



The Georgetown County Chronicle



A monthly e-newsletter produced by Georgetown County, S.C., for its residents and visitors.

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Calendar

Dec. 24-28 – County offices are closed for the Christmas holiday. See Page 2 for details on recycling center and land-fill closures.

Jan. 1 – County offices and facilities are closed for New Year's Day.

Jan. 7 – Newly elected and re-elected County Council members take the oath of office, 10 a.m. Watch live at youtube.com/gtcountysc.

Jan. 12 – Georgetown County Council meeting, 5:30 p.m. at Howard Auditorium.

Jan. 18 – County offices and facilities are closed for Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Jan. 21 – Georgetown County Planning Commission Meeting, 5:30 p.m. at Howard Auditorium.

Jan. 26 – Georgetown County Council meeting, 5:30 p.m. at Howard Auditorium.

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December 2020

What to expect locally as COVID-19 vaccines roll out

As COVID-19 numbers continue to increase, there is a glimmer of hope for many: the much anticipated Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine received an Emergency Use Authorization from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on Dec. 11.



By Brandon Ellis
Emergency Services
Director

The COVID-19 vaccine began arriving in South Carolina on Dec. 14 and vaccine administration be-

gan immediately for frontline workers of several healthcare facilities throughout the state, including Tidelands Health. Georgetown County's first responders started receiving the vaccine on Dec. 22.

Although the vaccine is here, it will be a while before it is available for the general population. The state's COVID-19 vaccination plan outlines the vaccine distribution process for S.C. through a three-phase process. Each phase



Georgetown County Fire-EMS Assistant Chief Tony Hucks receives his COVID-19 vaccination on Dec. 22. Photo provided by Tidelands Health.

identifies the target population and anticipated vaccine availability for the period.

See "Vaccine," Page 3

County says goodbye to two longtime officials

At the end of this year, Georgetown County government will lose a half century of experience with the departure of two elected officials. County Council Member Ron Charlton and Coroner Kenny Johnson — both of whom were first elected to their current positions in 1996 — will officially step down from their roles on Jan. 1.



Kenny Johnson

After two-and-a-half decades of service each, they are certainly due some rest and relaxation, but they will be sorely missed, staff and community members told them at their respective farewell parties. Both gatherings were kept small, as required by safety precautions in place due to the ongoing pandemic. But the appreciation expressed by colleagues and members of the public for the two men and their service was enormous.

"I think we could have filled three rooms this size if not for COVID," Clerk to Council Theresa Floyd said

during Charlton's gathering Dec. 8 at Howard Gymnasium. She gave a moving speech about Charlton's dedication to the county and its residents. Beginning in his early years on Council, even residents who didn't live in Charlton's district would call her office looking for him, Floyd said. She attributes this to how active he was in the county and his reputation for being willing to help residents however he could.



Ron Charlton

Among the many projects and improvements to the county Charlton helped bring to fruition are new library branches and recreation facilities across the county, the Waccamaw Neck Bike Path, construction of tournament level ball facilities across the county including 8 Oaks Park, and improvement of emergency services provided by Georgetown County. He said he believes two of council's most important accomplishments during his tenure were the establishment of the

See "Farewell," Page 6

Library offers free holiday entertainment viewers can enjoy from comfort of home



The Yuletide Home Tour features 10 beautiful Georgetown properties.

For anyone looking for some safe, fun ways to celebrate the holidays from home this year, the Georgetown County Library system has several great options — and best of all, they're free.

Thanks to videos produced and released by the library this month, residents can tour local homes decked out in their holiday best at the Yuletide Home Tour, hear Gullah holiday tales and enjoy a full-length holiday concert. Videos are available on the Library's [YouTube page](#).

The Yuletide Home Tour is an annual fundraiser for the Friends of the Georgetown Library. Due to COVID-19, the Friends were unable to have a traditional in-person tour, but instead of cancelling, the group opted to take the tour online and make it available for free. The [virtual tour](#) takes viewers to eight beautifully decorated homes, two houses of worship and down festive Front Street. The tour is hosted by Al and Lauren Joseph of Georgetown and features guests including Mayor Brendon Barber, Friends Chairman Bob Willey and Kevin Jayroe.

In "[A Gullah Christmas](#)," storyteller, singer and historic re-enactor Gloria Barr Ford reads "The Gullah Night Before Christmas" by Virginia M. Geraty. She also tells wonderful stories of growing up Gullah in Georgetown and reminisces about the holiday traditions of her childhood.

