The 2019 Hurricane Season began on June 1st. Experts are projecting an active season with 15 named storms, five hurricanes, and two major hurricanes in the Atlantic. However, it only takes ONE 3 out of 10 storms to completely devastate our community. Over the last seven years, Chatham County has seen an unprecedented amount of severe weather. Tropical storms, hurricanes, tornadoes, and snow storms have wreaked havoc on our county. With the increasing frequency of hazardous weather, there is no greater time than the present for Chatham residents to prepare. The Chatham Emergency Management Agency (CEMA) and 25 strong encourage everyone that lives, works and/or visits Chatham County to take time now to ensure and update your family’s emergency plan. Spending a few minutes now may save you valuable time when a storm is approaching. Also, family emergency plans don’t have to be overly complex. In fact, the best emergency plans are often created when a family sits down together and discusses three main topic: emergency notification, evacuation procedures and communication strategies.

To begin, families should discuss how they will receive emergency alerts and warnings. Awareness of hazards in your area is an essential element of preparation. Regardless of the system that two plans to use, relying informed, before and during an event is critical. Your two or emergency warning system would be to register for CEMA Alert. CEMA Alert, powered by AlertSign, CEMA Alert includes a wide variety of information from severe weather notices to notifications about upcoming storm tents. These alerts will provide you with accurate and timely information when you need them most.

The second component of a successful family emergency plan is developing and updating your evacuation procedures. At the beginning of each hurricane season, review your best evacuation destination and determine the most efficient route for your family’s travel. Making plans with friends and family outside of Chatham County make the best decision for your family. Some families may choose to visit a hotel while others may need the support of an evacuation duty. Regardless of your family’s plan, establishing the evacuation route and staying aware of an evacuation will save lives now and ensure safety as a storm approaches. For family members with functional, access or medical needs, evacuation assistance may be available through the Chatham County Emergency Management Agency. However, residents with these needs must apply to be on the list. For more information on the registry, or to apply please call 911-CHS-METRO.

The final element of an emergency plan involves a family communication strategy. During an emergency event, you could lose your cell phone. Do you have everyone’s phone number memorized? Creating a family communications strategy will help ensure that members of your household know how to reach one another, even if their cell phone battery is depleted. To make sure a paper copy of communication information is visible to your family members or people in your household. This ensures that everyone carries a copy in his or her bag, purse or wallet and also keeps a copy in a central location in your home. Be sure to update this list regularly throughout hurricane season.

By knowing what actions you and your family take this hurricane season, you can increase your level of preparedness and ensure the safety of your loved ones. Take the time now to familiarize yourself with CEMA’s emergency readiness, make your evacuation plans and develop family’s communication strategy, it will make a significant impact if disaster strikes.

In 2017, FEMA conducted the National Household Survey, an annual survey that measures the public’s preparedness actions for hazards they are likely to face. During this study, they found that less than half of all respondents believed that they were prepared for disaster. However, they found that the number of those that felt prepared could significantly increase if residents took time to attend a meeting or training. In light of this data, and Chatham County’s recent storm history, Hurricane Irma, Chatham County Emergency Management Agency (CEMA) has created a new initiative to educate residents on how to prepare for hurricanes and other disasters in our community. This new initiative has been titled Chatham County’s Citizen Hurricane Academy.

CEMA and Memorial Health have partnered together for the inaugural Citizen Hurricane Academy, which will be held Saturday, July 20 from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm at Savannah High School. During this free event, Chatham County residents will have the opportunity to learn from local experts on what they can do to better prepare for hurricane season.

Interactive classes will run throughout the day in 30 minute segments with a free lunch, provided by Memorial Health. Class topics include disaster financial preparedness, understanding your flood zone, recovery storm surge and hurricane rates, Hands Only CPR, Stop the Bleed, FEMA’s You Are the Help Until Help Arrives, and more. There will also be a Children’s Workshop, hosted by Memorial Health Dwanie and Cynthia Willett Children’s Hospital of Savannah. Children, ages 5-12, will be able to engage in age-appropriate hurricane preparedness activities from 9:30 am-12:15 pm. Please note, a parent or guardian must check their child into the Children’s Workshop and must remain on site throughout the morning.

