



Chatham County Connection

February 17, 2018



Albert J. Scott
Chairman



Helen L. Stone
District 1



James J. Holmes
District 2



Bobby Lockett
District 3



Patrick K. Farrell
District 4



Tabitha Odell
District 5



James "Jay" Jones
District 6



Dean Kicklighter
District 7



Chester A. Ellis
District 8

For more information on the current district lines visit:

www.chathamcountyga.gov



Al Scott, Chairman

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The Holiday Season and 2019 are approaching quickly. I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a joyous holiday season from myself, the Chatham County Board of Commissioners and the County staff.

It might be the end of the year but the Chatham County Commission and the staff are looking ahead to the future. Infrastructure is always one of the needs that is in the forefront of our planning. The Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) is a way for the County and its municipalities to fund those needs throughout the community. Many of the public buildings, road resurfacing and drainage projects, and recreational facilities have been completed thanks to SPLOST funding.

Over the past two years, planning has been underway on a new Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The new facility located on Savannah Hilton Head Airport property will house the Chatham Emergency Management Agency (CEMA), Chatham County E911 Communications Services, the Savannah Hilton Head Airport Authority Police Department, and a Traffic Management Center. Building designs are underway now and the building will be completed in late 2020.

In the past 5 years, over 45 miles of roads have been paved in various Commission Districts. To determine which roads are resurfaced, Chatham County has been a pilot program community using software developed to rate roads (worst to best) and make sure that the best life cycles possible were generated on our road system. COPACES (Computerized Pavement Condition Evaluation System) is based on ratings of the pavement condition and developing a "score". This numerical evaluation is then ranked to allow staff to get the most of our paving dollars.

In 2019, Chatham County will begin improvements to Quacco Road from HWY 17 to the I-95 overpass. Improvements will include providing dual turn lanes from Quacco Road to US 17 and dual left turns into Quacco Road from US 17. Other improvements will be: right and left turn lanes at all major intersections; sidewalks and multi-use paths; and pull off areas for Chatham Area Transit will be created at each bus stop along the road. The project is being constructed in two phases. Right of way acquisitions are underway on the first phase. Residents can expect construction to begin in the summer of 2019.

The last phase of Memorial Stadium is nearing completion. The multiuse facility will provide office space for Parks and Recreation and serve as a meeting facility for public use. The new Memorial Plaza will be dedicated to our fallen service members on December 7th. Other recreational improvements can be seen at the Jennifer Ross Complex where an expansion of three new synthetic turf fields will increase play time for area youth. This past year the County Manager and Parks and Recreation staff have worked diligently with a consultant to identify recreational needs countywide. Not just what the unincorporated area needs, but to come to a common ground with cities to prevent redundancy in our programs.

Chatham County and its municipalities are four years into the six year collection cycle for SPLOST VI, and we know there will be many infrastructure projects needed in the years to come for our community. Work is underway by County Staff to prepare for the next referendum for SPLOST which will be on the ballot in November 2019.



LIVE OAK
Public Libraries

Serving the Community

In 2018 Live Oak Public Libraries provided services valued at a total of \$25,357,578 across 12 library locations in Chatham County.

The library system is a free community resource and is open to all, with or without a library card. This year in Chatham County the Library hosted 977,000 patron visits and was open to the public 26,000 hours.

"Our libraries are wise community investments and we are pleased to share the value of our services in terms of dollars-and-cents," said Charlotte Welch, Chair of the Live Oak Public Libraries Regional Board of Trustees. "With this community report we show library services are in great demand, cost effective, and essential in promoting reading and lifelong learning for people of all ages," added Welch.

"For every dollar our counties invest in our libraries, the community realizes more than four dollars in service value," said Tom Sloan, Executive Director of Live Oak Public Libraries. "Using the best of business practices, including economy of scale and resource sharing, our libraries efficiently manage resources to build and support a more sustainable community," noted Sloan.

The 2018 Live Oak Public Libraries Community Report for Chatham County highlights patron use of library services including:

- More than 970,000 items borrowed with a service value of more than \$20 million
- More than 419,000 questions asked on a wide array of topics with a service value of more than \$2.9 million
- More than 340,000 computer/online sessions conducted with a service value of more than \$1.8 million
- More than 80,000 attendances at library sponsored programs with a service value of more than \$540,000

Learn more about the 2018 Community Report at www.liveoakpl.org/services/value.

