Free Communities

grant is a \$1.25 million grant program over the course of a 10-year implementation period.

The Drug Free Community (DFC) program is a non-partisan effort housed in the Office of National Drug Control Policy that provides necessary funding to communities to identify and respond

to local drug and alcohol use problems.

"The purpose of this grant is to establish and strengthen the collaboration among various sectors of a community working to prevent youth substance use. Drug-Free Communities are programs that work to reduce youth substance

use rates in communities across the country.

This will initially be a five-year grant, with the potential of five additional years. This could bring over \$1 million to help prevent youth substance use in Calhoun, Georgia and Gordon County," said Ester López, MPS, ICPS, of The Council

on Alcohol and Drugs

Voices for Prevention. This initiative is connected to the Gordon County Family Connections Teen Health Task Force. While the Voluntary Action Center will serve as the fiscal agent, the Council on Alcohol and Drugs will oversee the implementation of the

grant initiative.

"We are grateful for all of our community partners who assisted in preparing this competitive grant in the middle of a global pandemic," said Lopez. "We are also very thankful for the collaboration with the Voluntary Action Center that made this all possible."

## Early voting in runoff elections begins this Monday

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Early voting in the runoff election for two United States Senate seats and Public Service Commissioner begins Monday, Dec. 14 and will run Monday – Friday through Dec. 31.

Early voting will take place at the Gordon County Board of Elections and Voter Registration Office, located at 101 South Piedmont Street in downtown Calhoun. Early voting takes place each day from 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.

There will be no

Saturday voting offered this early voting cycle, and the election office will be closed for Christmas on Thursday and Friday, Dec. 24-25.

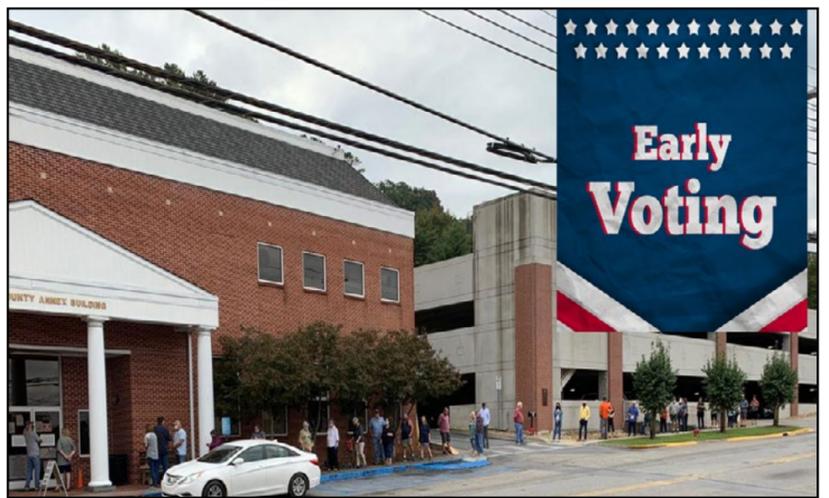
"We would like to encourage voters to cast their ballot early and we would like to encourage voters to wear a mask when coming to vote in person," said Gordon County Board of Elections Chairperson Shea Hicks.

The date for the runoff election is Tuesday, Jan. 5.

The three runoff races include incumbent senator David Perdue (Republican)

facing Democrat challenger Jon Ossoff; a special election of incumbent senator Kelly Loeffler (Republican), who was appointed to fill the unexpired term of former senator Johnny Isakson, who is facing Democrat challenger Raphael Warnock; and incumbent Public Service Commissioner Lauren Bubba McDonald, Jr. (Republican), facing Democrat challenger Daniel Blackman.

For more information on the runoff election, visit <https://www.mvp.sos.ga.gov/>



## FDA issues Emergency Use Authorization for first COVID-19 vaccine

Action Follows Thorough Evaluation of Available Safety, Effectiveness, and Manufacturing Quality Information by FDA Career Scientists, Input from Independent Experts

FDA

On Friday, Dec. 11, 2020, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued the first emergency use authorization (EUA) for a vaccine for the prevention of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome

coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) in individuals 16 years of age and older. The emergency use authorization allows the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine to be distributed in the U.S.

"The FDA's authorization for emergency use of the first COVID-19 vaccine is a significant milestone in

batting this devastating pandemic that has affected so many families in the United States and around the world," said FDA Commissioner Stephen M. Hahn, M.D. "Today's action follows an open and transparent review process that included input from independent scientific and public health experts and a

thorough evaluation by the agency's career scientists to ensure this vaccine met FDA's rigorous, scientific standards for safety, effectiveness, and manufacturing quality needed to support emergency use

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No COVID-related deaths reported in Gordon this week, but case numbers continue to skyrocket.

**HEALTH 5A**



GEORGIA HEALTH NEWS: Another alarming daily record set in Georgia.

**EDUCATION 6A**



NGNB holds Jeans for Teens campaign to help students.

## GEM Theatre closes doors for remainder of year over rising COVID cases; fundraiser in place to raise money for the non-profit

**Brandi Owczarz**  
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The GEM Theatre, the place to go for concerts, movies and other events in downtown Calhoun, announced that their showings of "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation" set for this weekend and "It's a Wonderful Life" set for December 19 and 20 have been canceled and that the theatre is closing for the remainder of 2020 in an over abundance of caution due to the rising cases of COVID.

"We look forward to seeing everyone in 2021 and pray you have a safe and healthy Christmas and New Year!" said the GEM in a statement.

The GEM Theatre has a long, lustrous history in our community, dating back to the late 1920's. During World War II, the community used the GEM to get news updates on loved ones serving overseas. Children's first movies were watched here; someone watched "Gone With The Wind"

during its first showing here; first dates occurred here; proposals were made at the facility, which opened its doors originally in 1927. The theatre was Calhoun's only movie and performing arts venue until it closed in the late 1970's.

The GEM building was purchased in 2001 thanks to the vision of Raymond and Pearl King and their children Ted and Ginger, who wished to see the theatre restored to its previous glory.

The main theatre area had remained intact; however, water damage had destroyed the stage and ruined much of the interior. The Friends of the GEM hired an architectural firm and contractor that specialized in historic restoration and after 10 tireless years of fundraising, the GEM Theatre re-opened on August 27, 2011. In 2012, the theatre was recognized as a Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation



Rehabilitation Award recipient.

The GEM Theatre in recent years has hosted free movies each summer for children; they've partnered with the local library to host educational events along with providing some of the best entertainment you can find, bringing in quality, family-friendly musicians and comedians to keep the community entertained. Now, the GEM Theatre needs its

community more than ever, with COVID-19 wrecking havoc on the not-for-profit venue.

