

Neighbors & Newcomers

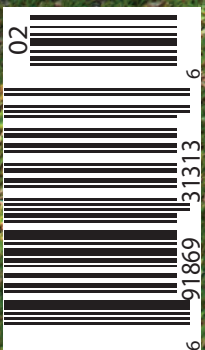
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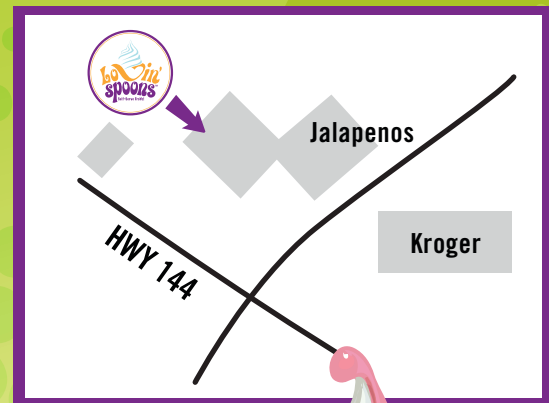


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More than 200 congregations keep Liberty spiritually connected.

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90

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Commerce

Local business numbers show rebound.

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Welcome to Liberty County, one of Coastal Georgia's finest communities.

We know transitioning to a new area requires a lot of work as you turn your new house into a home, and we've created this comprehensive community guide to ease your adjustment.

Liberty County is known for its historic roots and small towns surrounding the Hinesville metropolitan area. Our publication aims to better equip you with vital information for settling in and learning about places of worship, recreational outlets, points of interest, civic clubs and arts that enhance our quality of life.

Our community has built many of its programs to accommodate 3rd Infantry Division soldiers and their families, who are critical to building our identity and growth. Several area groups offer opportunities to unite newcomers, and many businesses offer military discounts as a token of their support.

It's a wonderful time to get to know this community. Last year, Hinesville officials moved into a new city hall, while county offices have expanded thanks to construction of the Liberty County Justice Center and renovations to the Old Liberty County Courthouse.

In Midway, a county complex is under construction. Once complete, it will house a public pool, a new library branch and more. A new fire station opened this spring in Gum Branch to better serve residents on the county's west end.

Business and real estate also have increased in the past couple of years, despite the economic recession that affected most of the country.

Now is also a great time for local education. This year, the Liberty County School System will open the doors to its long-awaited Liberty College and Career Academy in conjunction with Savannah Technical College and key community partners. The LCCA will be both a learning institution and a place where students can hone their technical skills under the watch of professionals at no cost.

The Liberty County School System is also in the process of unveiling new technology programs in middle and high



schools, partially with grant funds from the Department of Defense Education Activity grants.

We welcome you to become entrenched in the community and make the most of the new and exciting projects that are under way. Our hope is that you forge lasting connections while making a difference.

We're glad to have you in our community.

S. Marshall Griffin
Publisher

The Wagoners at Midway Museum



We introduced Diane and Shannon Wagoner to the Midway Museum and Historic Midway Church, one of the county's Liberty Trail gems (see page 67 for more). "I thought it was gorgeous,"

Diane said after the shoot.

"It is a beautiful place to visit," Shannon added. "Liberty County has so much history all over the place. Just drive in any direction and you're bound to find something historical from over 100 years old."

The military couple — she's in the National Guard and works for the Department of Defense on Fort Stewart, he is a 1st Brigade medic — have been here since 2002 and 2005, and they've seen a lot of change.

Those changes include beautification and increased recreation facilities, which is where this active family spends time with their children, Ethan, 5, Nicholas, 2, and Ava, 16 months.

"We love to go to family oriented events — parks, Monkey Joe's, the farmers market, and we're always looking for a new fun place to eat," Diane said.

They also enjoy trips for frozen yogurt, visits to the Liberty County Recreation Department pool and Fort Stewart's tree house, splash park and putt-putt.

They also head to the beach, Savannah and Amelia Island when looking for adventure.

Shannon said he was surprised to find how supportive the small community was when he moved to the area.

"They make it so accommodating for the military families here, so it's nice," Diane added.

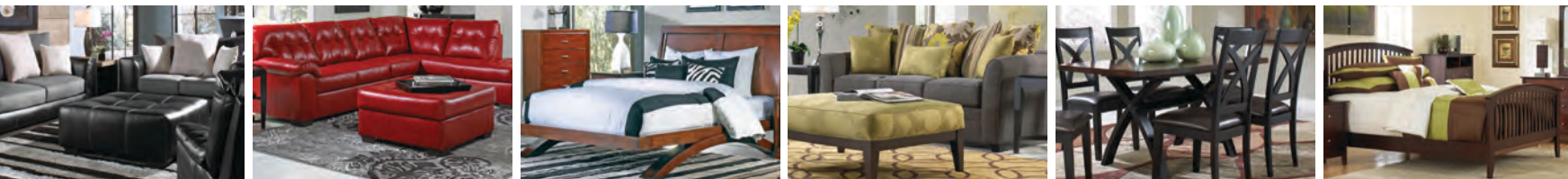
Their advice to newcomers?

"Check out the YMCA," Shannon said. "Hinesville has a great intramural sports league; It's a great place to start to get to know the people of Hinesville."

"I love that it's cozy," Diane said. "I like that I can drive away to the craziness, but I like the little hometown feeling ... I'm definitely a city girl, but now that I've lived here for so long, I don't want to live city anymore."

Cover photography by Geoff L. Johnson,
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WHERE TO LIVE

Get to know Liberty County

By Hollie Moore Barnidge



Liberty County is alive with energy and opportunities. Whether new residents have come in search of cultural diversity, historic attractions, affordable housing or economic growth, this coastal community and its municipalities have plenty to offer. With endless outdoor recreation possibilities, an array of eateries and retail establishments to meet every shopper's needs, those who choose to settle in Liberty County will face no shortage of amenities. And when it comes to scenic beauty, the area's stately live oaks, peaceful marshes and serene forests have every base covered.

Liberty County, established in 1777, has witnessed a lot over the years, leading to its status as a historic county. Two signers of

the Declaration of Independence, Lyman Hall and Button Gwinnett, and two generals of the American Revolutionary War — one of whom was Daniel Stewart, for whom Fort Stewart was named — are from or spent time in Liberty County. In addition, the area's proximity to major ports, interstates and rail systems makes the county a prime location for commerce.

Fort Stewart, the largest military installation east of the Mississippi River, employs more than 14,000 soldiers, and their presence in Liberty County has helped boost the economy and enrich the culture for decades. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the Hinesville-Fort Stewart Metropolitan Area increased 3.4 percent from April 2010 to July 2011, making it the No. 3 fastest-growing metro area during that time.

