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Tribune & Georgian

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2014

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INSIDE



Trial begins

A second suspect will be tried for the murder of a Woodbine man.

see 3A



A family affair

A grandfather pins his grandson during a promotion ceremony.

see 7A

TODAY'S POLL

What is the best use of the 720-acre paper mill property?

Vote online at tribune-georgian.com

LAST WEEK

When do you think it is appropriate for local governments to use consultants?

Always.....9%
Sometimes.....77%
Never.....14%

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Tribune & Georgian

P.O. Box 6960,
St. Marys, Ga.
31558

Volume 111, No. 6
36 pages • Three sections
tribune-georgian.com

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Community Newspapers Inc.



Submitted photo

Lamps illuminate the scene as Camden County Sheriff's Office personnel survey the area near Browntown where the body of a Jacksonville, Fla., man was discovered on Thursday, Jan. 30.

Murder victim's body found in Browntown

Emily Heglund
editor1@tds.net

Investigators charged a Jacksonville, Fla., man with murder just hours after the body of his alleged victim was discovered in Browntown.

Jeremy Christian Pittman, 34, was arrested late Thursday and remains in custody at the Duval County Jail. The victim,

Robert Glenn Hucks, 20, also of Jacksonville, and Pittman were strangers who met at the Metro bar in Jacksonville and left together. An argument ensued, and Pittman allegedly murdered Hucks and dumped his body in southwest Camden County, near Browntown.

Police became aware of the case when the victim's mother and an out-of-state friend called and expressed

concern because they hadn't heard from Hucks.

What began as a missing person's case quickly turned into a homicide investigation, according to the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, which declined to release a cause of death. Hucks' body will be autopsied at the Georgia Bureau of Investigation crime lab in Savannah. Neither the suspect nor the victim had previous criminal ties, JSO stated.

Fraud charge for former tax professional

KPD officer arrests Blue

Johna Strickland Rush
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Blue

A Kingsland man was arrested Jan. 31 in Camden County on a felony warrant out of Jacksonville, Fla., for allegedly depositing a forged check in 2013.

Kelvin Dwayne Blue, 43, has been charged with uttering forged bills, checks, drafts or notes by the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office. That charge covers counterfeit or altered checks, money and money orders, according to the JSO incident report.

Blue works at Center Point Tax Services in Kingsland, according to the incident report. He also previously ran for county tax commissioner and Kingsland City Council. He had a business license for a tax preparation service in Kingsland that expired in 2012.

Blue was arrested by a Kingsland Police Depart-

ment detective, then JSO arrested him at 9:45 a.m. Saturday.

In November, JSO took a forgery report from David Whitehurst, the regional security coordinator for SunTrust Bank, which included bank documents, surveillance photos and copies of checks. Whitehurst informed the officer that a fraudulent deposit of a cashier's check had been made through an ATM at

See ARREST, page 11A

School makeup day set Feb. 17

Emily Heglund
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Camden County students will attend school Monday, Feb. 17, after losing two instructional days last week due to weather concerns.

Feb. 17 was originally scheduled as a President's Day holiday but will now become a regular school day for teachers and students. The second makeup day is still being decided, according to a Camden County Schools news release.

"We are presently exploring ways to recover the second day in a way that maximizes instruction with as little disruption as possible for faculty, staff, students and their parents," the release states. "We will insure everyone receives information about how that will occur in a timely fashion."

Stay tuned
Camden County Schools will post updates at www.camden.k12.ga.us.



Submitted photo by Leslie Hamrick

Camden County Chamber of Commerce led a contingent of local business, government and education representatives to the state capitol this week for the annual Atlanta Fly-in. The event is intended to raise awareness and rally support for issues that impact Camden. Bill Gross (above left), Jeff Barker, Sheila McNeill, Kelsey Pauxtis-Thomas and Charlie A. Smith were among those who made the Feb. 3-4 trip.

Local leaders rally for fly-in trip

Jill Helton
publisher@tribune-georgian.com

Georgia was on the minds of several Camden County business, education and government leaders who traveled to the state legislature in Atlanta this week to trumpet local issues.

The Camden County Chamber organizes the annual event, as well as regular fly-ins to Washington D.C., to help keep legislators and government decision-makers up to speed on the top issues and

needs in southeast Georgia.

The chamber's legislative committee met for several months leading up to the trip to gather data and information. Their findings were compiled in a series of position papers that lays out each issue as well as recommended action by state leaders.

Approximately 20 local leaders, representing all facets of the community, participated in the Feb. 3-5 fly-in and most of them traveled at their own expense.

