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# Times - Courier

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## Boardtown bridge work delayed



Photo by Ryan R Rees

County road crews install a section of concrete culvert under Boardtown Road at Old Flat Branch Road. The work was done while Boardtown was closed last Monday.

by Ryan R Rees  
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Mother Nature didn't cooperate with the county's plan to move a section of the road on Boardtown Road over a new bridge at Kell's Creek last Monday.

Boardtown Road was closed to through traffic Feb. 15 to allow the work to be completed.

Because of the weather, the north side of the road was not able to be finished to allow movement of traffic to the new bridge as scheduled.

However, while the announced road closure was in place, county crews replaced a culvert on Boardtown at Old Flat Branch Road, which was to be done during the closure. According to County

Commission Chairman Mark Chastain, the county will complete the north end of the new road as quickly as possible, weather permitting, and then divert traffic one lane at a time between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. to avoid interrupting normal traffic and school buses.

Chastain said the work should be accomplished by next week, if the weather cooperates.

Box culverts to replace a culvert on Roy Road are scheduled to be delivered by March 1 so that road can be reopened once the bridge is completed.

An abutment supporting the bridge just north of Holt Bridge Road gave way Feb. 2, causing the road closure.

## Runaway car injures 27

by Al Summers  
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A runaway automobile at a local auto auction injured 27 people, at least two of them critically, Tuesday night Feb. 16.

According to Gilmer County Sheriff Stacy Nicholson and Gilmer County Fire Chief Tony Pritchett, the accident happened at the Blue Ridge Auto Auction at the corner of Hwy. 515 and Whitepath Road when the accelerator on a 1995 Volvo stuck and caused the car to careen through a crowd of bidders and spectators. The car was being brought into the bidding area.

Both public safety chiefs reported 13 people who received minor injuries and refused treatment at the scene.

A total of eight people were transported to area hospitals including North Georgia Medical Center and Fannin Regional Hospital. These people had fractures, some of



Contributed photo

The 1995 Volvo rests among debris after its accelerator stuck, striking bidders and spectators at the Blue Ridge Auto Auction Tuesday evening.

them multiple, and lacerations.

Six people were flown to hospitals with trauma centers via air ambulance helicopters, which landed and took off one after the other. Deputies from

the Gilmer County Sheriff's Dept. closed down both the north and south bound lanes of Hwy. 515 for nearly an hour. State troopers from the Georgia State Patrol are leading the investigation

into the incident.

Information was still being delivered at press deadline Tuesday night.

The Times-Courier will carry a full story in next week's edition.

## BOE reviews plan for spending SPLOST funds

by Whitney Crouch  
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During the January meeting, the Gilmer Board of Education approved a \$9 million bond resolution that will allow the school system to access a percentage of anticipated SPLOST funds.

At a BOE work session Feb. 4, facilities director Wes Clampitt presented a list of priority projects that need to be addressed as soon as the bond money becomes available. These projects include upgrading fire alarm systems, bringing kitchen hood units up to new building codes and addressing drainage problems.

Several of the proposed projects, such as replacing obsolete lighting systems with newer fixtures that will operate at half the cost, will save money and help the schools to become more energy efficient. As Clampitt stated, "Every dollar we save on energy will be better on the new budget" for the next school year. Before adjourning the work

session, the BOE also considered the possibility of renovating the baseball field at Gilmer High School after the end of the spring season. After a detailed discussion, however, the board members felt like they were going to be too hasty and decided to postpone the project.

Board member Michael Bramlett suggested that the BOE earmark the funds for the baseball field in the bond money but hold off on the renovation until they can agree on just what needs to be done.

The other board members agreed and selected Michael Parks and Ronald Watkins to examine the possibilities for upgrading the baseball field. After researching the situation, they will advise the full board about how to proceed with the project.

The BOE reconvened for a regular meeting at 6 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 9.

Finance director Julie Swindle reported that everyone in the school system is doing "a

good job conserving and holding back on things that are not absolutely necessary." As a result of frugal spending, the system's expenditures are currently about six percent under budget.

In an effort to keep the BOE informed about plans for next school year, gifted coordinator Greg Wingo delivered a report on changes in literacy instruction in grades six through 12.

While Gilmer's elementary

school students achieve excellent test scores on ITBS and CRTCT, Wingo explained that a disturbing number of students in the higher grades are exhibiting a "deficit in literacy understanding and a gap in vocabulary and comprehension."

Wingo attributed this problem to the shift in curriculum that occurs as students move into middle school. As the

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## EMTs commended for weekend rescue

by Whitney Crouch  
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Tom Fowler, 78, was returning to his home on Walnut Mountain the evening of Friday, Feb. 12, when slick roads forced him to abandon his car. Earlier that day, Fowler had

undergone a minor surgery on his ear, and the doctor advised him to avoid exerting himself. Needing to get to a warm shelter, however, he carefully continued on foot along an isolated road that was covered by at least two inches of snow. About a hundred yards

from his house, Fowler fell on a slick patch of ice, and because of pre-existing nerve damage, he was unable to stand up.

"I honestly believe I would have died," Fowler said. "I would have frozen to death out there."

Thankfully tragedy was averted because Fowler had his cell phone with him and was able to call 911.

As a result of the icy roads, the ambulance had to park about half-a-mile away. The EMTs walked the rest of the way and found Fowler lying in the snow on the side of the road. His teeth were chattering so much that he could barely talk.

The EMTs tried to help him stand up, but his legs were unable to support his weight.

Instead, they used a blanket litter to help transport him across the steep, icy terrain. Upon reaching the house, they transferred Fowler to a deck chair and carried him up the porch stairs and into the living room.

Once inside, the EMTs helped the incoherent Fowler into some dry clothes and built a huge fire. He had been lying in the snow for over an hour, and although it took a long time for him to stop shivering, he sustained no injuries from his frightening ordeal.

Fowler would like to thank his rescuers Captain Brian Scudder, Gigi Freedman, Jack Squire, Jerry Knowles and Adam James for "going above and beyond" the call of duty to make sure that he made it home safely.



Photo by Alice Davis

Gilmer County's latest snow brought out this snowman loverboy, complete with a box of candy.

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