Earlier this week, Kim Brazell, director of Marketing and Public Relations at the GEM, released a statement with information on what's happening with the GEM Theatre at this time, and how the public can help by donating money to help keep the theatre running.. "The COVID-19

pandemic has hit the GEM Theatre and the entertainment industry hard," said the statement. "Our revenue essentially dried up when everything was shut down. Although we are working to get back to where we were, it's a slow process and the majority of people just aren't ready to come to shows. We understand.

See GEM, page 7A

# Second Front

## CCS achieves 2020 GSBA Exemplary School Board status

CONTRIBUTED

Calhoun City Schools is pleased to announce the achievement and status of the Georgia School Boards Association's (GSBA) 2020 Exemplary School Board recognition.

This recognition program was designed to showcase best practices in school governance and leadership. GSBA recognizes good school board governance to foster educational community cultures in order to advance student learning and achievement.

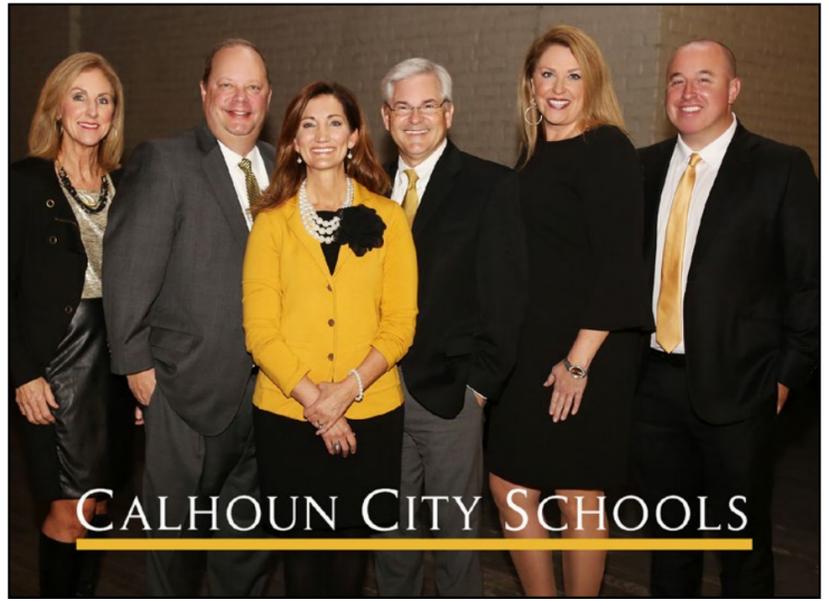
The Calhoun City Schools' Board of Education exceeded the criteria set forth by GSBA to earn the honor of a 2020 Exemplary Board.

The GSBA Governance Team Recognition Program was developed by Georgia superintendents and board members based on the state board of education's standards for effective governance to recognize exemplary leadership.

In 1998, the Georgia School Boards Association was one of the first school board associations in the nation

to develop a program of standards for local boards of education.

Calhoun City Schools has always achieved the highest standards of excellence and we are proud of their exemplary leadership. Congratulations to Chairman Eddie Reeves, Vice Chair Rhoda Washington, Secretary David Scoggins, and Board members Andy Baxter and Becky Gilbert-George. The Board of Education was also the recipient of GSBA's Leading Edge Award for innovative practices. It's great to be a Yellow Jacket!



## No deaths reported due to COVID in Gordon this week, but case numbers continue to rise significantly

Brandi Owczarz  
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COVID-19 continues to be a cause of concern for the Calhoun-Gordon County community, as numbers continue to rise and Gordon County Schools report more than twice the number of active cases they had last week.

Both school systems reported their COVID numbers Friday afternoon. Gordon County Schools' number of active COVID-19 cases grew to 40 this week, up from 17 active cases last week. There are currently a total of 26 staff members and 17 students that are considered active cases of COVID-19 at the system.

The breakdown of current active COVID-19 cases at the school system is: 1 student at Fairmount Elementary School, 2 students at Gordon Central, 2 students at Red Bud Elementary, 3 students at Red Bud Middle, 4 students at Sonoraville Elementary, 4 students at Sonoraville High and 1 student at Tolbert Elementary. Among staff at the school system, there are 2 staff members at Ashworth Middle School, 1 at Belwood Elementary, 1 at Gordon Central, 12 at Red Bud Elementary, 2 at Red Bud Middle, 5 at Sonoraville Elementary and 3 at Sonoraville High School with an active case of COVID.

Additional measures to fight the spread of the virus at Gordon County Schools were implemented in October, including switching both county high schools

to a hybrid attendance schedule, where part of the students at each high school attended school in person for a week while the other half attended online, reducing the amount of people in the schools at any particular time. The hybrid schedule was only a temporary measure; however, and the students at both high school resumed a normal schedule after Thanksgiving break.

"The decision to temporarily move to a hybrid schedule for both Gordon County high schools is a precautionary measure and comes following an increase in active COVID cases, resulting in a higher number of precautionary quarantines," said the system in a statement in early October.

Gordon County Schools' reporting is slightly different than the City school system. Gordon County Schools' weekly numbers, reported each Friday afternoon, show the new cases of COVID-19 for the week, plus any previous cases that are still active. You can find those numbers on their website at <https://www.gcbe.org/domain/5112>.

Calhoun City Schools' new cases of COVID-19 this week decreased to 20 cases system-wide, down 5 new cases from last week. There were 12 new cases among students (3 at Calhoun Primary, 2 at Calhoun Elementary, 2 at Calhoun Middle and 5 at Calhoun High School).

Neither student who tested positive at Calhoun Elementary has been on

campus; only 1 student at Calhoun Primary has been on campus and 2 of the positive students at Calhoun High have been on campus.

There were 8 new cases among staff members at Calhoun City Schools reported this week (1 at Calhoun Primary, 3 at Calhoun Elementary and 4 at Calhoun High School).

Calhoun City Schools post the new case numbers each Friday afternoon, and includes the previous week's numbers separately on their website at <https://www.calhounschools.org/summer-resources/ccsd-covid-19-case-status-reportnew-page>.

Both school systems have adopted strict cleaning procedures and are following the health and safety guidelines set forth by the CDC concerning social distancing.

Students and staff who have tested positive for COVID-19 or who have recently had close contact with a person with COVID-19 at either school system cannot return to school until they meet the Department of Public Health's Return to School Guidance After COVID-19 Illness or Exposure.

Numbers of new positive COVID in Gordon County are up, with more than 200 new cases reported over the last week, according to cases the Georgia Department of Health.