Local leaders who participated included Adam Kabasakalian,

Camden County; Alyce Thornhill, Georgia Department of Economic Development; Bert Guy, local attorney; Bill Gross, local developer/land owner; Charlie A. Smith, local financial planner; Charlie Smith Jr., local attorney/business owner; Christi Gallagher, Georgia Department of Economic Development; Jeff Barker, St. Marys United Methodist Church Foundation; John Morrissey, St. Marys; Kelsey Pauxtis-Thomas, Camden County

See FLY-IN, page 10A

ADVANCE REHABILITATION

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Atlanta fly-in group lobbies state on key issues

Jill Helton

publisher@tribune-georgian.com

A group of Camden County representatives visited Atlanta for their annual fly-in this week, armed with several position papers to present to state legislators and decision-makers.

Camden County Chamber of Commerce committees worked for months to compile facts and statistics to bolster support for several issues that will impact the local community. The positions they advocate are outlined in those papers with recommended actions for state leaders.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

Georgia spaceport

Camden County is one of three sites that have applied for a commercial spaceport permit and the fly-in group plans to update legislators on what this could mean for the region and the state.

"NASA has discontinued the shuttle program and begun outsourcing low earth orbit activities to an emerging commercial space industry," states the position paper. "As a result, a booming multi-billion-dollar commercial space industry has been birthed. Georgia needs to tap into this growing sector of the aerospace market and attract commercial space companies to the state."

The paper notes Camden County has a prime site with a history of space activity, having been used as a former solid rocket motor testing facility for Thiokol in the 1960s.

"The JDA is engaged in negotiations with the property owner and is seeking to acquire and license the site for development of an aerospace industrial park to become a commercial launch site," the paper adds.

The presentation suggests the following recommendations:

- Provide financial and staff support for this aerospace project from the executive and legislative branches, said support including:

- State assistance in conducting an economic impact analysis

- A financial partnership between the state and community to explore this project. The initial work of this partnership will be to fund the requisite studies, land acquisition and permits necessary to entitle and facilitate the project.

- Designate site area as an "Opportunity Zone."

- Legislation to provide incentives to recruit space companies to the project and limit the liability associated with their operations; and

- Explore the formation of a Georgia Spaceport Advisory Council to assist the community in its efforts to develop, license, and manage a space complex.

Exit 1 welcome center and I-95

Local leaders will be asking legislators to fund a more attractive and safer gateway to Georgia on Interstate 95.

The interstate is a significant economic driver for Camden County and Georgia, but the entrance to Georgia at Exit 1 is deficient in several ways, according to

the position paper.

"The State Visitor Center — Kingsland/St. Marys was built in 1970. It is rapidly deteriorating and is in need of major repairs that affect the safety and well being of staff and visitors," states the position paper.

The paper notes that the entrance to the welcome center is built into the northbound ramp of Exit 1.

"This is a unique and unfortunate design creating confusion for the visitors and excessive traffic stress on the ramp for St. Marys Road," the paper states.

The traffic created by the opening of the Pilot Travel Center, combined with the proximity of interstate ramps, has caused multiple accidents on St. Marys Road and backs up traffic on the northbound exit ramp.

The local delegation will make the following recommendations:

- Develop and fund a gateway plan to give visitors passing through the 95 corridor a better impression of Georgia; making a better impression to attract visitors to stay and spend money in our state.

- Invest in a new visitor center to replace an outdated, deteriorating building to meet the needs of the roughly two million visitors to Georgia.

- Partner with GDOT and Camden County to redesign the exit at mile marker 1. The exit both serves as the entrance to the visitor center and the on-ramp for St. Marys Road. This puts excessive stress on the exit and is confusing for visitors.

- Aid in the financing of redesign at the Exit 1 interchange with St. Marys Road and Haddock Road. The placement and timing of the lights, the traffic needs of the Flying J Pilot Travel Center, and the traffic on St. Marys Road causes a backup of traffic onto the ramp at Exit 1 and has caused unsafe conditions.

Gain support for Cumberland Island National Seashore

As the entry point for visitors who take the ferry to Cumberland Island National Seashore, Camden County hopes to strengthen the assets on the island as a means to increase tourism for both the city and the state.

"Cumberland Island National Seashore is Camden County's main attraction for over 40,000 visitors each year," states the position paper. "People who wish to visit this beautiful coastal jewel travel to St. Marys, which is the gateway to Cumberland Island. The only mode of transportation to the island is by boat and visitors embark via ferry from the St. Marys waterfront, which is mandated by law.

The position paper on the island highlights the need for updating the 300-person-per-day island visitation limit, continued funding of the Land and Legacies tour, future use of private properties that have been turned over to the park service and goals for increased tourism.

The group recommends state support for the:

- Development of a new visitor use plan that will allow the seashore to improve visitor services by allowing a modest increase in the daily visitor allowance to

the island, expansion of the popular Lands and Legacies tours to the north end of the island and maintain St. Marys as the embarkation point for Cumberland Island.