THINKING OF LIVING IN LIBERTY?

Use this guide to the county's municipalities when making a decision about where to settle:

Hinesville

More than 30,000 people call Hinesville, the Liberty County seat, home. Five highways run through the city, which has several schools and many businesses.

"It's a progressive city," Hinesville Mayor Jim Thomas Jr. said. "If a person moves here for just one day, they may just want to live here for a lifetime."

Thanks to Fort Stewart, Hinesville has a significant military retiree population. Former soldiers entering their "golden years" often choose to make the city their home base.

There are many shopping centers, manufacturing companies and other industries in the area. The library is near Bradwell Institute, a high school that began as Hinesville Academy in 1840 but was renamed Bradwell Institute in 1871 by Samuel Dowse Bradwell.

That same year, he also established the Hinesville Gazette, which later became the Liberty County Herald and now is the Coastal Courier.

Flemington

Flemington is adjacent to Hinesville's bustling streets and shops. It is home to many hotels and



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restaurants in the area, as well as Stacy's Florist, a decades-old Flemington institution. Additionally, the community boasts quiet, tree-lined neighborhoods with a historic feel. It is home to Liberty County High School, which was established after Bradwell Institute. The school recently built a new football stadium that seats more than 6,000 people.

Midway

Midway was one of the first settled communities in Liberty County. The coastal waterways made it an ideal hub for shipping and transportation. The city is full of historical relevance. It is home to the Midway Congregational Church, which was established in 1752, and Fort Morris (now a state park), which was established in 1776 to protect the growing seaport.

Those interested in learning more about the city can visit the Midway Museum and Cemetery or the Dorchester Academy Museum.

Dorchester Academy was established in 1870 as one of the earliest educational institutions for freed African-Americans in Georgia. Later, it was used as a training ground for civil rights efforts. It is considered a National Historical Landmark and recently was named one of the 11 most endangered historical landmarks in America.

Gum Branch

Gum Branch is a small, quiet municipality nestled on the western edge of Liberty County, bordering Long County. The city has around 700 residents, who enjoy the area's tight-knit community.

The most noteworthy structure in Gum Branch is the Gum Branch Baptist Church. It was created in 1833 under the name Gum Branch Primitive Baptist Church by the members of Beard's Creek Primitive Baptist Church — most notably Samuel Delk, Fashau Long Jr. and David Delk. Gum Branch Baptist

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in Liberty County



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- Dist. 6, Eddie Walden

Liberty County is blessed with an abundance of southern beauty and charm, but more importantly, we're blessed to be home to Fort Stewart and soldiers of the 3rd Infantry Division. These defenders of freedom have found a home of welcome and respect. 3rd Infantry Division soldiers are a vital part of this community and that makes Liberty County a great place to live.

Thousands of retiring veterans have discovered Liberty County as a great place to live for a lifetime. Southern charm and hospitality abound. Step back from the hustle of the business world and find yourself in a way of life that few have the opportunity to experience

All roads lead to Liberty County. We're connected to the outside world by interstates, rails, air and sea ports.

History surrounds us. You'll enjoy exploring the historic Midway Museum and Liberty Trail. Liberty County is the home of Button Gwinnett and Lyman Hall, two signers of the Declaration of Independence.

Highly trained engineers spend their week manufacturing high tech components and spend Saturday's engineering the perfect golf swing. Liberty County offers the tranquility of coastal beauty living in harmony with the millwrights of Interstate Paper who operate one of the largest paper mills in the southeast.

Liberty County offers a mix of old south tradition with advanced state of the art technology. It's a lifestyle second to none. We live in a place that we're proud to call home. Once visited, you too will want to stay for a lifetime.

Church was a member of the Baptist Union Association until 1908, when it became a member of the New Sunbury Baptist Association. The church began offering full-time services in February 1949.

Allenhurst

Allenhurst was incorporated in 1965 and has about 900 residents. Many children in the city attend Frank Long Elementary, which is one of the best schools in the county, having met Adequate Yearly Progress standards for the past decade.

Allenhurst has been a popular housing choice for military personnel for decades.

“In Allenhurst, you get the small-town feel on the outskirts of a larger town. You can feel the military’s support of the community and the pride that comes with it,” said Richard Mansel, pastor of Church of Christ at Allenhurst.

Walthourville

Walthourville may be the newest member of the Liberty County family of municipalities, but its beginnings are a source of pride for those who set up their homes inside the city limits.

Organized by women, Walthourville was established by Mayor Lyndol Anderson, the first mayor of the city of Walthourville. She was appointed by Gov. Jimmy Carter in 1974.

Attorney J. Noel Osteen administered the oath of office to the mayor, her council — Faye Booth, Maxine Gaskin, Carrie Kent, Ardith Herbert and Celia Davis — and clerk Molene Burke at the Walthourville polling office April 10, 1974. In her first act, Anderson donated her \$150-per-month salary for the betterment of the city and council.

Walthourville’s current mayor, Daisy Pray, says the community is “a quiet, family-oriented city.” This is evident through the Walthourville Youth Organization, which offers

mentoring, sports activities and tutoring at Hillery Park. The group’s basketball team, the Walthourville Blazers, always is on the move. In addition, members of the Walthourville Senior Organization walk together at Hillery Park and assist the city’s youth.

However, the town is best known for being home to the Tea Grove Plantation, which is owned by Danny Norman and boasts collections of classic cars, tools, machinery, buildings and posters in addition to a turpentine still, cotton gin, blacksmith shop, printing press, a sawmill and other staples of plantation life.

Riceboro

Riceboro is a historic town that maintains its heritage. Nestled southeast of Hinesville, the community’s roots run deep. It is home to the county’s first courthouse square, which was laid there Feb. 1, 1797. The land was donated by Matthew

McAllister, Thomas Stevens, Daniel Stewart, Joel Walker and Henry Wood, who were the first Liberty County commissioners. At the time, Riceboro served as the county seat and many public buildings were built in the city.

In addition to its civic heritage, it also is a centerpiece for the faithful of Liberty County. Riceboro is home to the Historic Baptismal Interpretive Trail, which includes a 12-by-12 wooden platform above a secluded pool of water where, it is said, some Riceboro natives were baptized as early as the late 1800s.

Liberty’s oldest African-American congregation, The First African Baptist Church, also is in Riceboro. The church has its origins in the North Newport Baptist Church, founded in 1809. It was comprised of white and black members, with a gallery for slaves. When the North Newport Church moved to Walthourville in 1854, the black members in the area continued to use the church that exists today.



