



Gilmer's Reece reaches for 'Big Time Stuff'

See Gilmer Living 1B

Crossmen singing on the square this Saturday

See Around Town 1D



Times - Courier

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County to postpone select improvement projects until 2009

by **Becky Antworth**
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The Gilmer County Board of Commissioners met Thursday, Nov. 13.

Among the most pressing matters: The county will postpone any capital improvement projects that are not currently underway, out to bid, or being advertised.

That includes the expansion of the detention center, the airport runway expansion, the 911 center, and the Clear Creek Road sports

complex.

Projects that will continue include: Phase II of the courthouse, parking lot construction, the fire stations (the new fire headquarters is expected to be done in mid-December), the new Howard Simmons Road (which, once the traffic lights arrive from their foreign country of origin, will be quickly completed — hopefully by the time school resumes in January), and the animal shelter.

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Stumping in East Ellijay



Contributed photo

U.S. Senator Saxby Chambliss, left, encourages people to vote in the December 2 Runoff Election, during a rally at Col. Poole's Bar-B-Q in East Ellijay Saturday, Nov. 15. Col. Oscar Poole, right, hosted Chambliss, who is in a race that has garnered national attention due to its importance.

It's time for your Christmas stories

Christmas is only five weeks away which means there are just over three weeks left to write a Christmas story for the annual *Times-Courier* Christmas Story contest.

The deadline for entering a story is Friday, Dec. 12 at 5 p.m.

The winning stories, and as many of the others as space allows, will be published in the Dec. 25 edition of the *Times-Courier*. The first place winner will receive \$35, second place \$25, and third place \$20.

Entries should be 500 words or less, and typewritten, if possible. Artwork may be submitted with stories, but it will not be judged as part of the contest.

Stories can be submitted via e-mail by sending them to editor@timescourier.com, or they can be mailed to the *Times-Courier*, P.O. Box 1076, Ellijay, GA 30540. You may also drop them by our office at 47 River Street. Please include your name, address, and phone number.

News Briefs

Early voting dates

Early voting for the General Election Runoff began Wednesday, Nov. 19, and will end Wednesday, Nov. 26. There will be no voting Monday, Dec. 1. The polls will open at 7 a.m. Tuesday, Dec. 2.

For more information, call the Gilmer County Voter Registrar's Office at (706) 635-4617. The office is located on Sand Street between the Gilmer County Commission Office and the old Gilmer County Library.

Cornerstone setting

The officers of the Grand Lodge of Georgia, along with the chairman and board of commissioners, will be setting the cornerstone of the new county courthouse Sunday, Nov. 23, at 3 p.m.

There will be reception following at the Oak Bowers Lodge Hall with refreshments. All area Masons and their families and members of the community are invited to attend.

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Times-Courier Thanksgiving Schedule

The *Times-Courier* will have regular deadlines for news and advertising on its Thursday, Nov. 27 issue. All paper drops and boxes will be filled on Wednesday, Nov. 26. Papers will also be mailed on Wednesday, but due to post office closings on Thursday, routes and P.O. boxes will receive their papers on Friday. Our office will be closed on Thursday and Friday so our staff can enjoy the holiday with their families.

BOE discusses food, SPLOST

by **Carolyn Lawrence**
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The November session of the Gilmer County Board of Education (BOE) met Tuesday, Nov. 11, for its regular meeting. On the agenda were key items like 2010 SPLOST, 2008 financial report and a food service update, as well as other notable items.

The BOE first discussed the financial report for 2008. With tax bills for the county

not set to go out until the third week in Nov. and due by Jan. 20, 2009, the BOE will not be receiving the tax monies until some time in late December or early January. This delay in tax monies received means that the BOE will have to borrow money to pay the salary of teachers for the month of December.

While the BOE is borrowing money to pay salaries, they are limiting spending in other areas. The central office

has requested that teachers hold off on any purchases that can wait until January or February, to keep spending to a minimum. The money borrowed for December is simply money required for operation.

The BOE elected to sign a TAN loan agreement with Gilmer County Bank. The loan is for no more than \$5 million. This is to cover the operating costs accrued during the time of Nov. 20 to Dec.

31, with all monies being repaid by Dec. 31. Basically, the TAN is to sustain the school system until the BOE sees monies from the tax bills coming in. Once the tax monies begin coming back into the system, the TAN will be immediately repaid.

Mike Schlabra then discussed the introduction of a possible new report card for the K-5 grades in Gilmer

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Ellijay council members hold brief meeting

by **Al Summers**
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Members of the Ellijay City Council continued with their streak of brief meetings Monday night, Nov. 17, with their regularly monthly gathering at Ellijay City Hall.