At press time Saturday morning, Dec. 12, Gordon County has had 3,418 confirmed cases of COVID-19 since the pandemic began - that's up 222 cases since the same



time last week. COVID-19 related deaths remain at 55 this week, and DPH also continues to report 5 additional probable deaths from COVID. There have been 180 hospitalizations in Gordon County due to COVID-19 since March, up 10 hospitalizations

since last week. Public Safety Officials as the public to remember to continue to wash hands often, cover your cough and practice social distancing.

Since the pandemic began in March, Georgia has had 466,904 COVID-

19 cases, with 9,175 deaths and 37,321 hospitalizations due to the virus.

For further information and numbers such as cumulative totals for Georgia and all counties please visit:

<https://dph.georgia.gov/>

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**POSITIONS AVAILABLE**

**GENERAL LABOR:** \$10/hr, 12 hour shifts 7am to 7p and 7p to 7a, 7 days a week right now, lots of over time, bilingual/Spanish is a must! for cutting, sealing boxes, packing, and able to work fast paced

**INDUSTRIAL BINDING:** (sewing machine) candidates that have sewing machine experience we will pay them \$14.25 per hour. They must have previous sewing experience. 2nd shift-and work Monday - Thursday 5pm to 3:30am

**ADMIN ASSIST:** \$12/hr, accounts payable, and receivable, computer skills, good solid work history, some receptionist skills needed-must have resume showing all computer/accounting skills.

**Flocking** - Interviews required -7p-5:30am Monday - Friday some Saturdays-\$11

**Packaging-** No Interviews needed -5pm-5am Monday - Friday \$11

**SHOP WORKER:** \$11-12/hr, day shift, will work wrapping/cleaning up cabinets for shipping, clean in shop, work as needed to assist in shop for making commercial grade cabinets

**COATER:** 1st shift M-T 7am to 5pm and F 7am to 3pm - coater operator and asst. operator. Pay is \$11 No exp. \$14 exp.-will send profiles to client-8 openings-will bring in slowly as training

**SERGER:** \$9/hr, 1st shift, must have skills on sewer/serger

**Front End Loader** - rotating days \$14/hr pft required. FEL experience required

**Sand Prep-** PFT required, forklift experience required, rotating days, \$15/hr-1 opening

**TEACHER:** \$8.25, must pass background check, experience in planning, teaching, following up, needs to have certificate in field or Associates Degree, must show work history on resume to submit to client

**HALL MONITOR:** \$8.25/hr, must have clean background, will be cleaning, assisting with students and taking care of facilities. Must show work history on resume to be submitted to client.

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# Obituaries

## December 12, 2020

### John Almas

John Martin Almas, age 78, of Calhoun and formerly of Pontiac, Mich., passed away on Monday, Dec. 7, 2020 at his residence.

John was born on Sept. 26, 1942 in Pontiac, Mich., son of the late Jack Martin Almas and Ruby Edna Jones Almas. John lived most of his life in Michigan then moved to Georgia where he and his wife have resided the past two years.

John is survived by: his wife, Rosalie Faith Almas; three sons, Todd Michael Almas, Sean David Almas, and Jonathan Leon Almas; daughter, Heidi Suzanne Rundquist; sister, Judith Ann Baumbach; and four grandchildren.

A Graveside Service was held on Wednesday, Dec. 9, 2020 at 10 a.m. at Chandler Cemetery.

You may leave the family online condolences at [www.thomasfuneralhomecalhoun.com](http://www.thomasfuneralhomecalhoun.com)

Thomas Funeral Home has proudly been entrusted with the care of John Martin Almas.



### James "Jamie" Anderson

James Earl "Jamie" Anderson, age 37, of Sugar Valley, passed away suddenly due to injuries sustained in an accident.

Jamie was born on Sept. 6, 1983 in Shelbyville, Tenn., son of Brenda Gail Hise Callahan and the late Jack Linden Anderson, Jr. Jamie was employed by Northwest Georgia Paving Inc. at the time of his death.

James is survived by: his mother, Brenda Gail Callahan of Resaca; daughter, Aimery Anderson of Calhoun; son, Jayden Wagner; and brother, Joseph "Joey" Anderson.

Funeral Services was conducted on Friday, Dec. 11, 2020 at 1 p.m. from the Chapel of Thomas Funeral Home with Reverend Dwaine Shadix officiating. Interment followed in Chandler Cemetery.

Pallbearers serving were: Blake Howell, Chad Bohannon, Brian Chastain, Justin Howerton, Jerney Schular, Tabb Fowler and Joseph Anderson.

The family received friends on Thursday, Dec. 10, 2020 from 5 – 8 p.m. at Thomas Funeral Home.

You may leave the family online condolences at [www.thomasfuneralhomecalhoun.com](http://www.thomasfuneralhomecalhoun.com)

Thomas Funeral Home has proudly been entrusted with the care of James Earl "Jamie" Anderson.



### Jesenia Armas

Jesenia Emily Recio Armas, age 37, of Johns Creek, passed away on Monday, Dec. 7, 2020 at Northside Hospital Forsyth.

Jesenia was born on May 20, 1983 in Miami, Fla., daughter of the late Daniel Recio and Daisy Armas.

Jesenia is survived by: her son, Jaidon Armas; and two brothers, Luis Fitz Armas and Joshua Garcia Armas.

A celebration of the life of Jesenia will be held on Saturday, Dec. 12, 2020 at 11 a.m. from the Chapel of Thomas Funeral Home with Reverend Randy Muse officiating.

You may leave the family online condolences at [www.thomasfuneralhomecalhoun.com](http://www.thomasfuneralhomecalhoun.com)

Thomas Funeral Home has proudly been entrusted with the care of Jesenia Emily Recio Armas.



### Willene Cochran

Willene (Brannon) Cochran, 83, of Acworth, passed away Wednesday, Dec. 9, 2020, at Tranquility Hospice Center in Marietta after several years of declining health. She was born May 4, 1937, in Fairmount to the late Bob and Audrey Brannon. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by brothers, Harold, Howell, and R.L.; sisters, Eunice Balliew, Eula Mae Crowe, Ruth Griffin, Betty Childers, Mildred Johnson, and Dymple Childers; granddaughter, Ansley Cochran.

She is survived by Bill Cochran, her husband of 67 years; daughter, Angela Tucker and her husband Doy; son, Lamar Cochran and his wife Donna; grandchildren, Robby (Katie) Burrell, Casey (Amber) Cochran, Ashtyn (Chad) Smith; great-grandchildren, Clayton, Olivia and Gracelin Burrell, Emerson and Savannah Cochran and Knox Smith. Nieces, nephews, and other relatives also survive.