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Convenience centers:

25 S. Dairy Road (Highway 196-W, Gum Branch)

156 Pate Rogers Road (Fleming)

836 Limerick Road (near Lake George)

64 Left Field Road (Highway 84, Miller Park)

619 J.V. Road (west of Hinesville)

50 Isle of Wight Road (Midway area)

344 Fort Morris Road (East End near Sunbury)

Recycling drop-offs :

111 Carter Road (behind Poole's Deli)

129 Sandy Run (off Highway 84)

941 E.G. Miles Parkway (Highway 196-W at Training Center)

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EDUCATION

Advancing academics

Liberty County schools educate and enrich

By Danielle Hipps



Whether it's the new career academy opening its doors in 2012, school renovations freshening old halls or new tablets in the classroom, many signs indicate that now is an exciting time for education in Liberty County.

"Sometimes I think what we have is kind of a well-kept secret," Superintendent Dr. Judy Scherer said.

The Liberty County School System

aims to provide a quality education for every student enrolled, Scherer said.

An estimated 43 percent of students are connected to the military, which means enrollment fluctuates greatly, spanning a range from 10,000 to 10,500.

The military connection also comes with some positive side effects. In the past four years, the district was awarded an estimated \$6 million in independent grants for capital, nutritional and technological initiatives.

Left: Waldo Pafford Elementary School art teacher Carol Hough helps a student construct an art project.

Right: Liberty County Board of Education Chairwoman Lily Baker hands a diploma to a 2012 Liberty County High School graduate.

LIBERTY COUNTY SCHOOLS BY THE NUMBERS:

- \$1.35 million — Department of Defense Education Activity grant for middle school iPads
- 43 percent military connected
- 8 elementary schools
- 3 middle schools
- 2 high schools
- 1 career academy
- 1 pre-K center
- 10,000-10,500 students enrolled

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Academy offers immersion

One of the district's most exciting endeavors will come to fruition in August 2012 when the Liberty College and Career Academy opens its doors.

The 50,000-square-foot facility on Airport Road in Walthourville will immerse high school students in a hands-on technical and professional environment, where they will be able to flex more than traditional academic muscles.

"It's our goal that every student that comes through the career academy leaves not only with a high school diploma, but with a skill."

— LCCA CEO Tom Alexander

"A career academy is a cooperative venture between the public school system, represented by our board of education and the superintendent, the Technical College System of Georgia and business and employers in the community represented by the Liberty County Chamber of Commerce and the development authority," LCCA CEO Tom Alexander said.

"It's our goal that every student that comes through the career academy leaves not only with a high school diploma, but with a skill," Alexander added. "That's what it's all about."

Students from both Liberty County High School and Bradwell Institute

will be able to attend classes at the academy beginning in their sophomore years, Alexander said. Shuttles will transport the students to and from their main campuses, and the academy courses will be offered during the daily block schedule.

In all, there are 22 pathway options in Liberty County schools, and 15 of them will be offered at the LCCA.

Program areas include engineering, teaching, interior design, nutrition, ag-

riculture, broadcast video production, construction, graphic communications, architecture, metals, transportation, computer science, culinary arts, Reserve Officers' Training Corps, nursing and cosmetology.

Slated to open in August 2012, the Liberty College and Career Academy will provide hands-on technical training to students at both Liberty County high schools.



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Sources of funding for facility construction include a \$3.3 million grant from the Technical College System of Georgia, ESPLOST funds and an \$800,000 GaDOE grant for equipment.

The academy is one of 26 state-wide that spreads a line of career-oriented thinking in compliance with state Career, Technical and Agricultural Education pathways — and officials acknowledge that it comes with a paradigm shift.

“There are lots of students out there that, at the end of their four years, aren’t necessarily working in the career that they trained for,” said Sonja Duncan, LCSS executive director of special programs. “What we want is to streamline that process so that students get an awareness of careers — maybe not a particular fine-detailed occupation, but a career in general, whether it’s business, medical, etc.”

With the shift, career education has become a greater priority at all levels, Duncan said. In elementary

school, educators introduce the idea of careers, while middle school focuses on career exploration.

In eighth grade, students make a transition toward choosing a cluster of classes to help them consider a major, and high school classes aim to integrate career experiences with academics.

The goal is to help students spend their time in education more efficiently without reducing their exposure to a variety of disciplines.

Academy leaders also hope to capitalize on the local business connections to bring in guest speakers and lecturers to talk about real-world topics, such as attendance and punctuality, and familiarize students with area business leaders.

“I think it’s a great opportunity to enhance the educational experience for these kids,” Interstate Paper human relations manager Mike McGowan said after a club presentation on the LCCA. “It gives them a great first look at what a career or field may be like.”

Engaging young minds, too

The Liberty County Pre-K Center is another bragging point for the school system.

“I think one of the most untold things about our school system is that wonderful pre-K center,” Scherer said. “It is unique, it is one of very few, specifically designated pre-K centers in the state, and it was one of only about two that was designed and built as a pre-K center.”

Students must be 4 years old on or before Sept. 1 and reside in Liberty County to attend the voluntary program, where core instructional programming is offered free of charge.

The full-day school takes in about 440 4-year-olds for its mission to provide young children with a positive and firm foundation and quality childcare.

“Most school systems — a lot of them because of funding issues — have had to totally eliminate pre-K from their public school system,” Scherer said. “It’s found much more in private daycares right now.”

In addition, the county named pre-K special needs teacher Sara Taylor its teacher of the year, and she was one of 10 finalists for the 2013 Georgia Teacher of the Year.

“I think the most amazing part of that is that I work for the pre-K center, and I think sometimes people question the value of early childhood education. ... I really took it as the opportunity to demonstrate the work that my students are doing and how critical it is to them,” Taylor said when she was awarded the designation in December 2011.

Students must be 4 years old on or before Sept. 1 and reside in Liberty County to attend the voluntary program, where core instructional programming is offered free of charge.

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Liberty County Student Media Festival judges evaluate a project in March 2012. Seventy-four projects made by 538 students advanced to the International Student Media Festival.

Tapping technology

In 2010, the Liberty County School System was one of three to be nationally recognized by the National School Boards Association for excellence in technology.

Now, the district continues the tradition of being on the cutting edge and boasts a 2:1 ratio of students to technology devices in each classroom, Scherer said. “And that will soon become close to 1:1.”

In the next three years, the district will introduce iPads to all middle school math and science classrooms thanks to a \$1.35 million, three-year Department of Defense Education Activity grant that brings fun interaction into the subjects.

“We know that we lose a lot of kids in middle school; it’s difficult to motivate middle-schoolers, to keep their attention, to keep them on task — and technology makes the differ-

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“We know that we lose a lot of kids in middle school; it’s difficult to motivate middle-schoolers, to keep their attention, to keep them on task — and technology makes the difference.”

