

LIBERTY COUNTY JUSTICE CENTER

DEDICATION CEREMONY

MAY 14, 2011
10:00 A.M.



There is Strength in Numbers...

Personal Injury including:

- 18 wheeler wrecks
- Automobile accidents
- Wrongful death
- Premises liability
- Products liability

Medical Malpractice

Real Estate law

Divorce and Family law

Criminal law

Business law

Probate and Estate law

With 8 attorneys and
15 paralegals, we are prepared
to handle your every need.

We have a deep and abiding
commitment to Liberty County.



Established in 1959, Jones, Osteen & Jones has earned a reputation for obtaining excellent results. Since our inception, we have secured in excess of \$150 million in jury verdicts and negotiated settlements for our clients. The firm's trial practice focuses on the representation of individuals and their families injured or killed in 18-wheeler wrecks, automobile accidents and as a result of other negligence.

Our attorneys and staff are committed to obtaining the best result possible in light of the specific facts and circumstances surrounding your individual case. No two clients or cases are identical. We pride ourselves on delivering the highest quality legal services tailored to meeting your individual needs.

While Jones, Osteen & Jones' trial practice focuses on representation of individuals and their families injured or killed in 18-wheeler wrecks, automobile accidents and as a result of other negligence, the firm offers a broad range of other legal services to individual, governmental and corporate clients within and outside the State of Georgia.

Such representative clients include:

Liberty County, Liberty County Industrial Authority, Liberty Consolidated Planning Commission, Liberty County Hospital Authority, Liberty County Board of Education, McIntosh County, City of Hinesville, City of Midway, City of Gum Branch, Hinesville Downtown Development Authority, Hinesville Housing Authority, The Heritage Bank, The Coastal Bank, Interstate Paper Corp., Coastal Electric Membership Corp., Hinesville Area Board of Realtors, GeoVista Federal Credit Union and numerous other industrial, corporate, governmental, lending, and development entities.

JONES OSTEEEN & JONES

Personal. Professional. Proven.

CONGRATULATIONS,
LIBERTY COUNTY,
AS WE USHER IN A
NEW ERA TOGETHER.



206 E. Court St. • P.O. Box 800 • Hinesville, GA 31310
912-876-0111 • 912-368-2979 FAX



608 E. Oglethorpe Hwy. • Hinesville, Georgia 31313
912-876-0888 • 912-368-5536 FAX

WWW.JOJLAW.COM

Liberty County officials celebrate

Offices moved into \$20 million facility on South Main in early May

By **Seraine Page, Denise Etheridge and Jen Alexander McCall**

Coastal Courier

With the opening of a new justice center in downtown Hinesville, Liberty County now can preserve its past without sacrificing streamlined government processes. Several offices bid farewell to their historic, albeit cramped, quarters and moved into new digs in early May.

Pursuant to a resolution of the Liberty County Board of Commissioners approved Feb. 17 and effective March 1, the Liberty County Justice Center now is the official courthouse of the county.

"It will be a real benefit to all the citizens of Liberty County, especially the Atlantic judicial system," County Commission Chairman John McIver said. "This facility provides more convenience for the public, especially those serving jury duty. This new center is long overdue and it will serve the community for many years to come."

Preliminary talks began as early as 2007, when county commissioners and local law enforcement leadership began discussing plans for a new center — with input from judges in the Atlantic Judicial Circuit — that would better accommodate officials and the public who utilized key services.

"The center was planned to allow ample space for efficient operations, including positioning of employees, etc. All offices are easily accessible and very functional," County Administrator Joey Brown said.

To pay for the three-story, \$20 million facility on South Main Street, officials designated dollars gathered from the special purpose local option sales tax (SPLOST) beginning in 2008. Pope Construction of Statesboro, a firm with prior experience spearheading courthouse construction projects, was selected to serve as the contractor and in February 2009 broke ground on the



Aliyah Dastour

The Liberty County Justice Center's jury-selection room offers plenty of workspace for attorneys as well as potential jurors.

project with an anticipated deadline of 24 months.