Live Oak Public Libraries

Live Oak Public Libraries is a system of 16 libraries and one bookmobile providing programs and services in Chatham, Effingham, & Liberty Counties. Our mission is to provide excellent, responsive service to enrich peoples' lives, support lifelong learning and build and enhance our communities.

Mobility 2045: Keeping the Region Moving



Transportation helps connect people to the places where they live, work, and play. Moreover, efficient, reliable transportation is essential to improving quality of life and economic vitality. Every five years, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are required to update the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) which serves as the blueprint for the region's multimodal transportation system. The MTP will guide regionally significant transportation investments designed to develop a well-balanced transportation system that promotes a good quality of life and supports a prosperous economy for the region.

Over the past year and a half, the Coastal Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (CORE MPO) has been working on the development of the next MTP, Mobility 2045, which will be adopted in August 2019.

One of the initial steps was to develop the goals and vision for the plan. Residents were asked what the most important aspects of transportation were to them and where they saw the biggest issues. CORE staff collected over 700 survey responses and comments. Some of the areas of concern included safety concerns, a need for improved opportunities for biking and walking, improved transit service and overall transportation options and connectivity. Based on the input the CORE staff drafted a set of goals representing a broad statement of our region's desired future conditions. These goals and objectives are targeted to ensure that the transportation system helps the region attain its overall vision for the future. The goals provide a framework for the provision of

a safe, secure, efficient, multimodal transportation network that meets the mobility needs of both people and freight.

CORE MPO staff is currently working with the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) assessing the current transportation system deficiencies and future needs based upon projected population and employment growth. Once the deficiencies are identified a list of projects will be compiled based on the Mobility 2045 goals and financial constraints.

In spring 2019 CORE MPO staff will host a series of public open houses to encourage public review and comment on the draft plan and project list. Following a review and comment period, any necessary revisions to the plan will be made prior to the CORE MPO meeting in August.

For more information on Mobility 2045 update, visit www.corempo.org or www.thempc.org.

Memorial Stadium is Accessible to Those with Disabilities



In September of 2018, thanks to SPLOST funding, the newly constructed Memorial Stadium was opened. The modern structure includes a special turf field designed to be cooler for the players, a real plus in the heat of South Georgia. The primary use in the past has been for high school football. In fact, every local high school has played games there. That will continue to be the primary activity at the stadium, but the field can accommodate soccer, lacrosse, youth football, and concerts, as well.

The original stadium built in 1957 was dedicated to the memory of all Georgians who died in our Nation’s wars. The original stadium was designed years before the Americans with Disabilities Act, and had to have several modifications over the years to make it accessible. Ramps were added, bathrooms were retrofitted, and the locker rooms adapted. This new stadium was designed from the beginning to meet ADA standards.

There are two sets of nice, big, modern bathrooms. The design also boasts new concession stands and there is braille signage throughout the complex. Both the home and visitor’s locker rooms are designed to be accessible to those with disabilities. Ramps at all four corners of the stadium lead to multiple sections designed for wheelchair and companion seating. There is also ample ADA parking spaces on each side of the stadium.

It is a great improvement over the old stadium which was showing the effects of sixty years of use.

SEVERE WEATHER Happens Here—Are You Ready?

Severe Weather Warning to notify those in the affected areas of the anticipated event and its associated risks. Being informed can save lives. This is why you should start your preparedness efforts by signing up to receive CEMA Alerts through the CEMA website: www.chathamemergency.org, purchase a NOAA Weather Radio and/or by following CEMA on social media @ChathamEMA.

The next step you can take is updating your emergency plan to include where you will go, what supplies you will have, and how you will communicate when disaster strikes. During a severe weather warning, you may be advised to seek immediate shelter in an interior room on the lowest level of your home/building. While this may be inconvenient, it is for your safety. Strong winds, damaging hail, and tornadoes make rooms with windows and exterior walls unsafe. Plan in advance where the safest space in your home is and know how you will get there quickly during a severe weather event. The next step is ensuring your emergency kit is up-to-date. You will want to include water, nonperishable food, a NOAA Weather Radio, and a flashlight. For a complete list of items you can pack, visit the CEMA website. Last but not least, you should keep a written list of important phone numbers and designate an out of area contact for your family.