— Liberty County Superintendent
Dr. Judy Scherer

ence,” Scherer said.

In 2012, 1,056 iPads were placed in science rooms as the first phase of the grant, which allows teachers to “redesign the learning environment,” according to a grant synopsis provided by LCSS Technology and Media Executive Director Dr. Patti Crane.

Math teachers should receive their tablets in fall 2012, with 60 classrooms implementing the technology by the end of 2012.



Snelson-Golden Middle School teacher Mary Ryan introduces eighth-grade physical science students to iPads in the spring of 2012.

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Food for thought

Educating tomorrow's leaders may be the primary mission for any school system, but the LCSS also provides up to two meals per day — breakfast and lunch — for its entire student body.

And that means a whole lot of planning for the district nutrition department, which is integrating more natural foods onto a more balanced plate.

The nutrition department has altered its menus to reduce salt and fat contents and increase fiber and whole grains, according to School Nutrition Director Dr. Chris Reddick. Cafeterias also have increased their fresh fruit and salad options and must meet USDA calorie and fat percentage requirements.

The district has incorporated convection economy ovens, which create baked foods that are similar to fried products, Reddick said. The ovens were purchased with funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

“The last stage in the cooking process is called crisp and tasty, and it



U.S. Rep. Jack Kingston visits Lewis Frasier Middle School for Connect with Congress: Healthy Schools Program Leadership, Training & Congressional Meetings in spring 2012.

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does in fact do that,” Reddick said. “The children don’t seem to know the difference between a baked fry and a fried fry.”

Six of the district’s elementary schools also participated in the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, which provided fresh produce to 3,500 students and teachers throughout the 2011-12 school year with a \$193,601.56 grant.

In April 2012, Lewis Frasier Middle School was one of 12 schools nationwide to participate in the Connect with Congress: Healthy Schools Program Leadership, Training & Congressional Meetings sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

“The children don’t seem to know the difference between a baked fry and a fried fry.”

— Liberty County School Nutrition Director Dr. Chris Reddick on food preparation changes

The school was chosen for its success in implementing standards from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation’s Healthy Schools Program and for removing soft drinks and high-sugar juices from its vending machines.

In a district-wide initiative, whole and 2 percent milk no longer are offered in schools, but students still can find fat-free and 1 percent offerings in plain, strawberry and chocolate flavors.

Last year, the county’s three middle schools — Lewis Frasier, Midway and Snelson-Golden — geared up to participate in the Fuel Up to Play 60 program launched by the National Dairy Council and the National Football League.

Midway Middle and Lewis Frasier each were awarded a \$2,500 grant for the program, and Snelson-Golden is in the process of applying. The program emphasizes a nutritionally balanced diet and encourages children to engage in at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day, according to its website.

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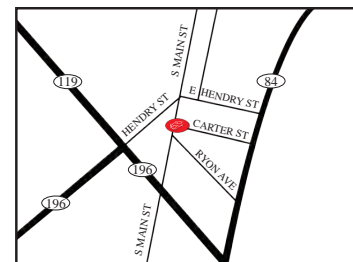
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876-0146

Frank Long Elementary

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Joseph Martin Elementary

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Lewis Frasier Middle School

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Midway Middle School

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465 Coates Road, Hinesville
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MAGAZINE

*Pick your favorite local people and places.
Let everyone know WHO'S THE BEST!*



FPCA social sciences teacher and forensics camp instructor Charles Canup shows Justin Carryl, a Lewis Frasier Middle School student, how to collect a blood sample during FPCA's summer 2011 Forensics 1 camp.

Private alternatives

Hinesville is home to First United Methodist Church Preschool and Kindergarten as well as First Presbyterian Christian Academy, a private institution with classes for students in preschool through 12th grade.

The FUMC Preschool and Kindergarten program provides children with a loving and innovative environment to promote personal, social and cognitive development during 9 a.m.-1 p.m. classes.

FPCA, grounded in conservative Christian values, seeks to provide a student-focused support system that plays to each student's talents, passions and skills.

And the school is sure to put those traits on display — FPCA recently garnered national attention for its efforts in the inaugural Under Armour Finding Undeniable Challenge, where the Highlanders made the cut for the final three.

Though a larger school with more voting power ultimately won, Under Armour officials dubbed the academy "the little school that could," and paid

a visit there this spring.

On the court, the FPCA Highlanders basketball team made it to the Independent School Association Region 2-AA state championship game in February 2012. While the team did not clinch the state title, there was much to celebrate with a record of 16-7 overall, 5-2 in Region 2-AA and 3-1 in the postseason.

In the fall of 2012, the school will field its first varsity football team, which will be open to all athletes in grades eight through 12. The school also offers baseball, cheerleading, cross-country, golf, softball, soccer, tennis and volleyball.

Fine arts programs for band, choir, drama and literature round out the school's enrichment.

First Presbyterian Christian Academy

308 E. Court St., Hinesville
876-0441
www.fpcahinesville.com

First United Methodist Church Preschool and Kindergarten

203 N. Main St., Hinesville
368-3355
www.hinesvillepreschool.com

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Education meets at 5:30 p.m. on
the second Tuesday of each month
at the board office,
200 Bradwell St., Hinesville.*

Chairwoman:

Lily Baker

368-7228

lbaker@liberty.k12.ga.us

District 1/vice chairwoman:

Verdell Jones*

884-3067

vjones1978@execs.com

District 2:

Charlie Frasier*

876-2258

cfrasier@liberty.k12.ga.us

District 3:

Carol Guyett*

876-6234

cguyett@liberty.k12.ga.us

District 4:

Marcia Anderson

369-7308

manderson@liberty.k12.ga.us

District 5:

Harold Woods

368-7008

hwoods@liberty.k12.ga.us

District 6:

Becky Carter

876-3292

bcarter@liberty.k12.ga.us

Fort Stewart/HAAF school liaison officer:

Gregory Cooke

767-6533

greg.cooke@us.army.mil

**Current terms end Dec. 31, 2012*

2012-2013 LCSS CALENDAR



Aug. 1-3	Professional learning workdays	Jan. 7	Prof. learning/workdays (student holiday)
Aug. 2	Open house from 3-6 p.m.	Jan. 8	Students return to school
Aug. 6	Students return to school	Jan. 10	Report card day
Sept. 3	Labor Day (holiday)	Jan. 21	Martin Luther King Jr. Day (holiday)
Sept. 10	Send progress reports home	Feb. 12	Send progress reports home
Oct. 5	Holiday	Feb. 15	Holiday
Oct. 8	Columbus Day (holiday)	Feb. 18	President's Day (holiday)
Oct. 10	First grading session ends	March 8	Prof. learning/workday (student holiday)
Oct. 16	Report card day	March 15	Third grading session ends
Nov. 9	Prof. learning/workday (student holiday)	March 21	Report card day
Nov. 12	Veterans Day (holiday)	April 1-5	Spring break
Nov. 16	Send progress reports home	April 26	Send progress reports home
Nov. 19-23	Thanksgiving break (holidays)	May 24	Last day of school/fourth grading session ends
Dec. 21	Second grading session ends	May 27	Memorial Day (holiday)
Dec. 24-Jan. 4	Winter break (holidays)	May 28-31	Prof. learning/workdays