Despite a wavering economy and the shifting population due to deployments from neighboring Fort Stewart, the project has been completed close to the original time frame — the doors opened May 2 for offices to move in and business to be conducted.

In the midst of the work, officials already were looking forward to spreading their collective wings in a more spacious facility. Judge Paul Rose with the Atlantic Judicial Circuit of Superior Courts told members of the Rotary Club in 2009 about the shortage of courtroom space the circuit had to contend with in the original courthouse.

"We simply don't have room. We're very much looking forward to the completion of the justice center," he said. "The building, which is under construction, will bring four new courtrooms to the area. I promise you it will be an asset to Liberty County."

The old courthouse remains an important part of the downtown landscape

and will continue to house crucial county services. It has some structural challenges that commissioners plan to address, including minor renovations that are expected to cost about \$2 million. Planned upgrades include replacing old windows with more energy-efficient models, adding new entry doors, repairing chipped paint and restoring old bricks.

Those renovations are scheduled to start in roughly two months and will allow the Liberty Consolidated Planning Commission, division of elections, county coroner and juvenile court to move into the building. Construction is expected to take about 10 months.

Prior to the opening, project manager Bill Vickery spoke to commissioners about the project, saying, "We are very, very excited that this project is coming down to the end and we're able to see the end of it. It is absolutely wonderful. It is, without a doubt, an icon for this county and this community."

"We've had zero hiccups, honestly," he said. "It's something to be truly excited about."

The 92,000-square-foot center houses six courtrooms, offices for the Liberty County Sheriff's Office, detention cells, a grand-jury room, jury assembly room, law library and offices for judges and the clerk of courts.

"During the 28 years that I've been clerk, the courts I serve — superior, state, juvenile and magistrate — have been forced to function in an environment adverse to productivity and almost devoid of security," Clerk of Courts Barry Wilkes said. "I feel like I've been pulled from quicksand and given a reprieve on life. We now have a facility that provides adequate court space and which is conducive to providing serious security for everyone availing themselves to and working in the courts."

"My staff moved everything in the clerk's office in less than a day and a half, including over 3,000 real estate books, 16,000 plats and more than 3,000 court case files, most of the furnishings from the old courthouse and computers. So, I'm extremely proud of their productivity," Wilkes said.

MORE FEATURES INSIDE:

Security measures 6 • Courthouse history 7 • Photo gallery 8 • Dedication ceremony agenda 10 • Directory 11

opening of new justice center

“Praise God, the clerk’s office now has adequate facilities for safeguarding the good people’s of Liberty County land and court records. At last I have all employees under one roof and don’t have to run five individual offices, which I’ve always maintained is necessary to gaining maximum production from staff and providing the most efficient services to the public.”

Wilkes added that since the courthouse change, all future sales of real and personal property resulting from delinquent taxes, foreclosures and other statutory levies will be conducted on the front steps on the eastern wing of the new building, fronting Main Street.

Probate Court Judge Nancy Aspinwall also welcomes the opportunity to conduct county business on behalf of lo-

cal families in updated facilities.

“Many of the matters the court handles are sensitive for the customers who visit the probate court,” she said. “Some examples of the sensitive matters are mental-health issues, guardianships and probate and administration from the death of their relative. Other matters include vital records, marriage license applications and weapon licenses.

“The new office gives the court more space to spread out than before and to have more privacy for the customers. The new courtroom is larger and gives more capacity for the audience and more room for the lawyers to spread out their papers and to conduct the trials. The new records room is more accessible to the public, title lawyers and researchers,” she added.

Aspinwall acknowledged the assistance of D. Scott Wall, Mapping GIS supervisor of the Liberty County Tax Assessor’s office, for his excellent recommendation, as well as retired Col. Kenneth A. Koetz, ROTC instructor at Bradwell Institute, for his assistance helping her make the relocation official.