And last, but certainly not least, residents can enjoy an hour of [Traditional Christmas Songs](#) with Jill Trinka, Ph.D. With a special focus on traditional carols from the Deep South, Appalachia and the British Isles, Trinka showcases her range of talent by playing a variety of instruments to accompany her beautiful vocals. These include the Appalachian dulcimer, Autoharp, guitar and keyboards.

These and more great videos are available at www.youtube.com/user/GeorgetownCountyLibr.

Georgetown County offices & facilities will be closed for the holidays on Dec. 24, 25 & 28, as well as Jan. 1

This excludes the landfill and recycling centers, which will close at 1 p.m. on Dec. 24 and will be open for normal operating hours on Dec. 28.



Mask ordinance extended

Georgetown County Council voted on Dec. 8 to extend the ordinance requiring individuals to wear face coverings in Georgetown County businesses. The ordinance will expire Jan. 27 if not renewed by County Council at its Jan. 26 meeting.

The ordinance mandates that members of the public wear masks that cover the nose and mouth in Georgetown County businesses, including grocery stores, pharmacies, restaurants and retail stores. Restaurant patrons are exempt while dining, but employees must wear a mask at all times while having face-to-face interaction with the public.

Businesses are required to post written notification at their main entrance notifying customers of the new law. One may be downloaded below, or businesses may create their own. For more information, visit gtcounty.org.

Sign up for emergency alerts!

Don't miss out on important information that could keep you and your family safe. Sign up to receive emergency alerts specific to your address from Georgetown County Emergency Management via email or phone. Sign up for this free service at www.gtcounty.org (look for the link near the top of our home page).

Get the Chronicle

At Georgetown County, we want our residents and property owners kept abreast of what's going on inside their local government. That's why we created the Georgetown County Chronicle. It's a vehicle for information about county services and events, important messages from county officials and behind-the-scenes glimpses at how government works.

You can find the Chronicle on our website at www.gtcounty.org or through our social media accounts. If you'd rather have it delivered to your inbox, e-mail jbroach@gtcounty.org with the subject line "send me the Chronicle."

That's also the place to send questions and comments about this newsletter and its content. We welcome your feedback and suggestions.

www.gtcounty.org

Vaccine

Continued from Front Page

Phase 1 is subdivided into two sub-phases: Phase 1A and Phase 1B. Phase 1A will focus on vaccinating frontline healthcare workers who are at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19. This group will include healthcare workers, first responders providing medical care, and other medical care providers who have a high risk of contracting COVID-19. Phase 1B will involve vaccinating other first responders and critical infrastructure workers not previously vaccinated in Phase 1A.

So, when can the general public expect to receive the vaccine? It will be a few months. Upon the completion of Phase 1 vaccine distribution, the state will then transition to Phase 2 of the vaccine plan when large quantities of the vaccine are available. Phase 2 will focus on ensuring that all applicable Phase 1 candidates have received the vaccine, while also ensuring the equitable distribution to other target groups and the general public. The transition to Phase 2 is expected to occur in early to mid-2021, but this timeline is subject to vaccine production and availability.

Once the vaccine status reaches a sufficient supply for the entire population, including the availability of a surplus supply of doses, we will then enter Phase 3 of the vaccine process. Phase 3 will allow the general population to obtain the COVID-19 vaccination by simply walking into their local vaccine provider and requesting it just as they would their annual flu vaccine. Although this phase is well into the future, it is something to look forward to.

Although the COVID-19 vaccine has hit the ground, it will likely be several months before the first doses are available to the general public. In the meantime, it is extremely important that everyone continue to take preventative measures to help control the spread of COVID-19. You can do your part by wearing a mask, social distancing, and practicing good hand and respiratory hygiene. By doing your part, we will continue to be Georgetown County Strong!

Did you know you can watch Georgetown County Council meetings online?

We livestream every council meeting to make it easier for you to stay up to date with what's happening. Watch at [YouTube.com/GtCountySC](https://www.youtube.com/GtCountySC).

Library readies for Jan. soft opening



A team of library staff spent several days this month unboxing and shelving more than 6,800 books at the county's newest library branch. It was one of the last steps in getting the newly completed Southern Georgetown Community branch ready to open. While computer stations still need to be installed, library director Dwight McInvaill said the library is on track for a soft opening on Jan. 11 and a grand opening on Feb. 11.

Sharea Drayton, a library employee since 2006, has been selected as branch manager for the new library and will begin training staff on Dec. 29, when county facilities reopen after the holiday. Drayton previously oversaw circulation at the library's main branch and was in charge of children's services at the Carvers Bay branch prior to that.

The new library, located at 4187 Powell Road, is about 9,000 square feet and will serve the areas of Sampit, North Santee and surrounding communities. Books for the facility were purchased thanks to donations from the Friends of the Waccamaw Library and the Frances P. Bunnell Foundation.