- Restoration of operational funding for Cumberland island NS to allow for better resource protection and visitor services to the public.

- Development of an educational program on the Island to make the best use of the park's facilities.

Increased missions for Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base

"(Kings Bay) was built for 10 Ohio Class ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs)," the position paper stated. "There are presently six SSBNs and two SSGNs assigned to Kings Bay. Once the SSGNs retire, the SSGNs will not be replaced. The strike capability currently provided by the SSGN will be replaced by the SSN's Virginia Payload Module. There is no discussion at this time on the location of these SSNs but, of course, will be as they are built. With the plans to reduce the SSBNs from 14 to 12 and further discussion from outside the Navy and defense community to further reduce the class to eight or 10 this becomes a real issue for Kings Bay and the supporting community."

The paper highlights the status of Kings Bay as a preferred duty station with some of the best retention rates in the submarine force and the Navy. It also notes the good relationship that exists between the military and surrounding civilian communities.

"As a 'duty station of choice,' Kings Bay presents a very strong case for adding new mission activity from both DOD and other federal agencies," the paper stated. "A strong argument could be made to consolidate support services from high cost areas to the relative low cost, high quality of life area of Camden County, Ga."

The paper encourages the support of the state and U.S. Congress for new missions at Kings Bay. It also asks that legislators "collectively apply all available resources to supporting mission expansion at NSB Kings Bay. Kings Bay's physical strengths, economic benefits and strategic location, brand her as an 'ideal installation ready for mission growth.'"

Biggert-Waters Act will have an adverse effect on property values

The Biggert-Waters Act, which has significant implications for coastal Georgia, is one issue the local delegation hopes will get more attention at the state level.

The position paper notes FEMA reform is clearly needed, but the federal act will have a crippling effect on coastal areas.

Among the areas of concern are increased insurance flood insuring premiums, depressed real estate sales, increased potential for foreclosure, commercial properties not being insured and potential for higher unemployment.

"It has been noted that in some instances, residential insurance premiums could increase tenfold, putting the purchase and sale of real property in limbo," the position paper states.

tion paper states.

The delegation from Camden will be asking legislators to closely follow U.S. Senate bipartisan coalition of members who introduced the Homeowners Flood Insurance Affordability Act in late 2013, which would require further study, mapping, grandfathering and phase-in requirements. They also will highlight legislation introduced by Rep. Jack Kingston that in many ways mirrors the Senate position of Sens. Johnny Isakson and Robert Menendez.

The fly-in group also will recommend support for the introduction of House Resolution 1055 by State Reps. Alex Atwood of the 179th, Spencer of the 180th, Burns of the 159th and Williams of the 168th, which encourages the repeal and or amendment of the Biggert-Waters Reform Act of 2012.

MILITARY OPPORTUNITIES

Two position papers involved supporting the nuclear triad and the Ohio-class submarine replacement program, both of which impact Kings Bay's future.

The Camden County delegation maintains in these two position papers that funding of those programs are critical to ensuring the safety and security of the nation.

"The current and planned U.S. Nuclear Triad takes into account both the expanding array and tactics of nuclear-pursuing countries as well as nuclear stockpile reductions and the risks associated with fewer types of weapons and delivery systems," the position paper states.

The Ohio-replacement program, dubbed in the position paper as "the ultimate safeguard of global security," is also another issue that is critical to Georgia and Kings Bay.

The position paper on the submarine replacement program seeks state support for continued federal funding of design, research and development to support 2021 construction, mitigate risk to the industrial base and achieve the most efficient design.

EDUCATION

Three position papers involve education issues that are critical to Camden County's future, according to the delegation.

To make Kings Bay a more attractive and inexpensive place to train its sailors, a stand-alone technical college setting is needed in the local community. In

fact, it is the only military installation in Georgia that is not supported by a technical college.

"The lack of training offered locally results in approximately \$1 million per year contracted out of state," the position paper states.

Trident Refit Facility is "the largest and most technically sophisticated employer in the southeast part of the state," it adds, and about half of those workers have reached or are within five years of retirement age.

The position paper adds, "The work done at (TRF) requires very highly skilled blue collar workers, engineering techs and engineers. The average annual wage for employees is \$55,000. This is exactly the type of worker and the level of salary Georgia seeks — a respectable wage in any part of Georgia."

The delegation from Camden will encourage legislators to address TRF's workforce issues by approving a stand-alone technical college for Camden County. The Gross family donated acreage near the county industrial park for that purpose a few years ago and it has been deeded to the technical college system.

Altamaha Technical College received funding last year to add programs to the Camden site, but proponents of the stand-alone campus say it falls short of addressing the needs of TRF and other major employers military and civilian.

One of those may be SpaceX, which is believed to be eyeing the Camden County spaceport site. If that project became a reality, this would also necessitate the need for additional technical college offerings.