BI Cadets 1st Sgt. Jontae White, C/Command Sgt. Maj. Cody Smith and C/Sgt. John Riddle cased and uncased



See **page 7** for a photo of the flag casing.

the American flag and the state of Georgia flag from the former courtroom in the An-

nex to Aspinwall’s new courtroom in the justice center April 29.

Assistant County Administrator Bob

Sprinkel said the justice center is “a great statement to the citizens of Liberty County.”

“Their property taxes did not pay for this,” he said. “It was paid for with SPLOST in its entirety. We have such a huge need for this, and the capital cost doesn’t burden the citizens. Based on our tax base, to get a building such as this for 1 cent on every dollar (spent in the county), it’s wonderful.”

McIver said many key players in county offices deserve credit for their participation and input in the planning process, including Wilkes, county commissioners and the late Sheriff Don Martin.

“A lot of credit goes out to county officials, constitutional staff, Deputy Chief Moran and all the judges,” he said.



Aliyah Dastour

The three-story, \$20 million facility on South Main Street was paid for with money from the special purpose local option sales tax (SPLOST).

Facility features advanced security measures

Layout prevents unwanted interaction between prisoners and general public, officers

By Jen Alexander McCall

Coastal Courier

To ensure the safety of the public and county officials, advanced security elements were given great attention during the planning and construction of the Liberty County Justice Center.

“The building was constructed so as not to allow the interaction of prisoners with the general public or public officers,” County Administrator Joey Brown said.

While he did not elaborate on specific elements, he did emphasize that all guests will be screened at one of two security entrances and will be monitored closely throughout the building by security officers.

In the old courthouse, cramped conditions meant the close proximity of inmates to courthouse employees, which created “an undesirable situation,” Brown said in 2008. At that time, Lt. D. Cleveland Pittman of the Liberty County Sheriff’s Office collaborated with the late Sheriff Don Martin and Chief Deputy Keith Moran on the security layout for the justice center.

Moran coordinated with the Georgia Sheriff’s Association, which will provide physical security special-



Photos by Aliyah Dastour

Above: Advanced security elements are stationed in the entryway of the new justice center. Right: Features include the X-ray machine and metal detector.

ists to help with the assessments. He also worked with Capt. Terry Enoch of the Chatham County Sheriff’s Office, a local expert on courthouse physical security.

Desired elements of security included cameras and lighting, X-ray machines and an advanced video system where inmates can stay at the jail in Walthourville and participate in preliminary trials at the center through a broadcast system.



***Congratulations
Liberty County!***

613 E. G. Miles Parkway
Hinesville, Georgia

912.876.8216

www.omiinc.com • www.ch2m.com

Arnold Stafford & Randolph
Attorneys at Law



With Attorneys Licensed in GA, FL, NC, IA, CA, & HI

Richmond Hill

2459-B Hwy. 17 S.
Next to Richmond Hill Medical Home

912.459.2200

Fax: 912.459.2227

Hinesville

128 S. Main Street
Across from The Heritage Bank

912.369.4529

Fax: 912.369.4542

Ludowici

348 E. Cypress Dr.
Next to the Church of God

912.302.4140

Fax: 912.302.4180

We congratulate Liberty County for the new Judicial Center and are proud to honor this momentous occasion.

www.CoastalLawyers.com

Historic courthouse retains some functions ... and all of its glory

By Margie Love and
Jen Alexander McCall
Coastal Courier

Sixty years after the Georgia Constitution created Liberty County from the parishes of St. John, St. Andrew and St. James, the burgeoning town of Hinesville welcomed the construction of the Liberty County Courthouse in 1837.