Following a severe storm, your community may have experienced damage. Prepare ahead of time for how you and your community will take action following damaging severe weather. Consider creating a check-in plan with neighbors and friends, discuss what resources your neighborhood has and what role individuals are willing to take during a cleanup effort. Another way to prepare for damage is by talking with your insurance provider annually to make sure your policy is up-to-date and you have adequate coverage for your property. Early spring is the perfect time to discuss purchasing or renewing a Flood Insurance Policy in preparation for severe storms and the hurricane season. Chatham County Flood Zones are based on freshwater only, if you live in Chatham County and have water damage from a flooding or storm surge, your damages may be denied coverage without a Flood Policy. To learn more about flood insurance and connect with a local agent, visit www.floodsmart.gov.

February is Severe Weather Preparedness Month and is a chance for residents to learn about and prepare for severe weather. Severe weather such as severe thunderstorms, hail, wind, and tornadoes can be seen throughout the year in Georgia, but tornadoes specifically tend to peak during the months of March, April, and May. While April showers bring May flowers, the temperature increase can also create an unstable atmospheric environment conducive to tornadoes and severe thunderstorms. If radar indicates notable instability or the National Weather Service receives reports of severe weather, they may issue a Special Weather Statement, Severe Weather Watch, or a

The Importance of Microchipping Your Pet

On average, Chatham County Animal Services takes in approximately 12 animals a day. This includes animals that are surrendered to us by owners, those that are found and brought in by residents of Chatham County, and those picked up by our officers.

When we find or receive an animal, we run a hand-held scanner over them searching for a microchip. This is a small transducer, about the size of a grain of rice, encased in glass that may have been implanted under the animal’s skin. The microchip is not a GPS locator, as some might believe. It does not always constantly send a signal. This only happens when it is activated by the radio waves emitted by the scanner. The scanner then reads the signal and displays the ID number associated with each unique chip. After obtaining the ID number, we can try to make contact with the microchip company to get the owner’s contact information. We then contact the owner for them to come pick up their lost pet.

Microchipping provides an excellent way to reunite lost pets with their owners but there are some important things to remember.

First, all pets should be microchipped. The implantation is done by injection similar to a vaccine with a larger bore needle. Oftentimes, owners choose not to microchip their small dogs or cats for a multitude of reasons. They use the same logic for choosing not to vaccinate these animal for rabies saying that the animals “never go outside” or are “never out of my sight.” These are a lot of the cases that we see because these animals are the ones that bolt and disappear when they accidentally get outside alone.

Second, the information linked to the microchip must be correct. Most of the time, the implanter of the microchip collects the owner’s information at time of implantation and automatically registers the microchip. However, sometimes it is left up to the owner to register the information. Therefore, it is very important to ask if you need to register your pet’s microchip when they are receiving the microchip. Another extremely important point is that should your contact information change, you need to remember to update information with the microchip company. An old phone number or address will not help your pet make it safely back home. Most microchip registries allow you to change information at no charge.

The amount of time it takes to find your pet when lost can be significantly shortened if they are microchipped. Oftentimes, when an officer finds an animal at large, they can scan them in the field and return them before taking to the shelter. Another benefit of microchipping is it allows for positive identification in case of ownership disputes.

Microchipping is typically done by your veterinarian. At Chatham County Animal Services, we also offer microchipping for \$20 which includes basic registration. Call us for more information at 912-652-6575.



At their 2019 Legislative Preview on Saturday, January 12, 2019, Georgia Equality honored Chatham County Sheriff John T. Wilcher with the 2019 Champion for Equality Award.

"It is a true honor to have received this award and I am humbled by this organization’s effort to recognize me," said Wilcher.

The Annual Champion for Equality Award is given to an individual for their efforts in advancing fairness, safety and opportunities for the LGBTQ people in Chatham County.

Wilcher has been a long-time champion for equality and his compassion and relentless tenacity for positive change has had an extensive impact on not only the individuals of the Chatham County Sheriff’s Office, but on the law enforcement community at large.

“Building a progressive infrastructure that allows for the equality of all people is something I am very passionate about and I hope that this award will open up some doors to allow me to continue to do that,” he said.

Chatham County Police Department

CELEBRATES FIRST ANNIVERSARY



the badge in order to be successful.”

