

## DOT cracks down on highway signs

By Deborah Bennett  
Millen News Editor

Jenkins County may be "Entrepreneur Friendly," but local entrepreneurs cannot post outdoor advertising signs for their businesses along highways in the county. Several business owners have received notices in recent weeks from the Georgia Department of Transportation (DOT) stating that their signs are in violation of the law and must be removed.

Jeff Joyner, owner of I Spy Pest Control and Superior Alarms, sought assistance with

the matter from the Jenkins County Commissioners during the Tuesday, Sept. 18, meeting of the group.

In his remarks, Joyner noted that his signs were located on private property along U.S. Highway 25 with permission of the property owners and that one had been at its present location for over nine years.

"We are trying to promote businesses in this community, but we can't put a sign up on property advertising a business. I don't think it is right for them (DOT) to tell us we can't pro-

mote a business in our county," Joyner said.

Joyner inquired if a county ordinance that permitted the signs could be a resolution to the problem.

The commissioners indicated that they would research the matter to determine if they could render assistance.

Mark McKinnon, DOT media relations manager, said the DOT campaign to comply with laws set forth by the 1965 Federal Highway Beautification Act was a statewide effort. He explained that the state of Georgia had received notification from the federal government that 10 percent, about \$150 million, of its annual federal highway funding would be withheld unless it began the immediate enforcement of the laws.

"It is a statewide effort, and our goal is to have everyone in compliance," McKinnon said. He also noted that business owners could appeal the DOT decision regarding their signs within 30 days of receiving a notice.

In notices to business owners, the DOT referenced the Official Code of Georgia section 32-6-70. According to the code, certain signs are allowed within and beyond 660 feet of the right-of-way. These include directional signs; signs advertising the sale or lease of property upon which they are located; signs advertising activities conducted or maintained within 100 feet of the activity (business); and directional signs about goods and services in the interest of the traveling public.

Also permitted within 660 feet of the right-of-way, but not beyond, are signs located in both zoned and unzoned commercial or industrial areas that provide information to the traveling public.

In addition, business owners who erect outdoor advertising signs along the highways but within 100 feet of their establishments must purchase a permit from the DOT for \$50. Since January 2007, 169 business owners in District II have received notices concerning their signs. Only 54 notices were issued in District II from 2005-2006.

## High Five JCES makes AYP again

Jenkins County Elementary School has made AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) for the fifth straight year. Dr. Judy Holton, principal, believes it is due to the hard work and commitment from teachers, staff, students, parents, and community members.

"It takes all of us to educate all of our students," she said. "We are very fortunate in Jenkins County to have committed, dedicated people working in the school who really care about the children. We have a lot to be proud of."

A school-wide celebration is scheduled for Oct. 4 for students, faculty and staff. Dr. Holton also noted that Jenkins County Elementary School has been named a "Title I Distinguished School" for the second year. JCES will be recognized at a Celebration of Excellence Banquet to be held at the World Congress Center in November by State School Superintendent Kathy Cox.

AYP is a series of annual performance goals set by the state for each school district and school as well as for the state as a whole. By participating in Title I, a voluntary federal program that provides more than \$1 billion plus to participating states to help educate low-income children, states agree to commit themselves to the goal of the federal No Child Left Behind Act that all students will be proficient in reading/language arts and mathematics by the



Jenkins County Elementary School (JCES) Principal Dr. Judy Holton said, "Teachers and staff at JCES have worked hard to become a Title I Distinguished School and continue to strive for excellence in all areas." Faculty shown are, from left, first row: Allison Dann, Hillary Oliver, Melissa Cobb and Shelby Williams; and second row: Melinda Jones, Sheryl Dudley, Lisa Burke, Deidre Brinson, Eleanor Jackson, Laura Hart and Dr. Holton. (Staff photo by Deborah Bennett)

year 2014. Each year, the goal increases and it becomes harder to make AYP. Jenkins County Elementary School met the goal in all areas required to make AYP including academic performance, attendance and participation rate.

Scores indicate that JCES scored above the state average in all areas except first grade language arts and math and

third, fourth and fifth grade science. It should be noted that 99 percent of the students in third grade met or exceeded state standards in math. These scores show a comparison with surrounding counties comparable to Jenkins County's socio-economic level.

Jenkins County Elementary School's goal is "Soaring to the highest levels of learning," ac-

ording to Dr. Holton. She is sure faculty and staff will continue to work hard to make sure that every child succeeds and makes academic progress.

"JCES will continue to raise the bar and have high expectations for all students," she said.

