

The Millen News

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County budget reveals no property tax increase

By Deborah Bennett
Millen News Editor

For the third consecutive year local property owners will not face a tax increase from the county. During a public hearing held Tuesday, July 10, for the purpose of discussing the 2007-2008 proposed budget, the Jenkins County Commissioners noted that the county has made significant progress in managing its finances, having reduced a long term debt of \$627,679 in fiscal year 2004-2005 to a \$0 balance in fiscal year 2007-2008.

"We feel good about what is going on with our budgeting process," commented chairman

James Henry as he offered words of gratitude to all of the commissioners, county employees, department heads and elected officials for their cooperative efforts in developing and maintaining a balanced budget.

The proposed 2007-2008 budget of \$4,671,863 is approximately \$500,000 less than the previous year's \$5,128,092 appropriated budget. This is due to the fact that a federal grant for improvements at the Jenkins County Airport in the amount of \$631,579 was included in the previous year's budget. Most of that work has now been completed.

Included in the new budget is \$160,000 for road projects. Chairman Henry explained that the funds would be used as "seed" money for seeking state grants for resurfacing of county roads and needed bridge repairs. The county is usually required to contribute 30%-40% of the contract price to such projects.

"This is something that we have not been able to do in the past," he commented.

The Jenkins County Sheriff's Department and Jenkins County Ambulance Service will see an increase in their budgets to allow for the employment of additional personnel and equip-

ment upgrades, and Jenkins County Hospital Authority will receive \$300,000 as agreed upon to assist with the construction of a new emergency room at the facility.

Also included in the budget is a salary increase for county employees.

The commissioners praised local citizens for their efforts in helping to keep dumpster areas throughout the county cleaned up and asked for their continued support with the task, noting that it was very costly to maintain the areas.

"We have tried to be very careful with the budget," chairman Henry said.



Don Gay Sr. to serve as Rotary president

From left, Millen Rotary Club President Don Gay Sr. presents Past-President Wanda Burke a gavel and plaque of appreciation for a very successful year leading the Millen club. Gay assumed the duties of president for the 2007-2008 year July 1. He has served as president of the Swainsboro Rotary Club 1997-1998 and as assistant governor of Rotary District 6920 for the past seven years. He graduated from Georgia Southern University with a bachelor of business administration degree in management. (Photo contributed)

Millen Police Chief retires

By Deborah Bennett
Millen News Editor

Millen Police Department (MPD) Chief Dennis Simmons took "early retirement" last week. He had served in the position since November 1991.

City Administrator Al Knight said the city was anticipating going to a new Department of Public Safety system upon Simmons' future retirement, and that during discussions of the matter, the police chief indicated that he was "ready to go now."

"He wanted to retire early, and we arranged it so that he could," Knight said.

Knight indicated that the Chief of Police position would most likely remain vacant until the new system could be implemented.

"We have made some schedule changes and are getting by," he said.

Immunization clinic to be held July 23-27

The Georgia Department of Human Resources, Division of Public Health, announced this week that the local health department would hold an immunization clinic July 23-27 to allow for compliance with new rules and regulations governing immunizations for schoolchildren. The hours of the clinic are Monday and Wednesday, 8 a.m. until 5 p.m., Tuesday, 8 a.m. until 7 p.m., Thursday, 8 a.m. until 6:30 p.m. and Friday, 8 a.m. until noon.

The new regulations went into effect July 1 and include children enrolled in Head Start and pre-kindergarten. They are as follows.

A child under the age of five years must have the Pneumococcal Conjugate vaccine. The number of doses will be dependent upon the child's age.

Children born on or after Jan. 1, 2006, who attend childcare facilities, must have two doses of Hepatitis A vaccine or laboratory proof of immunity.

Parents and guardians should contact their childcare facility about their child's Certification of Immunization (Form 3231) and the expiration date. When the certificate expires, the child will be required to meet the new immunization requirements.

A child currently enrolled in a 4-year-old pre-kindergarten program who has a certificate marked as "complete for school", may need to obtain the second doses of varicella and mumps vaccine and will need to submit documentation of meeting the new requirements on the Georgia Certificate of Immunization upon entry to school (5-year-old kindergarten.)

Contact the Jenkins County Health Department regarding fees for the immunizations.



Nicole Washington, left, has been named Jenkins County Middle School principal, and Dr. Joseph Kirkland will serve as Jenkins County High School principal. (Staff photos by Deborah Bennett)

New principals named at JCMS and JCHS

Washington, Kirkland to serve middle, high schools for 2007-08

By Deborah Bennett
Millen News Editor

Jenkins County Middle School (JCMS) will see a change in its administrative head, and the interim principal at Jenkins County High School (JCHS) will assume the role of principal for the 2007-2008 school term.

Nicole Washington has been named principal at JCMS, and Dr. Joseph Kirkland, who has served as principal for both schools since January 2007, will assume the role of principal at JCHS.

Ms. Washington has served 10 years in the field of education, the last three with the Jenkins County school system as assistant principal at JCMS. Prior to that she was employed as a middle school teacher at other school systems.

She holds a bachelor's degree in Education from Georgia Southern University and master of education and specialist of education degrees in Administration and Supervision from Georgia College and State University. She is currently working toward a doctorate degree in Educational Leadership.

On assuming the role of principal at JCMS, Washington commented, "I know there will be some challenges, but I am very excited about it. We have a dedicated staff at JCMS, and I just can't say enough about them. I also love middle school kids. They are always changing. We have some great kids here."

Washington stressed the importance of maintaining professionalism and getting parents more involved in the education process.

She is also planning a wedding in the near future with fiancé Wayne Moulton, a U.S. Army retiree. The couple plans to reside in Hephzibah.

Dr. Kirkland began his tenure with the local school system in 1997 as assistant principal at JCMS and girls' basketball coach. He was named principal at JCMS in 2004 and retired from coaching to assume the position.

He is a 1982 graduate of Lyons Sr. High School and holds a doctorate of education and education specialist degrees in Educational Leadership from Argosy University, a master of education in Educational Leadership and bachelor of science in Education, Health and Physical Education from Georgia Southern University, middle grades certification from Georgia College and associate of science in Education, Health and Physical Education from East Georgia Junior College.

Prior to coming to Jenkins County, Dr. Kirkland was employed by the Bryan County Middle/Elementary School as a physical education teacher for grades 3-8. He has also worked in the school systems of Glascock County and Washington Park Elementary School, Monticello.

He serves as system coordinator of the Jenkins County Professional Association of Georgia Educators and District I representative for the organization's Legislative Task Force. The girls' basketball team, under Dr. Kirkland's leadership, was state runner-up in 2003 with a 27-1 record.

"I am very excited about the three initiatives which are in place for the coming school year at JCHS - 9th Grade Academy, the JROTC program and Eagle Academy, which is an academic alternative school," Dr. Kirkland commented.

Dr. Kirkland and wife, Lisa, counselor at Jenkins County Elementary School, have three children, Brian, Tyler and Kayla. The family resides in Millen.