



Members of the Fatherhood Advantage program are, from left, first row: Robin Scott, facilitator; Tyrone Martin; Jerald Grier; Pershawn Jeff, facilitator; and Thomas Hudson; and second row: Devin Parker; Timothy Young; Earl Wright; Anthony Prescott; Michael Wallington; Kevin McClain Jr.; and Darren LaCue; Facilitator. (Photo contributed)

Jenkins County Commission chairman named regional chairman

Jenkins County Board of Commissioners Chairman James Henry has been elected chairman of the Central Savannah River Area (CSRA) Regional Commission, formerly known as the Regional Development Center (RDC).



JAMES HENRY

The CSRA Regional Commission is a planning and development agency that serves 13 counties and 39 cities in the Central Savannah River Area. Under legislation passed by the Georgia General Assembly in 2008, the Regional Commission was established to develop, promote and assist in establishing coordinated and comprehensive land use, environmental, transportation and historic preservation planning for the state. Additionally, the state's 12 Regional Commissions serve to advance positive governmental relations among the state, regional and local levels, and to prepare and implement comprehensive regional plans which will develop and promote the essential public interests of the state and its citizens.

"The new Regional Commission law enhances the Regional Commission's ability to serve its member jurisdictions, which creates new opportunities for the CSRA's local governments," said Chairman Henry. "The new law also creates the Georgia Commission on Regional Planning which will give our region unprecedented access to Georgia's Governor and other state leaders."

Effective July 1, Gov. Sonny Perdue created the Georgia Commission on Regional Planning for the purpose of coordinating state contract terms, identifying appropriate state and federal funding for the pursuit of share service delivery goals, coordinating planning of state and federal resource allocation and state service delivery and identifying issues and opportunities requiring state, regional or local action. Each of the 12 Regional Commission chairs will serve on the Commission, as will the Governor and a variety of state department heads and other leaders.

"This will mark the first time in Georgia's history that its regional entities have been asked to serve with the Governor and other state leaders to truly discuss regionalism in Georgia," said Chairman Henry.

The CSRA Regional Commission provides services to member governments in the areas of planning, economic development, local government administration and geographic information systems development. In addition, the agency serves as the CSRA's Area Agency on Aging, providing funding to non-profits that deliver services such as Senior Center activities, home-delivered meals and other activities that improve the quality of life for elderly citizens in the area. It also operates CSRA Business Lending, component units of the CSRA Regional Commission that provide loans to small businesses for a variety of purposes.

Andy Crosson, CSRA Regional Commission director, said that he looks forward to working with the new officers to ensure that the agency continues to meet the needs of member jurisdictions.

Program helps fathers be better parents

By Deborah Bennett
Millen News Editor

The conversation is frank, and the topics of discussion are not for the faint-of-heart. However, the purpose of those assembled for the Fatherhood Advantage program, sponsored by Prevent Child Abuse (PCA), Jenkins, is very worthwhile – learning how to become better fathers and role models for their children.

Fatherhood Advantage began March 26 and is facilitated by Tony Wardlaw, a licensed counselor.

On the second and fourth Thursday of each month, the group of men of varying ages gathers at the JCFEC Resource Center to discuss the common challenges and problems they face. There is a "no holds barred" attitude as they openly discuss issues such as determining child paternity and legiti-

macy, paying child support, the effects of unemployment on families, transportation problems and the long-term effects of past criminal offenses.

"We're very frank here. We've probably all gone through the same things," said one participant.

It is pointed out by facilitator Robin Scott that research shows that a father's involvement with his children can have a significant impact on the child's grades, behaviors and delinquency. The closer the father-child relationship, the better the child does.

"The bottom line is that it is all about the children," agreed Pam Brown, Community Partnerships for Protecting Children coordinator. "Fatherhood Advantage is a collaborative effort with the Jenkins County Department of Family and Children Services' (DFCS) office and

PCA, Jenkins. Paternal involvement was initially identified by DFCS as a need for their families. PCA, Jenkins championed the cause as a prevention/intervention tool for child abuse/neglect, and a Promoting Safe and Stable Families grant was written to pioneer the program."