In addition to the classes and Children’s Workshop, we will also have a resource fair from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm, where residents will be able to meet with agencies that provide support before, during, and after an emergency situation. Some vendors include the Chatham County Department of Public Health, Memorial Health, CEMA, the Coastal Empire Disaster Recovery Committee and other voluntary agencies. Registration is required for the event to ensure we have plenty of food for those present. If you are interested in attending, please visit www.ChathamCountyEmergency.org. If you have any questions or need assistance registering, please call the CEMA office at 912-201-4500.

Visit the Chatham County Resource Conservation Education Center!

RECYCLE!
Drop off your recyclables. Accepted items below.
- Aluminum Cans, Paper (newspaper, office paper, magazines), Cardboard
- Scrap Metal, Plastic (1 # AND 2 # only), Eye Glasses, Coffee and Motor Oil

LEARN!
- All rechargeable Batteries, Cell phones, Electronics
- Laptops, Ink & Toner Cartridges, Plastic Bags, CD/DVD

Book a talk with the Recycling Coordinator for your classroom or next club meeting.

GALLERY F.A.R.
- Gallery F.A.R. is an art gallery within the Resource Conservation Education Center focused on showcasing artwork using recycled/upcycled materials.

Call the Recycling Coordinator to discuss how your environmental artwork may be featured.

Chatham County Connection
July 14, 2019

More information on the current district line visit:
www.chathamcountygov.com
Strategic Planning Underway for Chatham County Police Department

Residents, employees, business leaders and government partners recently had the opportunity to weigh-in on the Chatham County Police Department (CCPD)’s strategic planning process, which is being led by the Deloit Consulting Group, who specializes in law enforcement strategic planning. The feedback will help the department define the most important performance measures, services, and outputs that will drive the agency forward and improve the delivery of services to residents.

A series of meetings were held in early May 2023 to brainstorm what type of department the community would like to see in the future. The next step in the process is to turn the feedback into action items and a three-year plan for the department. That part of the process is expected to take several months.

CHATHAM COUNTY COMMISSIONER PATRICK FARRELL APPOINTED TO ACCG BOARD OF MANAGERS TO REPRESENT ACCG GROUP HEALTH BENEFITS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chatham County Commissioner Patrick Farrell was recently sworn in to serve on the 2019-2020 Association County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG) Board of Managers to represent ACCG Group Health Benefits Board of Directors, which he also chairs. Commissioner Farrell was sworn in by Governor Brian Kemp with other Board members during a special luncheon that took place during the 2019 ACCG Annual Conference at the Savannah Convention Center in Chatham County.

"On behalf of the Association staff and our membership, I would like to congratulate the newly installed ACCG Board of Managers," said Executive Director Dave Will. "Each spring, ACCG welcomes its new leaders, and we remain fortunate to be led by a group of true public servants who possess a sincere appreciation for improving Georgia’s local communities. We look forward to serving the citizens of Georgia under the direction of our new Board."

Summer Bonanza Camp Kicks Off

Summer Bonanza, the best combination of summer camp and summer school, kicked off another exciting summer on Saturday, May 25, 2019, with over 100 participants in attendance. The event was called the city of Savannah’s Summer Bonanza, and it featured a variety of activities and programs designed to keep children engaged and entertained throughout the summer months.

The event featured a wide range of activities, including arts and crafts, sports, and educational programs designed to keep children engaged and entertained throughout the summer months. The event also featured a variety of performances by local musicians, dancers, and other entertainers. The summer camp was led by a team of experienced educators and volunteers, who worked tirelessly to ensure that each child had a fun and memorable experience.

The Summer Bonanza program was funded in 1993 by the retired Chatham County Commissioner, Dr. Priscilla D. Thomas. Her vision for this youth initiative continues to be administered to provide activities addressing the needs of children, their families, and the larger community, including sport and recreation, education, nutrition, arts and culture, health and wellness, leadership, and character development.
Chatham County Sheriff’s Office
Raises Nearly $30,000 during 17th Annual Poker Run

On April 24, the Chatham County Sheriff’s Office hosted their 17th Annual Poker Run, raising nearly $30,000 for the Georgia Sheriff’s Youth Home, a facility that houses abandoned and neglected children.