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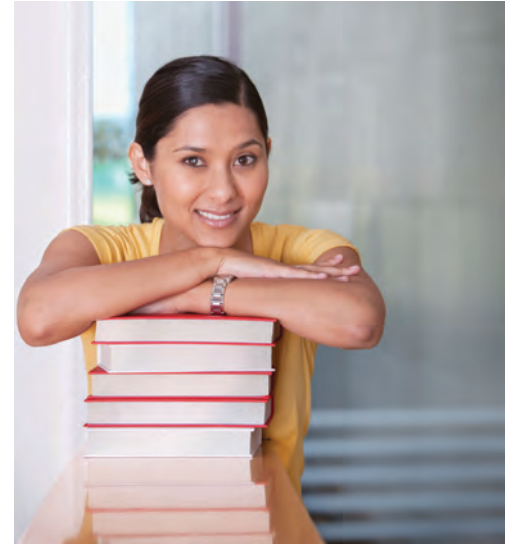
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Continuing education

Colleges, tech programs cater to nontraditional students

By Danielle Hipps



While the Fort Stewart Army Education Center has been serving nontraditional students for years, off-post institutions have adjusted their schedules to be more accommodating to soldiers on the move, the families that follow and civilians with other responsibilities.

Both Savannah Technical College and Armstrong Atlantic State University began offering short-term courses in fall 2011 to accommodate students who may not be able to commit to a 15-week semester.

Savannah Tech's Liberty campus offers 12 associate degree programs, 14 diploma programs and a wide array of technical credit certification programs.

At Savannah Tech, the seven-week "MiniMester" offers a wide range of online classes and a variety of times for in-person classes in core areas, as well as

a commercial truck driving course open to 12 students each term.

The Armstrong Atlantic State University Liberty Center also turned toward a more flexible schedule, with flex-terms aimed to accommodate students in all situations.

Armstrong lays the foundation for a wide range of studies and offers undergraduate degrees in criminal justice and liberal studies. It also provides support for those pursuing early childhood education, middle grades education and nursing.

In August 2011, the school tapped Donald Stumpf as the new director for the Liberty center, and Stumpf said his No. 1 priority is strengthening the relationship between the satellite campus and the community it serves.

Military needs will be a priority, but he added that academics don't differ between civilian and military students.

"The difference when working with

The Savannah Technical College Liberty Campus on Airport Road offers associate degrees, diplomas and technical certificates.

the military is you need to understand portability and flexibility," he said, citing the military's frequent relocations and tours of duty. He said he wants to ensure soldiers can carry credits with them when called away.

Armstrong Atlantic State University — Liberty Center

740 E. Gen. Stewart Way, Suite 210, Hinesville
877-1905
www.armstrong.edu

Army Education Center

100 Knowledge Drive, Building 100, Fort Stewart
912-767-8331
www.stewart.army.mil/services/education/education.asp

Savannah Technical College Liberty Campus

100 Technology Drive, Hinesville
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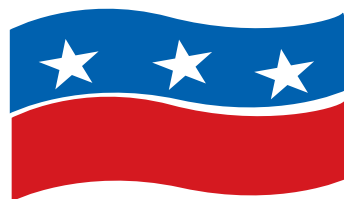
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Liberty County

By Danielle Hipps



Considered to be Georgia's sixth county, Liberty County was adopted by the Constitution of 1777 as a union of the St. John, St. Andrew and St. James parishes.

Now, the county boasts a population of more than 63,400 over 489 square miles, and it spans from Saint Catherines Island and coastal marshes on the east to rural inland woods on the west.

The area is governed by the Liberty County Board of Commissioners, which is comprised of a chairman at-large and representatives from six districts. Commissioners serve staggered four-year terms, with the chairman and representatives from districts 4, 5 and 6 up for re-election in 2012.

As a board, the commissioners oversee building and licensing for unincorporated parts of the county, the Liberty County Emergency Management Agency, county parks and recreation, roads maintenance and more.

County offices have a great physical

presence, too. The board recently oversaw \$2.2 million in renovations to the Liberty County Courthouse, which was built in 1926, as well as construction of the \$20 million Liberty County Justice Center, a new home for court operations.

Just west of Gum Branch, the first county-owned fire station opened in the spring of 2012. The \$782,000 facility currently is staffed by volunteer firefighters. However, the commissioners deemed fire protection their No. 1 priority for 2012 during a March retreat — and if their plan has support of residents and other governments, the county could transition to paid staffs as soon as fall 2012.

The East End Community Complex is another widely anticipated project. Located on Highway 84 in Midway, the site of the former Liberty Elementary/High School will house a library, swimming pool, playground and historically restored classroom. The \$4.6 million project is slated for completion in late spring of 2013.

Left: County Administrator Joey Brown speaks during a ribbon cutting for the Liberty County Justice Center in May 2011.

Right: Commissioners discuss their top priorities for 2012 during a retreat at the MidCoast Regional Airport.

LIBERTY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

*The BoC meets at 6 p.m. every first Tuesday of the month and at 5 p.m. every third Thursday at the Courthouse Annex, 112 N. Main St., Hinesville.
www.libertycountyga.com.*

LIBERTY COUNTY OFFICES

COURTHOUSE ANNEX 112 N. MAIN ST., HINESVILLE

Board of Commissioners

Chairman: John D. McIver *
District 1: Marion Stevens Sr.
District 2: Donald L. Lovette
District 3: Connie Thrift
District 4: Pat Bowen*
District 5: Gary Gilliard*
District 6: Eddie J. Walden*
Contact: 912-876-2164
**Current terms end Dec. 31, 2012*

County Administrator

Joey Brown
876-2177

Building and Permitting

Paul Zechman
876-8454

Capital Improvements Program

Lamar Tillman, project manager
368-6289

County Taxes

Glenda Roberts, Chief Appraiser
876-2823

Virgil Jones, Tax Commissioner
876-3389
www.libertygatax.com

Vehicle Tag Office

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Atlantic Judicial Circuit

Public Defender

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Office of the Clerk of Courts