Due to the Covid-19 health crisis, the family is concerned about the well-being of others and has selected to have a private service on Sunday, Dec. 13, 2020. Burial will be in the Cochran family lot at Pleasant Grove (Ryo) Baptist Church Cemetery. Pallbearers serving will include Robbie Burrell, Casey Cochran, Steve Brannon, Ronnie Childers, Tim Childers, Kenny Childers, and Chad Smith.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be given to "The Ansley Foundation" The foundation was established in memory of Willene's granddaughter, to fund research, diagnosis, and treatment of childhood cancer. You can make a contribution and learn more about the foundation online at [www.theansleyfoundation.org](http://www.theansleyfoundation.org).

The Brannon family and staff are honored to serve the family of Willene (Brannon) Cochran.



### Roy Henderson

Roy Wayne Henderson, 78, of Resaca, died Wednesday, Dec. 9, 2020. He was born on July 16, 1942 in Valley Station, Ky. to the late Huel Henderson and Pansy Hatfield Henderson.

Roy served his country in the U.S. Air force from July 1959 to August 1964. He was a member of Concord Baptist Church.

Roy is survived by his loving wife of 59 years, Frances (Totsie) Henderson; his daughters, Deborah (Armin) Martin, Leslie (Travis) Trumbull, Erin (Paul) Dove and Lori Henderson; brothers, Wade



Henderson, Ron (Jane) Henderson; grandchildren, Jared (Kayilee), Emily, Andrew, Isaiah (Debbie), Nathan (Liz), Natalie, Aaron (Anna), Micah (Libby), Anna, Riley (Jessica), Sarah (Heath), Adam (Mikayla), Haleigh, Heidi (Daniel), Adrianna, Paul, Grady, and Levi (Michaela); great-grandchildren, Braxton Layne, Branson Trumbull, Jeriah and Rylan Delange; Jonathan, Chloe, LillyAnn and Felicity Delange; Serenity, Lexi and Mason Whitfield; Jason and Karleigh Crabtree.

The family would like to thank the staff of Homestead Hospice, Dr. Wayne Harris, Jason Deroe PA, and the staff of Decatur VA.

The family will receive friends on Thursday, Dec. 17, 2020 from 4 – 9 p.m. at Concord Baptist Church. His body will lie in state on Friday, Dec. 18, 2020 from 11 a.m. until the hour of service at 2:30 p.m. at Concord Baptist Church with Bro. Johnny Jones, Bro. Handly Milby and Bro. Randy Sutherland officiating. Burial will follow in Concord Baptist Church Cemetery.

The Brannon family and staff are honored to serve the family of Roy Wayne Henderson.



### Daymon McClure

Daymon McClure, age 62, of Calhoun, passed away on Friday, Dec. 11, 2020 at his residence.

Daymon was born on Jan. 11, 1958 in Gordon County to Jean Bennett McClure and the late William Don McClure. In addition to his father, Daymon was also preceded in death by: a brother, Ricky McClure; and sister, Donna Boswell.

Daymon was a graduate of Calhoun High School Class of 1975. He was a member of Oak Grove Baptist Church, Plainville Masonic Lodge, and the Echota Vann Shiners Club. Daymon was employed by Mohawk for over 40 years as a truck driver. Daymon loved to hang out with his friends and family, and enjoyed his mother's cooking, especially her homemade biscuits.

Daymon is survived by: his mother, Jean Bennett McClure; his wife of 28 years, Martha Silver McClure; two daughters, Tishanna McClure of Calhoun and Danielle Fisher and her husband Caleb of Cartersville; son, Bryan C. Holland and his wife Victoria of Gainesville; sister, Jonah Campbell of Sugar Valley; eight grandchildren, Rand DeFoor, Lenora Fisher, Lillian Fisher, Drake Collum, Anna Collum, Bryce Holland, Brock Holland, and Chamilla Alsley; and two great-grandchildren, LouElla Collum and Mabney Collum.

A Graveside Service will be held on Monday, Dec. 14 at 2 p.m. at Fain Cemetery with Reverend Lamar Long officiating.

Pallbearers serving are: Brock Holland, Caleb Fisher, Dewayne Bennett, Dale Bennett, John W. Campbell, Robert L. Campbell, and William Boswell. Honorary Pallbearers are: Phillip McDaniel, James Hopper, David McClure, Lewis "LouLou" Stanley, and Bryan Holland.

You may leave the family online condolences at [www.thomasfuneralhomecalhoun.com](http://www.thomasfuneralhomecalhoun.com)

Thomas Funeral Home has proudly been entrusted with the care of Daymon McClure.



## Help for the Hurting

**-The Life Choice Hospice Bereavement Support Group will be meeting the 2nd Tuesday of each month.** The support group is open to anyone in the community who would like to attend. The office and support group are located at 189 Professional Court, Suite 300, Calhoun. For Information, contact Jennifer at 706-602-9001.

**-The Northwest Georgia Parkinson Disease Association, Inc., is offering a monthly support group** for persons living with Parkinson Disease, their caregivers, family and friends. The support group will meet at Gordon Hospital; Conference Room A. For any questions about the support group and future meetings, call James Trussell at 706-235- 3164 or 706-346-5678.

**-Families Anonymous is a 12-step program, for those concerned about drug abuse** and behavior problems of a relative or friend. Completely anonymous, non professional, and non religious. No dues, no fees. Not connected with any hospital or agency. Located on Red Bud Road in plaza below Fitness First, next to Calhoun Counseling Center (Dr. Bledsoe's office). Meeting every Thursday 7 - 8 p.m. Call 770-548-7849 for more information.

**-Bondage Breakers- Breaking the chains of addiction** one soul at a time. Every Thursday night at 7 p.m. at Crane Eater Community Church, located at 3168 Red Bud Rd Calhoun, GA 30701.

**-The Georgia Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association is sponsoring a monthly support group** at Morning

Pointe Assisted Living, 660 Jolly Road, on the third Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. For more information or directions, call Mary Braden at 770-548-4683 or Karen Parrott at 706-346-5220. For more information about dementia and Alzheimer's disease, call 800-272-3900 or visit [www.alz.org/georgia](http://www.alz.org/georgia).

**-Special Care Plus, a free one-on-one consultation program, offers education and information to primary caregivers of persons with dementia.** Any primary caregiver who is caring for a loved one with dementia in the home is eligible to receive this program. To learn more about the Special Care Plus program, call 800-272-3900.