The group is also taught ways to become better fathers and role models by spending time with their children, earning the right to be heard, disciplining with love, teaching their children values, modeling the proper way to handle conflict, taking responsibility for their words and action, showing love, teaching their children to cooperate and respecting their children's mothers.

All of the participants agree that the program is helpful.

"It's good. We're encouraged to spend more time with our chil-

dren," said one participant.

"My father was never there for me, and I said if I ever had children, I wouldn't do that to them," another commented.

There is also a feeling of comradeship among the group. Encouraging each other through their common struggles is an important aspect of the program, they said.

"We just lay it on the line here. All the walls come down. We can laugh about it, because we've shared the same experiences. It doesn't do any good to try and hide things," a participant explained.

Although the group is currently all-black, Scott pointed out that participation is open to any father or anyone who is a role-model for a child.

For more information on the program, contact JCFEC at 982-8004.

BOE to set millage – no tax increase

The Jenkins County Board of Education (BOE) will take final action on establishing its millage rate for maintenance and operations 7 p.m. Monday, Sept. 21, in the Board Conference Room. The current millage is 12.900. The BOE is proposing to adopt the rollback millage rate of 12.901, even though the tax digest has decreased such that funding for the school system will be reduced by approximately \$100,000.

On June 8, the BOE adopted a zero-based budget for FY 10 that was built on revenue funds totaling \$11,265,934 provided

by local, state and federal monies. This budget reflects efforts taken to reduce expenditures by approximately \$785,000 from the FY 09 budget while providing for the instructional needs of our students; thus, no budget increase.

Jenkins County School Superintendent Melissa Williams states, "As you are aware, there are new budget cuts being pushed down to our local system which are already dire situation. Our system received a 3 percent cut in QBE funding for this present school year totaling approximately \$392,000.

This was in addition to approximately \$200,000 more that was taken by the state for the local fair share and \$200,000 more taken for state austerity reductions. Measures are being taken to absorb the cuts without having to go once again to the taxpayers. For example, all school personnel who work more than 180 days are being furloughed for three days without pay; field trips are being limited and class sizes are being pushed to maximum levels in efforts to maximize state funding."

"We are all feeling the pinch as layoffs are rampant, houses are in foreclosure and retirement

accounts are shrinking. This is an opportunity for me, on behalf of the BOE, to say 'thank you' for standing with us during these difficult times. We take pride in our schools and recognize that our school system is an avenue that is explored by newcomers before transitioning to this area which will provide community growth that is so needed. Be assured that your tax dollars are being spent only when it impacts students' instructional needs. We are exploring every avenue available to us to preserve our workforce and conserve funds," Williams said.

JCFEC to sponsor Town Meeting Oct. 1

The annual town meeting, sponsored by Jenkins County Family Enrichment Center (JCFEC), will be held 6 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 1, at the Jenkins County Agriculture Center.

The spotlight for this year's event will be on "workforce development."

Area vendors will attend to provide educational and job resources. Vendors expected to be present include: Georgia Southern University, Southeastern Technical College, Georgia Power, Queensboro National Bank and Trust, One Stop – ECGC, Georgia Department of Labor and the U.S. Census Bureau.

Door prizes will be given away, and refreshments will be provided by the Millen Woman's Club.

For more information, call the Resource Center at (478) 982-8004.



Court House shows signs of improvement

After suffering water damage from a leaking valve in the heating/cooling unit necessitating months of repairs, the interior of the Jenkins County Court House is showing signs of improvement as evidenced by these photographs of the first and second floors of the facility. Work on the heating/cooling unit is still in progress. After this is completed, court proceedings will again be held on the second floor. (Staff photos by Deborah Bennett)