Superior Court, State Court, Juvenile
Court and Magistrate Court
Clerk and Court Administrator F. Barry
Wilkes
876-3625
clerkofcourts@libertyco.com

Superior Court Judges

Chief Judge David L. Cavender
368-2250

Judge D. Jay Stewart
739-4922

Judge Robert L. Russell III
912-437-3033

Office: McIntosh County Courthouse

Judge Charles P. Rose
877-4770

Senior Superior Court Judge

Judge A. Ronnie Rahn III
912-557-6393

State Court

Judge Leon M. Braun Jr.
876-7101

Magistrate Court

Chief Magistrate Melinda Anderson
876-2063

Probate Court

Judge Nancy K. Aspinwall
876-3635
www.gaprobate.org

Law Library

368-5111

OLD LIBERTY COUNTY COURTHOUSE 100 N. MAIN ST., HINESVILLE

Board of Voter Registration/Elections

Ella Golden, Supervisor
876-3310

Coroner

Reggie Pierce

884-4490

Extension Agent/4-H

Robert Bell, Extension Agent
Kasey Bozeman, 4-H Agent
876-2133

Juvenile Court

Judge Linnie L. Darden III
876-0111
Jones, Osteen & Jones
206 East Court St., Hinesville

Liberty Consolidated Planning Commission

408-2030

OTHER OFFICES

Keep Liberty Beautiful

Sara Swida, executive director
880-4888

Mosquito Control

Jack Vereen, supervisor
884-2065

Public Works Department

Clenton Wells, supervisor
876-8216 (24-hour answering)

Road Department

884-3310

Solid Waste Department

884-5353

STATE OFFICES

Child Support Services

876-4154

Georgia Department of Family and Children Services

112 W. Oglethorpe Highway, Hinesville
876-5174

Georgia Forestry Commission

884-3331

District Attorney

Tom Durden, District Attorney
876-4151, 370-2600

Georgia Department of Driver Services

2301 Airport Road, Hinesville
370-2064
www.dds.ga.gov

Georgia Department of Labor

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Hinesville
370-2595

Hinesville Probation Office

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GOVERNMENT

Hinesville

By Danielle Hipps



Hinesville city officials gather in May 2012 with local veterans organizations to dedicate Veterans Parkway, formerly Frank Cochran Drive.

Saint Stephen Catholic Church



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 Sunday: 8:00 and 10:30 am
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 Wednesday: 6:00 pm
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 Holy Day: 12:05 pm, 7:00 pm
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With an estimated population of 33,400, Hinesville is the heart and county seat of Liberty County.

Founded in 1837, the city of Hinesville celebrates its 175th anniversary in September 2012. The buzzing hub of the Fort Stewart Metropolitan Statistical Area, Hinesville has seen considerable growth in recent years.

Last year, the city completed construction on a \$7 million, 48,000-square-foot, three-story city hall located at M.L. King Jr. Drive and Commerce Street.

The building is where Hinesville Mayor Jim Thomas and the council's five district representatives adopt policies that govern the municipality.

Run on a day-to-day basis by city manager Billy Edwards, city hall also is home to a city clerk's office, business license office, water department, community development department,

inspections and geographic information systems, human resources and public relations.

The city also has its own police and fire departments as well as a public works department, which is run by Operations Management International, or OMI.

OMI is a private corporation that specializes in utilities management. Its employees in Hinesville handle trash collection, road and park maintenance and meter reading and oversee the sewage treatment plant, which also serves Fort Stewart.

Downtown Hinesville is known for its small-town charm. Bradwell Park, in the core of the city, is a gathering point for weekly farmers markets and annual events like Christmas in the Park. Surrounding the park are law offices, hair salons, a children's boutique, coffee shop, churches, a jewelry craftsman and a homemade candy store that make the area a pedestrian-friendly social destination.

CITY OF HINESVILLE OFFICES

CITY COUNCIL

Mayor: James "Jim" Thomas Jr.
 Mayor pro tem/District 1: Charles Frasier
 District 2: Jason R. Floyd
 District 3: David Anderson Sr.
 District 4: Keith Jenkins
 District 5: Kenneth Shaw
 Meetings are at 3 p.m. the first and third
 Thursday of each month
 Contact: 876-3564

Hinesville City Manager

Billy Edwards
 Hinesville City Hall,
 115 E. M.L. King Jr. Drive
 876-3564

OFFICES IN CITY HALL

Business Licenses

876-3564

City Clerk

876-3564

City Council Meeting Chamber

876-3564

Department of Community Development

876-3164

Inspections and Geographical Information Systems Office

876-4147

Mayor's Office

876-3564

Water Department

876-3564

OTHER CITY OFFICES

Hinesville Fire Department

Station 1
 103 Liberty St., Hinesville
 876-4143
 Station 2
 640 Airport Road, Hinesville
 876-4852

Hinesville Police Department

123 E. M.L. King Jr. Drive, Hinesville
 368-8211

Municipal Court

Honorable Gary A. Sinrich, Judge
 Mary E. Dowd, Clerk of Court
 Cris Schneider, Solicitor
 123 E. M. L. King Jr. Drive, Hinesville
 368-8206

Public Works Department

876-8216



Above: The park at Bryant Commons will offer passive recreation areas and an amphitheater.

Left: The Old Liberty County Jail was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1992.



HINESVILLE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

302 S. Main St., located in the historic "Old Liberty County Jail," Hinesville
 877-4332 or

www.hinesvilledowntown.com

The Hinesville Downtown Development Authority also is dedicated to preserving downtown Hinesville's past and ensuring it has a bright future.

Governed by a board of seven directors, the HDDA facilitates business transitions downtown, spearheads beautification projects and coordinates events that bring revelers to the city's core.

Sponsored by the HDDA, the 2012 Hinesville Down-

town Farmers Market will run from 4-8 p.m. Thursdays from May 3 to Oct. 25. The event offers a chance to enjoy the outdoors, mingle with the community and score fresh produce and artisan products. On the second Thursday of every month, the farmers market features local artists and live music.

Another HDDA project is Bryant Commons, the former home of the late Sen. Glenn E. Bryant and his wife, Trudie P. Bryant. The 150-acre site on Highway 84 is being converted into a park with passive leisure spaces and an amphitheatre. Bryant Commons will be jointly managed by the Bryant Foundation, city of Hinesville, HDDA and the Independent Telecommunications Pioneer Association, which has a museum on the site.

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OTHER MUNICIPALITIES

MIDWAY CITY COUNCIL

Mayor: Dr. Clemontine Washington
 Mayor pro tem: Curtes Roberts Sr.
 Council members: Levern Clancy Jr., Terry Doyle, Melice Hamilton
 Meetings are at 6 p.m. on the second Monday of the month in City Hall. City Hall is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Contact: 884-3344.