**-Want to make a difference in the community? Tapestry Hospice is seeking volunteers to provide companionship** to our patients, read books, make crafts, garden, light house cleaning, administrative work, etc. If you're interested contact Megan at [megan.guthrie@tapestryhospice.com](mailto:megan.guthrie@tapestryhospice.com)

**-The Alzheimer's Association's Caring Closet** was created to help offset the high cost of incontinent products and give the families support they often desperately need. If you would like to visit the nearest Closet, call the chapter office to receive a flier with locations and hours. Morning Pointe in Calhoun has a Caring Closet; call Mary Braden at 706-629-0777.

**-Community volunteers are needed at Countryside Hospice Care**, where the mission is to promote comfort and dignity

at the end of life. The agency covers 26 Northwest Georgia counties between three offices in LaFayette, Rome, and Newnan. If you would like to participate in this rewarding program, call 706-638-7651 or 1-800-660-7381.

**-Discovering Hope, an autism support group for Northwest Georgia,** meets the fourth Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at Friendship Baptist Church, Rocky Face. For more information, call Connie Post at 706-673-7765 or [www.discoveringhope.us](http://www.discoveringhope.us).

**-Caring Connection is a telephone support group especially** for caregivers of loved ones with Alzheimer's who cannot leave their homes because of care responsibilities. This support group is as close as the phone. Call 706-275-0819 or 1-800-272-3900 and ask to be enrolled in Caring Connection.

**-Grief Recovery Group for those who have lost loved ones** and friends, receive support and guidance with the Four Tasks of Grieving. Cost is Free. Second Wednesday of each month at 1 p.m. at Harris Radiation Therapy Center at Gordon Hospital. For more information or to RSVP, please call 706.879.5850.

**-The Compassionate Friends of Dalton and N.W. Georgia** is part of a worldwide effort that has helped many families cope with the loss of a child and to honor our children's memory. The Compassionate Friends meets on the third Thursday of each month from 7 to 9 p.m. at Evangelical Methodist Church (in the "Gathering Place" building),

1035 Abutment Road, Dalton (on the hill behind the old Lowe's off Walnut Avenue). For more information, call Dawn at 706-277-3312 or 706-264-4458 or e-mail [dawnsisson@msn.com](mailto:dawnsisson@msn.com).

**-SING (Surviving Infidelity Necessary to your Growth)** has formed here. If you are experiencing difficulty in marriage and are looking for ways to survive, then you should come and be part of these meetings designed to help, encourage, and solve issues in a marriage that can lead to a promising future ahead for the entire family. For more information, call Iroka Moore at 706-629-2880.

**-United Hospice is seeking volunteers** who can help others through companionship, reading, sharing, and other small tasks. Give the gift of caring and enjoy the privilege of sharing in your local area. Call Dan Hogan at 706-602-9546 or 800-867-7976.

**-Looking for a 12-step meeting for men and women?** At "Road to Recovery," recognizing Jesus Christ as our higher power, they take the 12 steps and compare how they are taken from scripture and how to apply them to our lives to experience true freedom from the bondages of addiction. The meetings are free and open to the public at World Harvest Church locations in Cherokee and Gordon counties. For more information, call 706-602-1919. The Calhoun church is located at 2335 Red Bud Road. The meetings here are every Monday and Thursday at 7 p.m.

# Hometown Holidays



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**135 Professional Court, Calhoun, GA 706.629.2651**

# GEORGIA HEALTH NEWS: A troubling snapshot — from before the pandemic

**ANDY MILLER,**  
Georgia Health News

A pandemic can easily skew the trajectory of health statistics.

Amid this year's long COVID-19 crisis, things may actually have improved in a couple of health categories, such as a higher number of people using telehealth services.

But many categories are likely to have worsened — and some dramatically.

The United Health Foundation released its annual scorecard of state health statistics this week. The data in the annual America Health Rankings Report are not that old in general statistical terms, but they are mostly pulled from 2019, before the coronavirus took hold.

So while many measures of Georgia health on the scorecard probably haven't changed much during the pandemic, others are clearly different now.

Take food insecurity. The America's Health Rankings 2020 report said food insecurity in Georgia fell between 2013 and 2015 and between 2016 and 2018, from 14.9 percent to 11.3 percent of households in the state.

But the pandemic has certainly reversed that trend.

Georgia's regional food banks are seeing "an unrelenting 50 percent increase in demand for food, with 40 percent of clients seeking help for the very first time in their lives due to job losses," Danah Craft, executive director of the Georgia Food Bank Association, said this week.

The food banks have responded to the

demand with the help of increased USDA spending and private donations. But Craft notes that emergency spending programs are due to end Dec. 31, "and the food banks are facing a 'commodities cliff' with food supplies tapering during a time when the demand is still high."

Food banks are advocating for Congress to approve a temporary 15 percent expansion of food stamp benefits as well as additional spending for food bank distribution.

## No number ranking

The most unusual feature of the Health Rankings report is that it did not assign overall numbers to the individual states.

That's due to the pandemic, and the inclusion of several new health factors presented in the report, Dr. Rhonda Randall, executive vice president and chief medical officer of UnitedHealthcare, told GHN. Last year's rankings put Georgia at No. 40 among states in overall health.

Randall added that COVID-19 has offered "unprecedented challenges."

"For years to follow, we expect that COVID-19 will impact almost every health and socioeconomic measure included in this report," she said.

Nevertheless, the report "provides context on where we were before the pandemic," Randall added. It will inform public health officials and policymakers the areas to target for improvements, or those where progress has been made, she said. The report



also shows disparities in health outcomes based on income, education and race.

## The mental health impact

Mental health is another area where past statistics have veered in a troubling direction.

The new report noted that in Georgia, frequent mental distress increased between 2011 and 2019, from 12.2 percent to 15.4 percent of adults. The pandemic almost certainly has accelerated that trend.

A Kaiser Family Foundation poll in mid-July found that 53 percent of adults in the United States reported that their mental health had been negatively affected due to worry and stress about the coronavirus.

The CDC found that elevated levels of adverse mental health conditions, substance abuse, and suicidal ideation (thoughts of suicide) were reported by U.S. adults in June.

The suicide rate increased 23 percent nationally between 2009 and 2018, the report said.

Georgia's suicide rate has been trending

upward for more than a decade, says Roland Behm, an attorney and a board member of the Georgia chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

Residents of rural areas, veterans, LGBTQ individuals and people on the autism spectrum tend to have higher suicide risks, Behm said.

The United Health report said mental health providers became more numerous between 2016 and 2020, increasing from 122.5 to 149.9 per 100,000 population in Georgia. But Behm notes that the rate remains far below the national average.

Georgia's diabetes rate has jumped between 2012 and 2019, from 9.9 percent to 12 percent of adults.