Look for more information about the new branch and opening plans at gtcounty.org and in our January newsletter.

PLEASE SUPPORT THE GEORGETOWN COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE AS IT PARTICIPATES IN THE

Polar Plunge

Feb. 6, 2021 at the Litchfield Inn beginning at 11 a.m.
Proceeds benefit the Special Olympics of S.C.



Become a sponsor or sign up to
participate at
<https://bit.ly/GeorgetownPlunge>
or call (843) 436-6042



Georgetown RISE named ‘outstanding flagship project’

A partnership between Georgetown County, Coastal Carolina University and the Winyah Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve has received international recognition for its contributions toward addressing local sustainable development challenges.

The partnership, known as Georgetown RISE, is dedicated to enhancing knowledge and research on sustainable development in Georgetown County. It promotes science-based research and decision-making by unifying community members, educators, businesses, elected officials and youth across the county with the goal of a sustainable and resilient future. It is the only United Nations Regional Center of Expertise (RCE) in the Southeastern United States.

For its efforts, it received the coveted “Outstanding Flagship Project” designation from the Global RCE Network in this year’s 2020 RCE Awards for Innovative Projects on Education for Sustainable Development.

Entrants came from all over the world, with Georgetown County being recognized alongside communities including Atlanta, Portland and Nairobi among others.

Public Services Dept. awards outstanding staff



The Georgetown County Public Services Department recognized three employees this month for exceptional work ethic and job performance during what has been an especially challenging year. The awards are normally presented during a luncheon, but the ceremony was modified to a virtual event due to COVID-19. Clockwise from top: Eddie Parsons, center, was named the department’s Employee of the Year. He is pictured with Tracy Jones, left, who coordinated the awards program, and Ray Funnye, department director. Parsons is a heavy equipment operator with the Public Works and Construction Services Division. Victoria Sammis received the Customer Service Award. She is collections and recycling supervisor with the Environmental Services Division. The final award went to Matthew Miele, project coordinator with the Engineering and Capital Projects Division. He was presented with the Professional Achievement Award.

Official county holiday card features artwork from middle school student



Georgetown County’s official 2020 holiday card features Santa and his team of reindeer silhouetted by a full moon as they fly over a peaceful marsh. The artwork was painted by Norah Addison Hoppe, 13. The Waccamaw Middle School 8th-grader was the winner of this year’s holiday art contest, which is open to all county public school students. Caroline Bond, 14, a Waccamaw High freshman, placed 2nd and Janiya Ford, 10, a student at Plantersville Elementary School placed 3rd. Pictured above from left are Ford, Bond, Hoppe and Austin Beard of Anderson Bros. Bank, which sponsored prizes for the annual contest.





Georgetown County

South Carolina

Racket Sport Tuesdays

Junior Tennis	Adult Tennis
<p>4:00 – 4:30 Tater Tots (ages 5 - 6)</p> <p>4:30 – 5:30 All Stars (ages 7– 11)</p> <p>5:30 – 6:30 Super Stars (ages 11 – 17)</p> <p>Max 6 for Tater Tots – Max 8 for hour classes</p>	<p>6:30 – 7:30 Adult Beginners</p> <p>Each week we will work on strokes and strategies</p> <p>Cost is \$10 per class</p> <p>Max 8 players</p>

Pickleball

1:30 – 2:30 Adult Pickleball

Introduction to pickleball strokes and strategies.

Cost is \$10 per class

Max 8 players



We will be alternating between Choppee and Andrews rec center on Tuesdays – please call Anthony to find out the rotation

Anthony Rivera, USPTA

- Please call Anthony at 253-278-8379 to reserve your spot.
- Junior classes are free of charge.
- Payment can be made with cash, check or Venmo.
- Classes will be cancelled if courts are wet.

Beware of phone scammers, Sheriff warns

Telephone scammers are contacting local residents with a variety of stories designed to get them to hand over personal information or money, said officials with the Georgetown County Sheriff's Office. People are advised to be extremely cautious about giving credit card, banking or other private information to any caller.

A local business reported to the Sheriff's Office that the business' phone number was used to contact Santee Cooper customers with claims their accounts were past due and threats to cut off the customers' electricity. Another person who filed a report with the Sheriff's Office said she was contacted about "suspicious activity" on her Amazon.com account and was transferred to a second person who asked for a credit card number. Another asked a man to buy gift cards to pay a bill he was told he owed.

If a caller asks you to buy gift cards to pay for something, it's a warning sign you are being scammed, said Sheriff Carter Weaver. He said people should also beware of anyone asking for cash after claiming to have put money in your bank account.