Previously seated in Riceboro, the county now had a two-story wooden structure from which it could conduct trials and county business — a structure that still was a bit crude, as it had fireplaces for warmth in winter and no means of cooling in the steamy Georgia summers; no electricity, either, until the last two years of its existence, and no indoor plumbing. This stately courthouse also managed to become a stable for goats, whose owner, attorney B.A. Way, herded them into one of the courtrooms at night.

Recognizing that such a structure could not withstand the elements over

time, the Georgia General Assembly in 1911 authorized the Liberty County Commissioners to build a new courthouse. In 1913, they attempted to set a \$100,000 bond issue, but voters balked — twice.

Apparently many residents wanted the seat moved to Ludowici, so they blocked both resolutions. Their claim was that western Liberty County was bigger than Hinesville, housed more residents and hosted more retail establishments.

Residents of western Liberty County convinced state officials in 1920 to let them form a separate county, now Long County. Long County eventually got its courthouse, built in 1926. It also got 30 percent of Liberty County's population.

In 1924, another referendum was held, only to be turned down by voters. Frustrated, the commissioners decided to build a new courthouse without the blessing of the people; however, bonds issued later eventually were approved.

The cornerstone for a new brick courthouse was laid in 1926 and construction completed in 1927. Wings were added in

the 1960s to accommodate growth, and the building made its way onto the National Register of Historic Places in the 1980s.

One of the prominent elements of the courthouse is a cannon resting below the southern steps. Historical accounts suggest the cannon was brought over from England during the colonial period and placed on the wharf of Old Sunbury. When Fort Morris was constructed at Old Sunbury, the cannon was mounted there — reportedly it became the site of Lachlan McIntosh's battle cry of "come and take it" during the Revolutionary War, when he was challenged by a British officer to surrender the fort.

After the war and the abandonment of the fort, the cannon was left to the elements until the 1830s, when it was repurposed for muster grounds and 4th of July celebrations. More than 50 years later, it was hauled to the main entrance of the county courthouse and remains a fixture there today.

Other historic markers around the courthouse honor veterans and casualties of virtually every war in which the United States and Liberty Countians have fought.



Photo provided

BI Cadets C/Sgt. John Riddle, 1st Sgt. Jon-tae White and C/Command Sgt. Maj. Cody Smith cased and uncased the American flag and the state of Georgia flag from the former courtroom in the Annex to Probate Court Judge Nancy Aspinwall's new courtroom in the justice center April 29.

CenturyLink
is pleased to serve
Liberty County

Internet
Phone
TV



CenturyLink™

Stronger Connected™

Cubicles • Furniture • Relocations • Warehousing



866.552.7668
www.mbwinstall.com

MBW

OFFICE INSTALLATION

#9 Telfair Place Suite D • Savannah, GA 31415

912-232-9118

**Thank you for making us
a part of your big move!**

Savannah • Charleston • Hilton Head



Photos by Aliyah Dastour

Above: Officials meet in the superior court conference room of the new justice center. The superior court presides over felony cases (except those involving juvenile offenders, in which jurisdiction is shared with the juvenile court) and cases regarding title to land, divorce and equity. Right: Superior Court Chief Judge David Cavender's office is shown.



*Congratulations Liberty County.
Thank you for helping make
Downtown Hinesville a better place...
for a day or a lifetime!*



WWW.CITYOFHINESVILLE.ORG

912.876.3564



WWW.HINESVILLEDOWNTOWN.COM

Honesty · Integrity · Reliability · Excellence · Professionalism



Exceeding Industry Standards...

912.764.6138

1 Cone Street · Statesboro, Georgia 30458

www.popeconstructionco.com

LIBERTY COUNTY JUSTICE CENTER

DEDICATION CEREMONY

MAY 14, 2011 • 10:00 A.M.