"My biggest concerns moving forward short term are about diabetes and mental health challenges brought on by the pandemic," says Colin Smith, a public health expert at Georgia State University. "We are forced to stay at home, potentially not getting as much exercise, being in stressful situations with loved ones, not eating

properly, et cetera, [do] not have the same resources to maintain our physical and mental health."

## The scourge of obesity

The report outlined longstanding health problems, both here and nationally.

Obesity is up 15 percent, to 31.9 percent of U.S. adults. Georgia's obesity rate is higher still, at 33.1 percent.

The report said obesity has increased nationally among all subpopulation groups — whether classified by gender, age, education, income, race or ethnicity. And obesity is "a precursor to diabetes, heart disease and cancer," Randle said.

The rate of low-birthweight babies in Georgia rose from 8.5 percent in 1999 to 10.1 percent in 2018, the report said.

Other factors that probably have worsened include the high percentage of Georgians without health insurance. That likely has climbed due to the loss of jobs, and corresponding loss of health insurance.

Georgia ranks 48th among the states in its rate of people without health insurance, and in the percentage of instances when people reported avoiding medical care due to cost, according to the report.

America's Health Rankings compiled its report in partnership with the American Public Health Association, and with an advisory group of leading health experts.

The report "paints a picture of the nation's ongoing public health successes and challenges as well as a deeper understanding of the nation's health at the outset of the global COVID-19 pandemic," Dr. Georges C. Benjamin, executive director of the American Public Health Association, said in a statement.

"We hope this report inspires proactive solutions about effective ways to improve the health of everyone within our communities as we navigate the evolving pandemic and head into the next decade."

*Andy Miller is the CEO and editor of Georgia Health News.*

# GEORGIA HEALTH NEWS: Another alarming daily record as COVID cases accelerate here

**ANDY MILLER,**  
Georgia Health News

A state website showed a record-shattering single-day increase in COVID-19 cases Thursday, with nearly 8,000 new cases.

The total — 7,950 — includes positives from rapid antigen tests. It easily surpassed the previous one-day record of new cases of 6,601 reported Friday.

"We are in a really bad spot," said Amber Schmidtke, whose Daily Digest tracks COVID-19 in Georgia.

"We are seeing exponential growth over the past week," she said, adding that Georgia is "heading in the direction" of the Upper Midwest and Western states with the highest

COVID rates.

The percentage of people who test positive for the virus is also increasing in Georgia, standing at 14 percent of all individuals tested. The target for states is 5 percent or below.

The increases in infections come in all types of Georgia counties — urban, suburban and rural — Schmidtke added.

Georgia's ICU bed capacity continues to be strained, with 86 percent of such beds occupied across the state.

The Gainesville Times reported Thursday that cots are being set up in a gym by Northeast Georgia Health System to handle the overload of patients.

The system was treating 217 COVID-19

patients on Wednesday, its highest number since the pandemic began.

At the health system's hospitals in Braselton and Barrow County, no beds were open Wednesday, the Times reported.

Northeast Georgia Medical Center in Gainesville had 24 available beds, with only one bed in the intensive care unit available and another 100 occupied.

NGMC Gainesville already has a mobile unit near its North Tower with 20 beds. The Gainesville and Braselton hospitals have tents outside for extra treatment space.

Northeast Georgia Medical Center in Gainesville

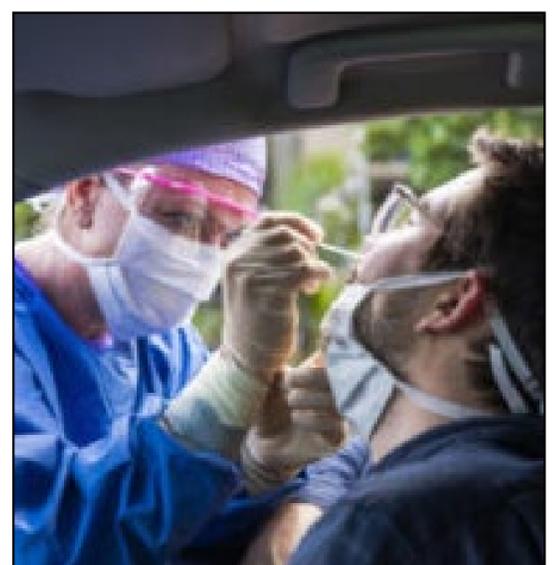
Nationally, the pandemic reached another grim milestone Wednesday with the

highest daily death toll so far.

The COVID Tracking Project reported 3,054 COVID-19 related deaths — a significant jump from the previous single-day record of 2,769 on May 7.

The spread of the disease has shattered another record, with 106,688 COVID-19 patients in U.S. hospitals, the Associated Press reported.

*Andy Miller is the CEO and editor of Georgia Health News.*



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# NGNB holds Jeans for Teens Campaign for local students

CONTRIBUTED

Chris Pierce, President and CEO of North Georgia National Bank, saw a need of clothing for local students and was inspired to do something about it.

North Georgia National Bank recently implemented a "Our Jeans Day is Yours" event to raise funds for each local high school to be used to help students in need of winter clothing.

Sonorville High thanks NGNB for the 1st Annual Jeans for Teens Campaign funds for Sonorville High School students!

Pictured, Chris Pierce, NGNB President/CEO and Jennifer Hayes, SHS Principal.



# CCCA Programs/Teachers of the Month Spotlights STEM for December 2020

CONTRIBUTED

The CCCA Program/Teachers of the Month Spotlight is featuring the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Program. This program is offered through the Calhoun College and Career Academy (CCCA) at Calhoun Middle and High School.

Mrs. Kimberly Jones is the STEM-Engineering and Technology teacher at Calhoun College and Career Academy (CCCA). Kimberly has been teaching for nine years, spending the first six as a fourth-grade teacher at Calhoun Elementary School. During this time, Kimberly got her start with STEM then she branched out to the school-wide STEM initiatives including STEM day and STEM night. When the opportunity became available, Kimberly moved into the role of STEM teacher for Calhoun Middle School and has spent the last two years as the high school STEM-Engineering and Technology teacher.

Kimberly earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Early Childhood Education from Dalton State College. She then earned her Master's Degree in Instructional Technology through Kennesaw State University in 2019. Kimberly has been married to her husband, Chris for four years. They have two beautiful children and one furbaby. Outside of school, Kimberly enjoys doing DIY projects at her home. In her spare time, she enjoys spending

time with her family and traveling.

At CCCA, the STEM-Engineering and Technology pathway offers a variety of opportunities for students to learn and apply the engineering design process to solve real-world problems. Students learn math and science skills related to solving these problems. Students also learn about the many career opportunities in fields related to engineering and how to use machines such as 3D printers, a laser engraver, a CNC router, and robots to solve problems.