WALTHOURVILLE CITY COUNCIL

Mayor: Daisy Pray
 Mayor pro tem: Patricia Green
 Council members: Charlie Anderson, James Hendry, Luciria L. Lovette
 Meetings are at 6 p.m. on the second and fourth Thursday of the month.
 Contact: 368-7501

FLEMINGTON CITY COUNCIL

Mayor: Sandra Martin
 Mayor pro tem: Paul Hawkins
 Council members: Dotty Fermin, Gail Fox Evans, Charles Richardson, Palmer Dasher, Donnie Smith
 Meetings are at 4:30 p.m. on the second Tuesday of the month.
 Contact: 877-3223

RICEBORO CITY COUNCIL

Mayor: William Austin
 Mayor pro tem: Tommy Williams
 Council members: David Miller, Chris Stacy, John Young
 Meetings are at 6 p.m. on the first Tuesday of the month.
 Contact: 884-2986

ALLENHURST CITY COUNCIL

Mayor: Thomas Hines
 Council members: Amanda Cox, Carl Easton, James Willis
 Meetings are 7:30 p.m. on the first Monday of the month.
 Contact: 876-2180

GUM BRANCH CITY COUNCIL

Mayor: Kathy Todd
 Council members: Irene Chandler, Charles Simpson, Jesse Strickland, Edward Wells
 Meetings are at 7:30 p.m. on the third Monday of the month.
 Contact: 876-5945

Meet Your Representatives

Whether they serve in the Georgia General Assembly or on Capitol Hill, these representatives were elected to provide a voice for the state and its coastal residents.

Federal officials:

Senators



Sen. C. Saxby Chambliss, R-Moultrie
 Washington, D.C., office:
 416 Russell Senate Office Building
 Washington, D.C. 20510
 202-224-3521
 East Georgia office:
 3633 Wheeler Road
 Suite 270
 Augusta, GA 30909
 706-650-1555



Sen. John "Johnny" H. Isakson, R-Marietta
 Washington, D.C., office:
 131 Russell Senate Office Building
 Washington, D.C. 20510
 202-224-3643
 Georgia office:
 One Overton Park, Suite 970
 3625 Cumberland Blvd.
 Atlanta, GA 30339
 770-661-0999

Representative



Rep. Jack Kingston, R-Savannah
 Washington, D.C., office:
 2372 Rayburn House Office Building,
 District of Columbia 20515-1001
 202-225-5831
 Savannah office:
 1 Diamond Causeway, Suite 7
 Savannah, GA 31406
 912-352-0101

State officials:

Governor



Nathan Deal
 The Office of the Governor,
 State of Georgia
 203 State Capitol
 Atlanta, GA 30334
 404-656-1776

Lt. Governor

Casey Cagle
 240 State Capitol
 Atlanta, GA 30334
 404-656-5030

Senators



Sen. Earl "Buddy" Carter, R-Pooler

District 1 (includes most of Liberty County)
 Capitol office:
 301-A Coverdell Office Building
 Atlanta, GA 30334
 404-656-5109
 Pooler office:
 406 Purple Finch Drive
 Pooler, GA 31322
 912-748-1414
 bcarter331@aol.com



Sen. Tommie Williams, R-Lyons
 Senate Pro-Tem
 District 19 (includes extreme western Liberty County)
 Capitol office:
 321 State Capitol
 Atlanta, GA 30334
 404-656-0089
 404-463-5220(fax)
 Lyons office:
 148 Williams Avenue
 Lyons, GA 30436
 912-526-7444
 tommie@tommiewilliams.com

Representatives

Rep. Al Williams, D-Midway
 District 168 (includes most of Liberty County)
 Capitol office:
 511 Coverdell Office Building
 Atlanta, GA 30334
 404-656-6372
 Midway office:
 9041 East Oglethorpe Highway,
 Midway
 977-5600
 al.williams@house.ga.gov

Rep. Ron Stephens, R-Garden City
 District 164 (includes Fleming and most of Fort Stewart)
 Capitol office:
 228 State Capitol
 Atlanta, GA 30334
 404-656-5099
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The 411 on emergencies

Agencies respond to nature's whims

By Evanne Floyd



Liberty County emergency services respond to all emergency calls in the area. Missing persons reports, well checks, fires and plane crashes — these well-trained and respected members of the community are at your beck and call.

Currently, Hinesville is the only area in the county protected by a paid, full-time fire department. The other municipalities either contract with Hinesville for services or rely on volunteer firefighters. However, the Liberty County commissioners deemed fire protection their No. 1 priority for 2012 during a March retreat — and if their plan has support of residents and municipal governments, the county could transition to paid staffs as soon as fall 2012.

Although emergencies can't be prevented entirely, individuals can take precautions to limit the effects of emergencies, such as hurricanes.

Experts recommend that newcomers research hurricane

County, city and volunteer emergency personnel respond to issues that are made by man and nature.

preparedness tips through the Emergency Management Agency and the local Red Cross. The Atlantic hurricane season runs from June 1 to Nov. 30, but storms have occurred before and after this time frame.

Liberty County has not taken a direct hit in years; however, hurricane bands and residual storms do pass through the area. Since most of the county is at or near sea level, it is important for residents to be aware of and prepared for flooding.

Due to Liberty County's geographical location, storms can come from both the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico. Residents should know that the local building code requires braces to help withstand the force of winds — but if an evacuation is called for, experts agree it is in your best interest to leave.

In the event of an evacuation, all of Interstate 16 becomes

westbound between Savannah and Douglas. Evacuees can listen to WSVH 91.1 FM for information or call 511 for real-time travel information. Information also can be found on Liberty County's Twitter and Facebook pages.

Those with medical conditions or issues that would require special assistance or evacuation by ambulance or wheelchair during an evacuation should call the Liberty County Emergency Management Agency at 368-2201 to be placed on the Special Needs Registry.

Southern comfort

Many people choose to live in Liberty County because of its enjoyable weather and beautiful, blue skies. The climate is semi-tropical, which means mild winters and warm summers — perfect for the Coastal Georgia beaches.

Winter

The Southeast is known for its mild winters. Here, residents can expect an average high of 61 degrees and low of 41 degrees. The average snowfall is less than one-tenth of an inch.

Summer

The average high is 90 degrees, while the average low is 71 degrees. But beware humidity levels, which can increase the heat index up to as much as 120 degrees.

Spring and fall

By far the most pleasant times of year, average highs of 71 and lows of 47 make outdoor recreation a dream. Both seasons are perfect times to enjoy touring historic sites and nature trails.