Six agenda items were up for review and action, and a first reading for the annexation of a piece of property on Lois Parks Drive was completed.

Council members adopted the capital improvement element of the short term work plan submitted by the North Georgia Regional Development Center and approved a zoning variance for Bernhardt Funeral Home for a shed.

In money matters, members of the council accepted \$91,932 into the capital projects fund and \$15,550 into the multiple grant fund. These monies will be earmarked for projects around the city.

Connie Davis was appointed to the city planning commission and Maggie Williams, Paige Green, and Ellen Grant were appointed to the Better Hometown board.

During the October meeting of the council, members adopted a budget of \$1,922,184, while dropping the millage rate from 3.49 mills to 2.761 mills.

Ellijay Police Chief Larry Callahan reported officers in his department answered 501

calls in October which resulted in 70 arrests and 185 warnings.

Ellijay Fire Chief Sam West reported city firefighters responded to four mutual aid calls, 15 motor vehicle accidents, one service call, three EMS assist situations, one smoke investigation, one vehicle fire, one cooking fire, one brush fire, one transformer fire, four fire alarms, one gas leak, one good intent call, and eight landing zones for the month of October.

Ellijay Mayor Al Hoyle presided over the meeting which was attended by mayor pro tem David Westmoreland, council members Katie Lancey, Ruth Caudell, Al Fuller, and Charles Barday, and city clerk Gay Crescenti.

The Ellijay City Council meets on the third Monday of every month at 6 p.m. in the council chamber of Ellijay City Hall.

Their next meeting is scheduled for Monday, Dec. 15.

Two arrested in burglary case

Gilmer County Sheriff Stacy Nicholson reported to the *Times-Courier* that the Gilmer County Sheriff's Department's criminal investigation division has solved a large residential burglary case and recovered 13 weapons taken in the burglary.

Two arrests were made in connection to the burglary. Joseph Scott, 27, of Hartwell and James Ramsey, 18, of Ellijay were arrested and charged with two counts of burglary each.

Capt. R.T. Henry with the investigation division stat-

ed that Det. Calvin Wilson and North Carolina authorities worked jointly on the case after the investigation revealed that one of the weapons taken in the burglary had been used in a drive-by shooting of a police officer's home in Cherokee County, North Carolina.

Neither of the two arrested had any involvement in the shooting incident in North Carolina other than that the weapon used in that shooting was once in their possession prior to the

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County ————— from 1A

Reasons for postponement include the fact that local option sales tax and special local option sales tax sums are down about 13 percent for the first eight months of 2008. (A previous article failed to take into account the monthly delay in calculating these figures and put them at a 30 percent decrease through the month of October.)

Chairman Jerry Farist, who presented the postponement plan and was strongly in favor, also suggested placing \$8 million in unspent bond money in a "just in case" reserve, should the economic environment worsen in 2009.

In old business, commissioners discussed the county airport. The contract for hanger construction, awarded to WCI, LLC Oct. 23, included the directive that contractors explore using t-hangers instead of storage hangers, in an effort to cut costs. The Airport Advisory Board, however, recommended plans proceed according to the original contract, including storage hanger construction. The FAA requires the airport to have 20 planes permanently stationed there in order to continue to receive federal grant money, though the county — not the FAA — will fund hanger construction.

Jim Smith, speaking on

behalf of the airport's board, waxed poetic, quoting Gov. Perdue: "You can build a mile of road and it'll get you to the county line; build a runway and it'll get you the world."

Asked Commissioner Mark Chastain, ever the pragmatist: "Was that before or after he cut off grant money?"

It was before. Nonetheless, the motion passed with 'ya's from Farist and Commissioner Ken Bailey, but with a 'nay' from Chastain. Farist said the airport will allow for county growth and industry.

In new business, Gilmer County employees will see no changes to their 2009 401K plans.

The BOC will turn over about \$26,000 in grant money from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division, to the Hazardous Waste Trust Fund.

After all agreed a backflow of sewer water into the clean water supply would be unpleasant, commissioners tentatively adopted a Backflow Ordinance. A copy of the ordinance is available in the commissioner's office and will be placed on the next agenda for final approval. Commissioners also approved three land use resolutions.

In financial news, the county will advertise for proposals for the 2009 interest rate for county controlled bank deposits. United Community has held the account

in 2008.

The county will also advertise for the 2009 interest and tax anticipation note (TAN) loans. TAN borrowing is used to provide revenue throughout the year until property tax revenue comes in at the end of the year.

The BOC also authorized the opening of new county bank accounts. Those accounts will hold two bonds, totaling \$7.5 million, recently granted to the county from the Gilmer County Building Authority. The first is for completion of Phase II of the courthouse and partial funding of the parking lots. The second, for renovation of the old library to be leased by Dalton State College, and for the remainder of the parking lots.