TSA, the Technology Students Association is the Career Technical Student Organization (CTSO) associated with STEM-Engineering and Technology. Students can participate in leadership training through CORE (Chapter Officer Retreat of Excellence) and the Fall Leadership Conference. Training related to competitive events occurs at Fall Leadership for events conducted at State Leadership.

Kimberly's favorite thing about teaching STEM-Engineering and Technology at CCCA is getting students to step outside their comfort zone and develop critical thinking skills to produce evidence of their learning instead of passively receiving information.

Mrs. Missy Hathcox is the Calhoun Middle School STEM teacher. Missy has been teaching for eight years. Missy earned her Bachelor of Science in Business and a Master's in Education Degree from the University



FROM LEFT: Kimberly Jones and Missy Hathcox.

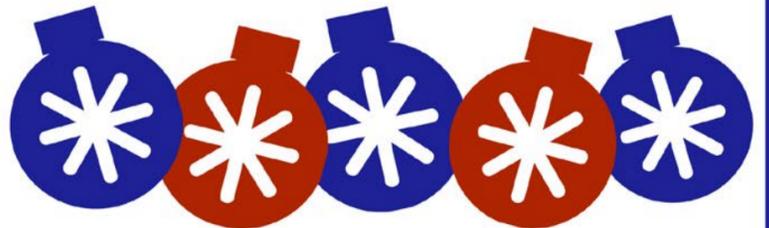
of Georgia. Missy has taught middle school STEM for two years.

Missy is married to Alan and they have three awesome sons, including two Calhoun graduates. Turner attends KSU and is studying to be an Electrical Engineer. Banks attends GNTC and is studying Construction Management. Wesley is a junior at CHS. Missy has a yard full of pets such as dogs, cats, chickens, lizards, turtles, and whatever else the boys find. Missy enjoys anything that involves being outside and she loves to travel and see new places. There's no place that she wouldn't visit.

In the CMS Connections STEM classes, students are given challenges

or problems to research and then they design solutions. Using the Engineering Design Process as a template, students build critical and constructive reasoning skills to look at a variety of solutions to a problem. Teamwork is a critical skill to STEM and students are given many opportunities to build on that skill.

Missy's favorite thing about teaching STEM at CCCA is that she enjoys seeing students learn about something they knew nothing about and taking that information to design solutions. Students with many different skill sets can be successful in STEM if they persevere through the problem.



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# FDA From page 1A

authorization. The tireless work to develop a new vaccine to prevent this novel, serious, and life-threatening disease in an expedited timeframe after its emergence is a true testament to scientific innovation and public-private collaboration worldwide.”

The FDA has determined that Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine has met the statutory criteria for issuance of an EUA. The totality of the available data provides clear evidence that Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine may be effective in preventing COVID-19. The data also support that the known and potential benefits outweigh the known and potential risks, supporting the vaccine’s use in millions of people 16 years of age and older, including healthy individuals. In making this determination, the FDA can assure the public and medical community that it has conducted a thorough evaluation of the available safety, effectiveness and manufacturing quality information.

The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine contains messenger RNA (mRNA), which is genetic material. The vaccine contains a small piece of the SARS-CoV-2 virus’s mRNA that instructs cells in the body to make the virus’s distinctive “spike” protein. When a person receives this vaccine, their body produces copies of the spike protein, which does not cause disease, but triggers the immune system to learn to react defensively, producing an immune response against SARS-CoV-2.

“While not an FDA approval, today’s emergency use authorization of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine holds the promise to alter the course of this pandemic in the United States,” said Peter Marks, M.D., Ph.D., Director of the FDA’s Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research. “With science guiding our decision-making, the available safety and effectiveness data support the authorization of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine because the vaccine’s known and potential benefits clearly outweigh its known and potential risks. The data provided by the sponsor have met the FDA’s expectations as conveyed in our June and October guidance documents. Efforts to speed vaccine development have not sacrificed scientific standards or the integrity of our vaccine evaluation process. The FDA’s review process also included public and independent review from members of the agency’s Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee. Today’s achievement is ultimately a testament to the commitment of our career scientists and physicians, who worked tirelessly to thoroughly evaluate the data and information for this vaccine.”

## FDA Evaluation of Available Safety Data

Pfizer BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine is administered as a series of two doses, three weeks apart. The available safety data to support the EUA include 37,586 of the participants enrolled in an ongoing randomized, placebo-controlled international study, the majority of whom are U.S. participants. These participants, 18,801 of whom received the vaccine and 18,785 of whom received saline placebo, were followed for a median of two months after receiving the second dose. The most commonly reported side effects, which typically lasted several days, were pain at the injection site, tiredness, headache, muscle pain, chills, joint pain, and fever. Of note, more people experienced these side effects after the second dose than after the first dose, so it is important for vaccination providers and recipients to expect that there may be some side effects after either dose, but even more so after the second dose.

It is mandatory for Pfizer Inc. and vaccination providers to report the following to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) for Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine: all vaccine administration errors, serious adverse events, cases of Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome (MIS), and cases of COVID-19 that result in hospitalization or death.

## FDA Evaluation of Available Effectiveness Data

The effectiveness data to support the EUA include an analysis of 36,523 participants in the ongoing randomized, placebo-controlled international study, the majority of whom are U.S. participants, who did not have evidence of SARS-CoV-2 infection through seven days after the second dose. Among these participants, 18,198 received the vaccine and 18,325 received placebo. The vaccine was 95% effective in preventing COVID-19 disease among these clinical trial participants with eight COVID-19 cases in the vaccine group and 162 in the placebo group. Of these 170 COVID-19 cases, one in the vaccine group and three in the placebo group were classified as severe. At this time, data are not available to make a determination about how long the vaccine will provide protection, nor is there evidence that the vaccine prevents transmission of SARS-CoV-2 from person to person.

## The EUA Process

On the basis of the determination by the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services on February 4, 2020, that there is a public health emergency that has a significant potential to affect national security or the health and security of United States citizens living abroad, and then issued declarations that circumstances exist justifying the authorization of

emergency use of unapproved products, the FDA may issue an EUA to allow unapproved medical products or unapproved uses of approved medical products to be used in an emergency to diagnose, treat, or prevent COVID-19 when there are no adequate, approved, and available alternatives.