As part of the community policing philosophy, officers are expected to drop by businesses and get out of their cars to walk through neighborhoods in between answering calls. This gives citizens a chance to know the officers who patrol their area, and to speak to them about any concerns they may have. Officers also use the time as an opportunity to educate citizens about ongoing issues and crime prevention.

Hadley says the support of other law enforcement agencies, including the Chatham County Sheriff’s Office and Savannah Police Department, has been invaluable. He gives much of the credit for the success of the department in its first year to the sworn men and women who wear the badge, the civilian employees, and every member of Team Chatham who helped the department build and grow.

“The amount of work and effort involved in putting together this department from the ground up is truly amazing,” said Hadley. “We benefited from the help and expertise of staff from every department in county government, and their assistance was incredibly important to us. This is a perfect example of Team Chatham pulling together with a focus and a vision, and the end result is one that will benefit every member of our community for years to come.”

Needed equipment was purchased, which included everything from police vehicles to office supplies. Policies and procedures were carefully crafted and implemented. In addition, officers spent hundreds of hours of their beat time proactively reaching out to citizens in an effort to partner with the community to keep unincorporated Chatham County safe.

“Community policing is our guiding philosophy, and both our officers and citizens have embraced it,” said Chatham County Police Chief Jeff Hadley. “Community policing is not a spectator sport. It requires the dedication and participation of people on both sides of

In the year since Chatham County Police Officers first began patrolling on February 1, 2018, the re-established department has worked tirelessly to provide citizens with a visible and trusted police force focused on community policing. The work accomplished over the last year is impressive.

In its first eleven months, the department answered 35, 446 citizen calls for service. It hired more than 100 sworn officers and a dozen civilian staff members, and twenty-eight recruits who were new to law enforcement completed police academy training.



Janice Bocook, Clerk of the Chatham County Commission, recently earned the Certified Municipal Clerk

ing that requires an educational component, and social and professional contributions. Educational requirements include classes in topics such as policy, human resources, ethics, open meetings, and effective communication.

(C.M.C.) designation from the International Institute of Municipal Clerks. The certification process is offered in Georgia by the Carl Vinson School of Government at the University of Georgia.

The C.M.C. designation is the second highest certification in the world for municipal clerks. Earning the designation is a demanding undertaking

Janice, Team Chatham congratulates you on your new, hard earned designation!!!



CHATHAM COUNTY LEADERS GRADUATE FROM THE GEORGIA ACADEMY FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Commissioner James “Jay” Jones recently graduated from the Board of Georgia Academy for Economic Development’s 2018 Region 12 Multi-Day Training Program. Class participants represented a number of professional and non-professional economic development fields, including elected officials, public servants, business leaders, educators, and social service providers from 10 counties in Coastal Georgia. The Academy provided each of the graduates an opportunity to gain a unique understanding of the complexities of economic and community development on the local, regional, and state levels.

“One of the goals for the multi-day regional Academies is to encourage multi-county cooperation,” says Corinne Thornton, Director of the Georgia Academy for Economic Development. “Many times the participants discover the issues facing their community are the same as those facing other communities in their region, and can then combine limited resources to address the issue.”

The Academy’s multi-day program, taught one day a month over a four-month period, includes training in the basics of economic and community development, plus specialized segments on business recruitment and retention, tourism product development, downtown development, planning, and other essentials for community success. In addition, the curriculum features specific leadership skills such as consensus building, ethics in public service, collaborative leadership and other segments needed for effective community leadership in economic development. Local elected officials may receive certification training credits through the Association County Commissioners of Georgia and the Georgia Municipal Association for completion of this program.



Let’s Go! Is Well On Its Way!

Chatham Area Transit (CAT) recently launched its Let’s Go! Designing Better Transit Together initiative, which will result in a system-wide redesign of the community’s bus network. The 18-month comprehensive redesign effort is a first for CAT, which has many bus routes that have not been changed in decades despite our changing community.

“This innovative process will help us step back from the current transit system, rethink the bus routes within our community, and design a system that reflects the values, needs, and available resources of our community,” Chief Executive Officer Curtis Koleber said.

Throughout this project, the community’s input is needed to help make the tough choices of redesigning a transit network. Phase I: Transit Choices, focused on the big picture value choices, such as what is more important – high ridership or widespread coverage?