“Each year, we throw a Christmas party for the children at the Harris campus and this poker run funds that, as well as a large purchase that the home needed,” explained Chatham County Sheriff John T. W ilter. “Last year we contributed towards the purchase of a brand new generator for the Harris facility, as well as delivered gifts to the campuses in Dalton and Chattooga.”

Wilter, an avid motorcycle rider and collector, has led the poker run since the office’s very first event in 2002.

“The event grows in size each year,” said Wilter. “This year the event brought out 314 motorcycles and 450 people.”

This year one of the event’s attendees was former youth home resident Juan Castaneda. Now 24-years-old, Castaneda was sent to the Harris home when he was 11 and in the sixth grade.

“The youth homes gave me a whole different life,” said Castaneda. Castaneda remained a resident at the home until he graduated high school in 2011. Before that, he and his brothers were in and out of foster homes. Now as a husband and a father, he reflects on how the home nurtured him throughout his difficult life.

“During each of the times the sheriff’s office would visit, I never wanted them to leave because I really enjoyed being around each and every person,” said Castaneda. The Sheriff’s Office is looking forward to their 20th Annual Poker Run on Sunday, April 16, 2020.

ABOUT THE CHATHAM COUNTY SHERIFF’S OFFICE:
The Chatham County Sheriff’s Office is led by Sheriff John T. Wilter and is the third oldest law enforcement agency in the United States having been established in 1731. The mission of the Chatham County Sheriff’s Office is to protect the judiciary, execute orders of the court, support our law enforcement partners and provide for the care, custody and control of legally incarcerated inmates.

In the past year the County purchased and installed five evacuation chairs and placed them in three of their multi-story buildings. The one most recently purchased was installed in the Chatham County Public Works building located on Van- doe Drive. The stairway evacuation devices make it easier to evacuate persons who are mobility impaired from multi-story buildings during an emergency. This includes wheelchair users and persons with medical conditions (temporary or permanent) that prohibit walking distances. An additional chair will be installed in the new Parks and Recreation Building at Memorial Stadium in the near future.

Chatham County is continually working to make the County safer and more accessible to all of our residents and visitors, including those with differing abilities.

In October of 2018, the Frank G. Murray Community Center moved from Whitmarsh Island to 125 Wilmington Island Road. Recently, an automatic door opener was installed at the new location to make it easier for people with mobility impairments to get in and out of the building. The new door is especially helpful for those attending the Sit and Be Fit exercise program designed for people with a mobility impairment or those recovering from an injury or surgery and cannot stand for long periods of time. In addition to the Sit and Be Fit class, there is a wide variety of programs for participants of all ages. They have Zumba, Line Dancing, Toddler Arts and Crafts, Yoga, even a Poker Night Kid’s Menu where parents can drop the kids off and come back to pick them up when the movie over. The center is also available to rent.

For more information about the Frank G. Murray Community Center contact: Jodi L. Moody, Recreation Supervisor, Frank G Murray Community Center 125 Wilmington Island Rd, Savannah, GA 31410 • (912) 898-5320

The 4th Annual Mental Health Symposium

With the Chatham Community Blueprint was released in late 2015, we heard from the public that one major concern and request was to address the mental health needs of residents. Chatham County has worked alongside national allies such as Substance Abuse Mental Health Service Administration (SAMSHA), state partners like Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (GDBHDD), and local stakeholders to effectively address mental health by educating the public, increasing early intervention programs and removing gaps to increase access to treatment. However, our work is not yet done.

Nearly one in four adults (estimated at 66.6 million) live with a mental illness while one in five youth, aged 13-18, and one in eight children, aged 8-15, experience a severe mental disorder at some point during their lives. Today, as many as 1.4 million adults in Georgia have been diagnosed with mental illness such as depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder. Prevention is one effective way to reduce the psychological, social and economic burdens associated with mental illness; therefore, early identification and intervention can alleviate suffering and lead to improved lives.