The tax commissioner's office will be audited prior to the transition from current commissioner Frank Elliot to Melba Bennett, recently elected to the job. The audit was recommended by county auditors and will be conducted by the Department of Revenue.

Said Elliot, "The coming year will be a hard year in the tax office. Melba's got a hard job ahead of her."

Let's hope Bennett has an easier year than the Veterans Memorial Bridge has had. The bridge, a pedestrian path that will link the parks and recreation department baseball fields with the soccer fields across the Coosawattee River, continues to face troubled waters and rocky progress. The Department of Transportation, which is providing about \$270,000 to build the bridge, is expected to grant conditional approval in the next week or so.

That condition is the newest snag in the epic planning process: The current plans, for various engineering reasons, put the bridge within the danger zone of a 25-year storm. That area is prone to flooding, and if the bridge were damaged or wiped out, the county — not the DOT — would be responsible for repairs or replacement. It's unknown whether the DOT would pay for repairs if the bridge were outside of the danger zone. And so it goes with the Veterans Memorial — like a bridge over troubled water.

The BOC will meet again in December.

Burglary ————— from 1A

selling of the weapon. Additional arrests are expected and additional charges are likely.

Henry said there is a dramatic increase in theft-related crimes along with others due to the recent downfall of the economy. He commended

the criminal investigation division for keeping their solvency rate high even with the increased caseload.

Nicholson and Henry also commended Wilson for his persistent and professional manner in his handling of this case.

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FREE 8 x 10* Christmas photo opportunity!

Call New Horizons Bank today to schedule your photo session to be held in our lobby in front of the Christmas tree. Limited time available, so call (706) 515-2256 to make your appointment.

We have the following dates available:

Thursday, December 4th and Friday, December 5th from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Saturday, December 6th from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Photography conducted by Stacy Lanning of Appalachian Photography studios.

Photos should be available for view or pick up within a week. Christmas cards are available to order upon request.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

*Free 8 X 10 photo limited to one per household.





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www.newhorizonsbank.com

Check It Out at the Gilmer County Library

by Brandi Resendez
Gilmer County Library
Branch Manager

Festival of Trees

Although the deadline for participating in the Festival of Trees has passed, we still have several spots open so continue to send in your applications so you can be part of the festivities. If your organization did not receive an application in the mail, please call or stop by the library to obtain one.

Kitchen Ingredients

A companion exhibit to "Key Ingredients" is now open at the GAHA Gallery until February. It features all local food-themed artifacts and images. Sandy Lyons has taken special pains to depict early Ellijay food-ways from pressing apples into cider, milking cows for butter and cream, and preserving fruits and vegetables to making biscuits, cooking meals, and even using an indoor outdoor house! Come on by and take a step back into the past and see what's cookin'.

Storytime

Family Storytime (all ages) at 10 a.m. Wednesday, Nov. 26, will feature stories and a simple craft. Baby Storytime (birth - 24 months) at 11 a.m. will feature stories, songs, and action rhymes. Please preregister for storytimes.

The Bookshelf

The Bookshelf, inside the lobby of the Gilmer County Public Library, will also be opened during the Festival of Trees opening celebration on Monday, December 1, between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. There will be Christmas books - hardback and paperback - fiction, nonfiction.

tion, romance, spiritual, crafts, and children's books. Hundreds of ideas for Christmas decorations, gifts and dinners will be found in the Christmas magazines that include Southern Living, Bon Appetit, Women's Day, Family Circle, Martha Stewart's Living, Good Housekeeping, Better Homes and Gardens and many more. All materials are at an affordable price for our customers.

The Friends of The Gilmer County Library hope to see some of their old friends at the celebration and they are looking forward to meeting new community members. Hours are Monday through Friday, 10:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. and Saturday, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Donations of Books and Magazines

Please donate to the library any books and magazines in good condition which you are no longer reading. Just bring them to the library during library hours and drop them off at the circulation desk. If you need a receipt for tax purposes, please request one. We are not able to accept encyclopedias or National Geographic magazines or Reader's Digest condensed books. Some of the donations actually end up being put directly on the library shelves! The goal is to provide more books in the library's collection.

Location, Contact Information

The library is located at 268 Calvin Jackson Drive, Ellijay, GA 30540. Phone: 706-635-4528. Fax: 706-635-3528. Web address: www.seqoyahregionallibrary.org.



HANDMADE CHRISTMAS ORNAMENT CONTEST!

Calling all 5 - 10 year olds!

Grand Prize (\$50 Value) Winner notified December 20.
Stop by PENLAND'S MERCANTILE and register early!
Winner will be chosen by our customers - the longer your handmade ornament is on the tree, the more votes you can receive!

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