Phase II: Network Concepts will produce two vastly different concept maps. Feedback on these options will then influence the new bus network (routes, frequency, hours of service, etc.). Phase III: The Draft Network Plan, will provide a final opportunity for input and be thoroughly discussed by CAT’s Board of Directors before a final vote on implementation.

During each phase of Let’s Go! CAT will host community meetings and surveys to continue seeking feedback. Visit letsgo.catchacat.org for more information and to sign up for email updates, participate in surveys, learn about upcoming meetings, and review reports and maps. To share feedback or request a Transit Talk in your neighborhood, send an email to letsgo@catchacat.org. Hope to see you at one of our community events this spring!

Fear Factor

Starfish Swim School’s learn to swim program and can recite the swim and safety skills for every level, but that is where her swimming experience stopped. Like many adults who do not swim, she had a harrowing experience as a child. She was thrown into the deep end a pool, went to the bottom and a family member had to rescue her. From that day, she avoided any situation that put her near any type of water. Fast forward 50 years, Priscilla took a family vacation to Hawaii in 2017. While her family played and splashed in the pool, Priscilla sat alone on the pool side. She wanted to join them but her fear held her back. That was her “AHA moment.” When she returned home, she decided to take the plunge and learn to swim.

Priscilla and her instructor started slowly in the shallow end getting comfortable before going under the water. Initially, breath control was difficult for her. She swallowed many mouthfuls of pool water before learning how to hold her breath under the water. When Priscilla mastered floating on her back, she began working on forward movement with direction change (kicking and paddling). Once she figured out how and when to breathe while swimming, there was no stopping her. Priscilla has made great progress the last 6 months on her learn-to-swim journey. She is now a competent swimmer in both shallow and deep water. She swims on her own 3 days week before starting her work day.

Priscilla says, “I am now comfortable in the pool and I am confident that if I ever got into trouble, I could save myself. The fact that the fear no longer dominates me allows me to freely enjoy being with my family around any aquatic setting.”



Adult Swim Lessons are offered year round at the Aquatic Center. Please visit our website aquatic.chathamcounty.org for more details. It is never too late to learn how to swim.

Did you know?


YOU CAN ADOPT CATS AND DOGS AT CHATHAM COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES!

ADOPTIONS INCLUDE; AGE APPROPRIATE VACCINATIONS, CANINE HEARTWORM TEST (IF OVER 7 MONTHS OF AGE), DEWORMER, FELV/FIV TEST FOR FELINES, SPAY-NEUTER, AND A MICROCHIP.



*Dogs \$70
Cats \$10*





BOATER SAFETY COURSE

Instructed by Chatham County Marine Patrol and Georgia Department of Natural Resource Rangers

Free class! Every 3rd Saturday of each month from April until September.

**Savannah Moose Lodge
2202 Norwood Ave.
Savannah, GA 31406
9 AM - 4 PM**

Required for anyone born after January 1, 1998, in order to operate a water craft on Georgia waters.


Reservations
912-264-7237 or
www.gooutdoorsgeorgia.com

UNINCORPORATED CHATHAM COUNTY YARD WASTE COLLECTION SCHEDULE


Monday	Westside and Georgetown
Tuesday	The Landings - Skidaway Island
Wednesday	Isle of Hope, Whitfield Avenue/Dutch and Burnside Islands
Thursday	Island areas - Wilmington, Talahi and Whitemarsh Islands

Find the yard waste schedule online under “Popular Services” at chathamcountyga.gov


COUNTY GUIDELINES FOR PROPER YARD WASTE REMOVAL




Loose items must be containerized using either a reusable container or compostable Kraft paper bags. No plastic bags.




Keep weight of containers or bags to 50 lbs. or less. Yard waste that is too heavy or too large to quickly remove by hand will be scheduled for removal with specialized equipment.




Stack loose branches, limbs, brush, and larger tree prunings at the curbside for collection.



Yard waste containing plastic bags or bulky items or other non-vegetative yard waste materials will not be collected. Additionally, yard waste created by tree services and/or land clearing operations will not be collected.



Maximum length of 4 feet for tree trunks, branches, limbs, etc.



Bulk waste is collected monthly and may be placed curbside no sooner than 72 hours in advance of collection day.