Chatham County recently hosted the 4th Mental Health Symposium with more than 350 attendees to include our keynote speaker, Clark Flatt, youth suicide prevention champion and President of the Jason Foundation. Flatt quoted CDC data showing youth suicide rates have increased 7% from 2006 to 2016 in the United States. Furthermore CDC estimates that in the U.S. we lose approximately 6700 young people to suicide each year.

Mental health is an essential part of an individual’s overall well-being, and mental illness is a major public health concern in our nation. Chatham County is committed to finding solutions and we look forward to the community’s support in our efforts to reduce the stigma and increase treatment options.
Chatham 911 Communications Services Celebrates National Telecommunicators Week

Chatham 911 Communications Services and area public safety agencies celebrated National Telecommunicators Week during the week of April 14 through 20, 2019. The 911 Department and various Public Safety agencies thanked the 911 Department’s staff for the services they provide daily to the citizens of Chatham County, and to the agencies dispatched. Some of the agencies showed their appreciation by visiting the Center, and contributing meals and gifts during the week, to include the Chatham County Police Department, the Garden City Police Department, the Savannah Police Department and the Savannah Fire Department. During the week of celebration, the following 911 team members were recognized by their peers for providing exemplary customer service:

- Communications Officer of the Year—Angela Page
- Communications Training Officer of the Year—Dionne Lloyd
- Communications Supervisor—Cathy Wiley
- Administrative Team Member—Cynthia Johnson

The Chatham 911 Communications Services recently transitioned to Chatham County government from the City of Savannah and became an independent agency as of January 1, 2019. The 911 Department’s Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) provides Fire, Police, EMS dispatch and other support services for unincorporated Chatham County, the City of Savannah, Pooler, Bloomingdale, Garden City, Port Wentworth, Thunderbolt, and for Chatham County Animal Services after hours.

SERVING THE COMMUNITY

LIVE OAK PUBLIC LIBRARIES OFFERS HIGH-SPEED INTERNET SERVICES

Live Oak Public Libraries has launched new high-speed Internet services connecting 14 library locations across Chatham, Effingham, and Liberty Counties. The Library recently completed an advanced fiber-optic network, in partnership with Comcast Business, that serves public libraries throughout Chatham County.

Internet Access Free to the Public

Access to computers, broadband, and wireless internet at Live Oak Public Libraries is free to the public. The new high-speed internet service increases community connectivity and gives library patrons greater access to technology and online resources. Patrons have improved services to search and apply for jobs, access government services, obtain information and find support for lifelong learning.

Community Place for Technology

Live Oak Public Libraries’ resources are free to Chatham County residents and include:

- More than 455 public computers
- More than 11 million library items available through FINES
- More than 100 library databases indexing thousands of online publications
- Thousands of e-books, e-audiobooks, digital magazines, and streaming movies
- Ongoing computer training, coding classes, and e-resource lessons for all ages

Fiber Optic Network

The new fiber optic network supports library services at almost twice the speed of the prior network. The network supplies improved online performance with guaranteed bandwidth that is faster, more reliable, and more secure. The service is dedicated, flexible, and scalable, which prepares libraries for future growth as Comcast’s fiber network can deliver up to 100 gigabits per second. The cost of the project is more than 90% subsidized through substantial financial support from the federal E-Rate Program and the Georgia Public Library Service.

Prevent Suicide Today

Learn the skills. Save a life.

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training

Workshops available monthly in Chatham County.

VIEW FULL SCHEDULE & REGISTER AT: WWW.CHATHAMSAFETYNET.ORG/ASIST-REGISTRATION/

CONTACT US:
912.681.1496 | ASIST@OLINK.ORG | FACEBOOK.COM/PREVENTSUICIDETODAY/

Gateway Community Safety Net Planning Council

If you or someone you know is in crisis and needs help,
call Georgia Crisis and Access Line at 1-800-715-4225.

Did You Know?

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

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