WELCOME

Joseph Brown, *Liberty County Administrator*

“NATIONAL ANTHEM”

Liberty County Mass Choir Ensemble

REMARKS

John D. McIver, *Chairman Liberty County Commission*

Marion Stevens Sr., *Vice-Chairman*

David Cavender, *Chief Judge Atlantic Judicial Circuit*

Senator Tommie Williams

Representative Al Williams

James Thomas, *Mayor City of Hinesville*

Craig Buckley, *Project Architect*

DEDICATION PRAYER

Pastor Richard Hayes

“AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL”

Liberty County Mass Choir Ensemble

RIBBON CUTTING / DEDICATION CEREMONY

Public Tour of Building / Refreshments

Justice center directory

Who will work in the new Liberty County Justice Center?

Clerk of Courts **F. Barry Wilkes**

Clerk and court administrator for the Superior Court, State Court, Juvenile Court and Magistrate Court of Liberty County; processes and manages court documents; collects and disburses all court fees, fines and costs; and provides citizens access to records. The clerk specifically is responsible for permanent recordation and preservation of deeds, liens, plats, charters, court, military discharge and notary public records.

County Sheriff Operations **Steve C. Sikes**

The sheriff's office provides court security; serves all papers, process and summonses; conducts sales of property ordered by the court; incarcerates defendants awaiting trial when bail is denied; produces them at court whenever re-

quired by court order; and attends court when required.

District Attorney Operations **Tom Durden**

The circuit includes the Superior Court of Liberty County. As district attorney, Durden is responsible for prosecuting criminal defendants charged with the commission of felonious acts.

Magistrate Court **Melinda Anderson, chief magistrate**

Magistrate jurisdiction encompasses civil trials for claims of \$15,000 or less; issues distress warrants and dispossessory writs; trials of county ordinance violations; trials for misdemeanor bad-check laws; holds preliminary hearings; and issues summonses, arrest warrants and search warrants.

Probate Court **Nancy K. Aspinwall, probate judge**

Probate judges exercise exclusive, original jurisdiction in the probate of wills, administration of estates, appointment of guardians and involuntary hos-

pitalization of incapacitated adults and other individuals, administer oaths of office, issue marriage and firearms licenses and may serve as election supervisors and make appointments to certain local public offices when authorized by local statute.

Public Defender of the Atlantic Circuit **Brandon L. Clark**

Under the mission of the Georgia Public Defender Standards Council, the public defender is tasked to ensure, independently of political considerations or private interests, that each client whose cause has been entrusted to a circuit public defender receives zealous, adequate, effective, timely and ethical legal representation.

State Court Judge **Leon M. Braun Jr.**

State courts exercise jurisdiction over all misdemeanor violations, including traffic cases, and all civil actions, regardless of the amount claimed, unless the superior court has exclusive jurisdic-

tion. State courts are authorized to hold hearings on applications for an issuance of search-and-arrest warrants and to hold preliminary hearings. The Georgia Constitution grants state courts authority to review lower-court decisions as provided by statute.

State Solicitor **Jeffery N. Osteen**

The solicitor serves as the state court prosecutor, serving in the same manner as the district attorney in superior court.

Superior Court Judges **David L. Cavender, chief judge** **D. Jay Stewart** **Robert L. Russell III** **Charles P. Rose Jr. (Paul)**

The superior court presides over felony cases (except those involving juvenile offenders, in which jurisdiction is shared with the juvenile court) and cases regarding title to land, divorce and equity. The superior court also has exclusive jurisdiction in such matters as declaratory judgments, habeas corpus, mandamus, quo warranto and prohibition.



**PAUL KREBS
CONSTRUCTION**

COMPANY, INC

We are so proud to call Hinesville home.



architects • engineers • planners • interior designers

*Buckley and Associates is proud to be the
Architect for the Liberty County Justice Center.*



Partners in Revitalizing the Heart of a Community

WWW.JWBUCKLEY.COM

Savannah
(912) 447-1080

Swainsboro
(478) 237-6467

Brunswick
(912) 265-8686

Albany
(229) 883-4698

Rome
(706) 234-1884