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## Citizens protest gift of property for dumpsters

By Deborah Bennett  
Millen News Editor

A local citizen's offer to give the county property for the placement of trash dumpsters has adjacent property owners concerned. The Jenkins County Commissioners heard during their Tuesday, Sept. 18, meeting numerous protests on the matter from residents on Hiltonia Road who live near the proposed site.

Joanne Chance presented photographs of the current dumpster site which she said was taken over the weekend depicting the dumpsters overflowing with debris. She also presented a petition with 120 signatures protesting the relocation of the dumpsters to the property being offered.

"I don't think anybody wants that at the end of their drive," Chance remarked, noting that the proposed new site was also adjacent to a cemetery.

The commissioners indicated that they would only accept the property being offered if it could be used as a dumpster site. The group was then asked to help locate another site for relocation of the dumpsters.

Robert Pierce presented a nuisance complaint against a property owner who he said was "stock piling scrap metal to be broken down and sold." The required five adjacent property owners signed the complaint.

Commissioner Floyd Chance indicated that he had visited the site and felt it qualified as a public nuisance under the county's Public Nuisance Ordinance. He then expressed a desire to take immediate action on the matter.

The county administrator was instructed to proceed with the matter, according to the ordinance. Under provisions of the ordinance, the county administrator or an appointee must investigate the matter. If a public nuisance is determined to exist, the property owner may be notified to clean the property up or it may be sent to the Jenkins County Magistrate Court for disposition.

In other action, the commissioners voted 3-2 to offer county health insurance coverage to all elected officials, including the commissioners, though several indicated they did not intend to take the coverage. Commissioners Chance, Domingo Green and Tommy Lane voted in favor of the motion. Commissioners Pam Dwight and James Henry opposed.

Another motion to split the cost of the insurance on a 50-50 percentage between the county and elected officials was approved 4-1 with Commissioner Henry opposing.

Other actions taken by the commissioners were as follows:  
• Approved additional landfill expenses of \$30,000 for Stantect;  
• Approved the appointment of Paula Herrington to the Airport Advisory Committee; and  
• Tabled the appointment of Jenkins County Recreation Board member.

## Will high school get a new home?

### BOE must decide whether to build

By Deborah Bennett  
Millen News Editor

Whether or not to keep construction of a new high school in its five-year Facilities Plan is a question being debated by members of the Jenkins County Board of Education (BOE). The question arose during the Monday, Sept. 17, meeting of the group.

Bill Loudermilk, state facilities consultant, explained that state law requires that each school district develop a new five-year Facilities Plan every five years. The local school system's previous plan included construction of a new high school.

Loudermilk stated that the BOE cannot leave the project in its new Facilities Plan unless it actually intends to build a new

high school. The options, he said, are to leave the project in the new plan and start making preparations to get started or remove it and put the old high school back in.

Loudermilk noted that the cost estimate for construction of a new high school was between \$10.1 million and \$13.1 million, dependent upon construction costs. Currently, \$2.4 million in entitlement earnings have accrued that could be used for the project.

Local participation was estimated at \$8.2 million. Should the funds be raised through Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) revenue, he explained that it would take 17 years to accumulate the needed local funds, or three SPLOST enactments. Therefore, it would

be necessary to use the sale of bonds to raise the money sooner in order to avoid additional inflation costs.

Should the BOE elect to remove the project and put the old high school back in its five-year plan, state funds for renovations to the facility would not be available for approximately 20 years, he said. Loudermilk asked for a decision from the BOE at the group's next meeting.

Superintendent Joan Blackwood reported that the school system had made Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) for the first time in the past five years. She also noted that Jenkins County Elementary School had been named a Title I Distinguished School and congratulated Principal Dr. Judy Holton and staff on the achievement.

#### OTHER ACTIONS TAKEN

- Approved board policy on extended day/extended year that was placed on the table for review at the previous BOE meeting;

- Approved a motion to allow Chairman Carroll Gay, BOE member Roy Cook and Superintendent Blackwood to negotiate the sale of the old primary school property with potential buyers with the full BOE making the final decision on the matter;

- Approved a Spending Resolution for the month of October;

- Approved club advisors and supplements; and

- Approved several fundraising activities at the Jenkins County Middle School and Jenkins County High School.



### Brinson crowned

Brookes Brinson, daughter of Matt and Jancey Brinson, was crowned Jenkins County High School Homecoming Queen during halftime activities at the Friday, Sept. 21, football game. Brookes is shown with her father. (Photo by Mike Dann)