In addition to the Sheriff's Office, scam phone calls and caller ID "spoofing" may be reported to the Federal Trade Commission online at www.usa.gov/common-scams-frauds or via phone at 1-877-382-4357.

Bryant to join JAG Corps

Wesley Bryant, longtime county attorney who was also named Deputy County Administrator this summer, is joining the Air Force JAG Corps. Bryant's last day with the county will be Dec. 31.

Bryant is a graduate of the Citadel and said he has regretted not having enlisted after graduation, so he is seizing the opportunity now and is excited to serve his country as a Judge Advocate General. He and his family will be based in Texas. We at Georgetown County are proud of his achievement and wish him all the best.



Bryant

Library staff awarded for innovation

Staff at the Waccamaw Library were recently recognized with the county's Innovation Award for their success in this year's summer reading program.

Despite the pandemic and being unable to have in-person programming, the library had the highest summer reading program participation ever, thanks to their efforts. Staff used the library's laser cutter to create sea creature mobiles for kids to paint, held online STEM workshops with accompanying take home kits, offered online Natural Resources Heritage Programs, and even had Adult Summer Reading Bingo. And of course there were virtual Storytimes and summer reading logs for kids, helping to stem the summer slide.

Main contributors were: Amy King, Donald Dennis, Chris Bell, Kendra Corey, Mallary Allen and former children's assistant Ashley Brooks.

Santa's Helpers



Staff with Georgetown County Parks and Recreation, pictured at top, had a special assignment straight from the North Pole on Dec. 16 and 17. After some training and tips from elves in Santa's workshop and on shelves across the county, these staff members helped Santa make pre-Christmas Eve phone calls to more than 200 boys and girls in Georgetown County. The following week, Santa enlisted the Georgetown County Sheriff's Office to escort him as he double checked his delivery route and his Naughty and Nice lists in local neighborhoods.

Stay Connected

WITH YOUR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

@GtCounty

Georgetown County, South Carolina County Government

Numbers to know

(All begin with area code 843)

Animal Control, 546-5101

Assessor, 545-3014

Auditor, 545-3021

Clerk of Court, 545-3004

County Council, 545-3058

Coroner, 546-3056

Elections, 545-3339

Finance, 545-3002

Parks & Rec., 545-3320

Planning and Zoning, 545-3116

Probate Judge, 545-3077

Register of Deeds, 545-3088

Sheriff, 546-5102

Treasurer, 545-3098

P.O. Box 421270
129 Screven Street

Phone: (843) 545-3063
Fax: (843) 545-3292



Farewell

Continued from Front Page

county's recycling program during his first term and the creation of regional parks throughout the county in more recent years.

"The county has certainly done a lot and come a long way over 20-something years," he said. "There are many other things I'm proud of, but those two things are certainly some of the highlights that we have had and will have a lasting impact for residents."

During his tenure on Council, Charlton has served as chairman and vice chairman at various points, and chaired the Visions II committee, which was a precursor to the county's long-range capital improvement plan. In addition to serving on the boards of Keep Georgetown Beautiful, the American Red Cross and the United Way, he received the Chamber of Commerce's Lifetime of Achievement Award in 2007 for his contributions to Georgetown County.

An Army veteran, Charlton was the longtime owner of Southern Coastal Cable until earlier this year, when he sold the business to HTC. He still owns a property development business in Georgetown, which he said will receive more of his time now.

A retirement party for Johnson took place Nov. 19 at Wedgefield Plantation. A registered medicolegal death investigator who also has a degree in criminal justice, Johnson started his career with Georgetown County as a sheriff's deputy in 1986. He served in that capacity until he was elected as coroner. He is also on the staff at Ridgeway Funeral Home and serves as senior pastor at Ringel Heights Baptist Church. It has all been enough to keep him very busy over the years, and he's looking forward to having some extra time, but won't slow down too much. He said he plans to spend more time going forward at his church, and will also spend more time with his family.

"I've been looking forward to this day for a long time," Johnson said.

Still, he calls his departure from the Coroner's Office bittersweet. He'll miss many of the people he has met within county government, but plans to maintain those relationships.



Charlton in the Chairman's seat at the old Council Chambers, which was converted a decade ago to house the Stormwater Department.



Charlton and his wife Bonnie watch a slideshow of memories from his 24 years in office.



Johnson greets family at his retirement party.



Johnson throughout the years of his career.

Oath of Office

An Oath of Office ceremony for newly elected and re-elected County Council Members is set for Jan. 7, 2021, at 10 a.m. The ceremony will be livestreamed at [YouTube.com/gtcountySC](https://www.youtube.com/gtcountySC).