For this reason, local leaders are asking for additional technical college programs in science, technology and math that will allow Camden and coastal Georgia to compete for jobs in emerging industries like aerospace, maritime and logistics.

The position paper asks, "How can a community that is in need of a highly trained technical workforce to support the defense industry at NSBKB, as well as be a prospect to Georgia's future in the global aerospace industry, not have a brick and mortar facility for technical training accessible to its workforce?"

The final educational position paper seeks restoration of funding to local school systems, which have been hit hard by state cuts and the recession.

"Citizens served by Camden County Schools lost, on average, \$4.5 million each year, since austerity reductions began in 2003 adding up to more than \$53,378,656," the position paper states. "The community endured a 38-percent decline in state funding for education in the last five years. Consequently, local taxes were raised and learning opportunities were threatened by the elimination of programs and people."

This resulted in cuts at the local level to include fewer instructional days, increased class sizes, elimination of music and technology in the elementary schools, fewer teachers and lower salaries.

At the same time, students who qualified for free and reduced lunches increased dramatically. More than half of students are now eligible. Yet test scores and graduation rates remain among the highest in Georgia.

The recommendations supported by the local group include:

- Fully fund the state's Quality-Based Education (QBE) formula.

- Restore funding to local communities by beginning to pay back austerity cuts.

- Recognize that the trend to reduce personnel and programs while expecting improved performance is not sustainable.

- Recognize that relief is necessary if Georgia is to remain economically viable and progressive in preparing a 21st century workforce and educated citizens.

- Provide school systems with flexibility as QBE funds are restored to allow adequate support for a 180-day instructional calendar.

- Not saddling local communities with the addition of a Local Education Sales Tax that simply shifts the fiscal responsibility for education to local communities and away from the state.

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Are you ready for a **STIHL?**

Camden County Board of Commissioners AGENDA

Tuesday, February 11, 2014

200 East 4th Street, 2nd Floor, Room 252,
Commissioners' Meeting Chambers
Woodbine, Georgia

Convene Regular Meeting at 6:00 PM

Opening Ceremonies

- Invocation
- Pledge

Roll Call

Agenda Amendments

Adoption of Agenda

Approval of Minutes

- January 21, 2014 Regular Meeting minutes

Presentations

- "Showcase Camden County Photo Contest" 2013 winners presented by County Clerk Katie Bishop.

Public Comments

Regular Meeting

Purchasing – Keri Moreland

1. Approval of Countywide Mowing Services Contract
2. Approval of Surplus Item List

Tax Assessor / Tax Commissioner

3. Approval of Chair to execute tax release applications.

Reports

- Calendar – February / March
- County Administrator's Report

Additional Public Comments

Adjourn BOC Meeting

Please be advised that this agenda is subject to amendments. As set forth in the American with Disabilities Act of 1992, Camden County does not discriminate, on the basis of disability, and will assist citizens with special needs, giving proper notice. Please contact the Office of the County Clerk before 5:00 PM the day of the scheduled meeting at (912) 576-5651 for assistance.

Fly-in

from page 1A

Joint Development Authority; Leslie Hamrick,

Camden County Chamber of Commerce; Louise Mitchell, Woodbine City Council; Marie Lacek, Express Scripts; Marty Klumpp, Camden Partnership; Joel Hanner, Georgia Power; Rachel

Baldwin, Camden County Schools; Sheila McNeill, Camden Partnership; Steve Howard, Camden County; Tonya Rosado, Kingsland Tourism; and Will Hardin, Camden County Schools.

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Times Good Fri 2/7 thru Tue 2/11

***3D THE LEGO MOVIE (PG)**
(Fri-Sun 3:00) 7:30

***2D THE LEGO MOVIE (PG)**
(Fri-Sun 12:45) 5:15 9:45

***MONUMENTS MEN (PG13)**
(Fri-Sun 1:15) 4:00 7:00 9:40

***VAMPIRE ACADEMY (PG13)**
(Fri-Sun 1:45) 4:45 7:15 10:00

***LABOR DAY (PG13)**
(Fri-Sun 1:30) 4:15 7:10 9:40

***THAT AWKWARD MOMENT (R)**
(Fri-Sun 12:55 3:15) 5:30 7:45 10:00

***FROZEN SING ALONG (PG)**
(Fri-Sun 1:35) 4:30

LONE SURVIVOR (R)
(Fri-Sun 1:20) 4:10 7:10 9:50

NUT JOB (PG)
(Fri-Sun 1:00 3:00) 5:00 7:00 9:00

RIDE ALONG (PG13)
(Fri-Sun 12:50 3:10) 5:25 7:40 9:55

JACK RYAN: SHADOW RECRUIT (PG13)
7:25 9:50
*Pass Restricted

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