The issuance of an EUA is different than an FDA approval (licensure) of a vaccine. In determining whether to issue an EUA for a product, the FDA evaluates the available evidence and assesses any known or potential risks and any known or potential benefits, and if the benefit-risk assessment is favorable, the product is made available during the emergency. Once a manufacturer submits an EUA request for a COVID-19 vaccine to the FDA, the agency then evaluates the request and determines whether the relevant statutory criteria are met, taking into account the totality of the scientific evidence about the vaccine that is available to the FDA.

The EUA also requires that fact sheets that provide important information, including dosing instructions, and information about the benefits and risks of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine, be made available to vaccination providers and vaccine recipients.

The company has submitted a pharmacovigilance plan to FDA to monitor the safety of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine. The pharmacovigilance plan includes a plan to complete longer-term safety follow-up for participants enrolled in ongoing clinical trials. The pharmacovigilance plan also includes other activities aimed at monitoring the safety profile of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine and ensuring that any safety concerns are identified and evaluated in a timely manner.

The FDA also expects manufacturers whose COVID-19 vaccines are authorized under an EUA to continue their clinical trials to obtain additional safety and effectiveness information and pursue approval (licensure).

The EUA for the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine was issued to Pfizer Inc. The EUA will be effective until the declaration that circumstances exist justifying the authorization of the emergency use of drugs and biologics for prevention and treatment of COVID-19 is terminated, and may be revised or revoked if it is determined the EUA no longer meets the statutory criteria for issuance.

The FDA, an agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, protects the public health by assuring the safety, effectiveness, and security of human and veterinary drugs, vaccines and other biological products for human use, and medical devices. The agency also is responsible for the safety and security of our nation’s food supply, cosmetics, dietary supplements, products that give off electronic radiation, and for regulating tobacco products.

# GEM From page 1A

Each one of us has to make the best decision we can for our health and safety. It’s difficult. Our type of business can’t offer “to-go” or “curbside” options. We don’t have an online store either. We are either open or not and people either feel comfortable coming or they don’t. If we aren’t open, we are afraid we will be shut down for good.

“As a not-for-profit, we applied for some of the small business relief loans, but they won’t last forever. The pandemic has been going longer than any of us expected. Sales are slow and bills such as power, gas, insurance, supplies and salaries don’t

stop each month. What little reserve we have is quickly depleting.

“We know that we are not the only ones either. Businesses all over our community and our country are struggling and trying to stay afloat. We are praying for better days for both the health of our world and for the financial future of our organization. But we are worried. That’s why we are reaching out to you. If you are able, we are asking for your help by donating to our fundraiser. We aren’t asking for a specific amount. We are grateful for what you can give whether it’s \$1, \$5, \$10, \$20 or more. We are hoping to finish riding out this storm and want to be here on the other side of it.

“The GEM has a long, rich history here in Calhoun. We are committed to trying to maintain that history. We want to be here to work with our

local schools and library to offer free or reduced rate programming, offer free summer movies to kids, and to offer low cost entertainment options such as concerts and movies. We want to create a new generation of GEM supporters, who love and support the arts and who know the value to the community by offering these opportunities. But we need your help too. Please consider helping us get through this difficult time by clicking on the attached link and donating.

“Whether you can give or not, we want you to know that we are praying for your safety and continued health above all else. We can’t wait until we can see you all again and can enjoy concerts like we did before, but until then, stay strong and we will #seeyouattheGEM!”

To donate to the GEM, click [HERE](#)

# Church Calendar

## ONGOING

**-Philadelphia Christian School is located off Highway 41 between Calhoun and Adairsville.** The school offers 4-year-old kindergarten through 12th grade, using the A-Beka curriculum. To find out more about the school, call the office at 706-625-3233.

**-Faith Deliverance Ministry and Outreach** will be taking donations of clothes, shoes, also all house hold items to help needy families. Call Minister Evelyn Adams at 706-671-7988.

**-Celebrate Recovery, a faith based 12-step program, meets every Tuesday at 6 p.m. at Relevate Church in Ranger off 411.** Call Nicole for information: 706-979-4713/706-290-8028.

**-East Calhoun Church of God, at 401 Peters Street,** gives out groceries and clothing through the “Feed the Needy” ministry each Saturday from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The church hosts a miracle healing service every first Friday at 7 p.m. For more information, contact “Feed the Needy” ministry

director Florence Jones at 706-409-1981. Senior pastor is Keith Reid.

## CHURCH DIRECTORY

**-Fairmount Church of Christ, located at 265 South Avenue in Fairmount, Ga.** Minister Bobby Gayton. Everyone

is invited to visit and worship with us. Sunday morning Services at 11 a.m.; Bible study at 10 a.m.; Wednesday Bible study at 6 p.m.

**-Fairmount United Methodist Church-Loving One Another To Christ. Sunday School at 10 a.m.; Worship Service at 11 a.m.** Children’s Church provided. New

Minister now Leading. New programs and community outreach coming soon.

**-Pastor Terry Reisner invites everyone to the Vision Pentecostal Ministry** located at 401 South Wall Street in Calhoun. Come hear the truth of God’s Word Sundays at 11 a.m.

**-Faith Deliverance**

**Church & Outreach Ministry Welcomes Everyone to an Anointed Church Service** at 1320

Dawnville Road in Dalton every Sunday at 6 p.m. and Thursday at 7 p.m. Pastor and Evangelist Evelyn Adams, also an Anointed Gospel Singing. Come expecting Jesus to move for you. Miracles, Healing, Deliverance, Salvation.

For more information or directions, call Minister Evelyn Adams (706) 671-7988

**-Pine Chapel United Methodist Church,** located at 2232 Pine Chapel Road in Resaca, “A place to begin, belong and become.” Sunday School, 10:15 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m. Pastor Louise W. Elmore.



## Tallatoona Community Action Partnership LIHEAP Heating Assistance

**Beginning November 2, 2020 at 8:30am, Tallatoona will begin accepting appointments for the LIHEAP Heating Assistance Program for senior households 65 years of age and older.**

**Beginning December 1, 2020 at 8:30am, the general public may begin scheduling appointments.**

**Appointments are provided on a first-come, first-serve basis. To receive assistance applicants must qualify based on the FY 2021 annual income guidelines. For more information visit [www.tallatoonacap.org](http://www.tallatoonacap.org).**

**SCHEDULE ONLINE: WWW.TALLATOONACAP.ORG**

**IMPORTANT NOTICE: Due to health and safety concerns related to COVID-19, all Tallatoona offices are closed to the public. Appointments will be completed remotely by telephone. All required documents will be accepted via fax, mail, or quick drop off at local county offices. Please DO NOT send documents prior to your appointment.**

**SCHEDULE BY PHONE: 770-817-4666, Option 2 or 770-773-7730, Option 2 (toll free for 706 area codes)**

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