PREPARATION IS KEY

During the Atlantic hurricane season, which runs June 1 to Nov. 30, experts say preparation is the best protection. Here are some must-have items:

1. At least one gallon of water per person for at least five days
2. A five-day supply of nonperishable food items that do not require cooking, water or refrigeration
3. A first aid kit and a two-week supply of all prescription medicine
4. Clothing and bedding
5. Supplies including flashlights, extra batteries, battery-operated radio and hand-worked tools
6. Important family documents, including copies of wills, insurance policies, shot records and passports
7. Waterproof storage containers for the above supplies

Source: Liberty County Emergency Management Agency and the American Red Cross



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EMERGENCY: 911

Public safety/nonemergency:
368-3911

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Liberty County Sheriff's Office

Court operations:
Liberty County Justice Center
201 S. Main St., Hinesville
876-2131

General services:
Liberty County Jail Complex
180 Paul Sikes Road, Hinesville
876-4555
www.libertyso.com

Hinesville Police Department
123 E. M. L. King Jr. Drive, Hinesville
368-8211

Flemington Deputy Sheriff
Sgt. Guy Paliolo
deputy956@gmail.com

Midway Police Department
10490 E. Oglethorpe Highway, Midway
880-1000

Walthourville Police Department
192B Talmadge Road, Walthourville
368-6525

Georgia State Patrol
2301 Airport Road, Hinesville
370-2600

FIRE

Hinesville Fire Department
103 Liberty St., Hinesville
876-4143

Fleming Volunteer Fire/Rescue
809 Fleming Loop Highway, Fleming
884-4242

Fort Stewart Fire Department
119 Coe Ave., Building 457,
Fort Stewart
767-8118

Riceboro Volunteer Fire Department
5786 S. Coastal Highway, Riceboro
884-5539

Gum Branch Volunteer Fire Department
7199 West Highway 196, Hinesville
368-8181

Midway Volunteer Fire Department
10490 E. Oglethorpe Highway, Midway
884-3676

Lake George Volunteer Fire/Rescue
14 Fourth St., Midway
884-5666

Walthourville Volunteer Fire/Rescue
222 Busbee Road, Walthourville
368-6260

Eastern District Volunteer Fire/Rescue
2630 Fort Morris Road, Midway
884-3950

St. Catherines Island Volunteer Fire Department
182 Camellia Road, Midway
884-5009

AMBULANCE

Liberty Regional Emergency Medical Services
413 S. Main St., Hinesville
369-9403

OTHER EMERGENCY RESOURCES

Liberty County Emergency Management Agency
100 Liberty St., Hinesville
368-2201
877-5362 — Weather Line
www.libertycountyga.com

American Red Cross
Southeast Georgia Chapter —
Liberty Branch
218 Fraser Drive, Hinesville
876-3975
www.savannahredcross.com

Fort Stewart American Red Cross
Building 253, Suite 2074, 55 Pony
Soldier Ave., Fort Stewart
767-2197
www.fortstewartarc.org

Public Safety Communications Office
102 Liberty St., Hinesville
368-3911

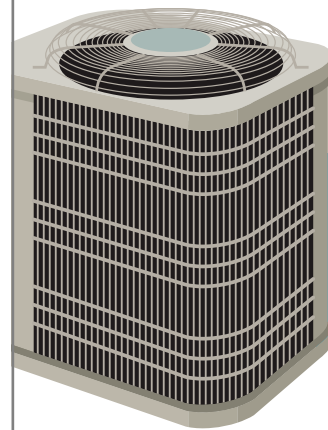
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HEALTH CARE

Medicine in motion

UGA's Fanning Institute guides Liberty Regional Medical Center expansion

By Dana Clark Felty



Liberty Regional Medical Center is nestled between South Main Street and E.G. Miles Parkway, and EMS recently opened a new ambulance facility nearby.

Many experts list hospitals among the top 10 factors that attract new residents and businesses to good communities.

The knowledge that the latest standards in health care are just a few minutes away from your front door or office provides the kind of security that helps communities grow.

As Hinesville grows, so have the demands on its only public hospital, Liberty Regional Medical Center.

Visits to the emergency room have jumped from about 6,000 in 1998 to 26,000 in 2011, according to hospital

CEO Scott Kroell.

That's why Kroell and leaders of the Liberty County Hospital Authority are moving forward with a bold, new expansion and renovation project due for completion in 2013.

Liberty Regional Medical Center, or LRMC, is among Georgia's 34 critical access hospitals, a term applied by the federal government for rural community hospitals with 25 or fewer beds.

Located just south of downtown Hinesville on E.G. Miles Parkway, the two-story facility serves more than 50,000 patients a year, with more than half of the patients coming through the emergency room alone. Most patients come from Liberty and Long counties,

though some travel from Bryan, McIntosh and Tattnall counties as well.

The hospital also operates an eight-unit ambulance service in Liberty and Long counties and a 108-bed long-term care facility.

Based just 15 minutes away in Ludowici, Coastal Manor Long Term Care provides 24-hour skilled nursing care with a designated specialty-care unit for patients with Alzheimer's or dementia.

With more than 400 employees between the three facilities, Liberty Regional is one of the largest employers in the area.

The hospital was founded on Highway 84 as Liberty Memorial Hospital

in 1961, a name that resonates with some longtime residents.

Services were expanded in 1974 with a new radiology unit, laboratory, emergency room, obstetrics area, dietary services and administration facilities.

Liberty Memorial added the Fraser Conference Center in 1982, dedicating it to Dr. Whitman Fraser.

Another renovation, completed in 1993, added more area to the registration, physical therapy, cardiopulmonary, laboratory and emergency departments.

The Hospital Authority of Liberty County, which governs the facility, changed the name to Liberty Regional Medical Center in 1994.

That year, when Kroell came on board as the hospital's CEO, the facility was in dire straits.

"We were basically bankrupt," Kroell said. And the building "was pretty much worn out."

Many of the physicians were not well trained, and some Liberty County residents chose to make the 50-minute drive to Savannah for their medical care.

"We had a perception of the hospital being a place you didn't want to get medical services from," Hinesville Mayor Jim Thomas said. "That's changed. Today, we're providing services that most critical-care hospitals don't provide."

At the time, Hinesville's population was close to 30,000, only 3,000 fewer people than were counted in the most recent census.

"Today, we're providing services that most critical-care hospitals don't provide."

— *Hinesville Mayor Jim Thomas*

However, the ER at Liberty Regional was serving only about 6,000 to 8,000 patients annually, an average of one patient every hour to hour-and-a-half.

Shortly after being named CEO, Kroell and members of the Hospital Authority began seeking ways to make

Liberty Regional more attractive to local residents.

They started by building the new 70,000-square-foot facility in 1998 on land donated by Lewis Ashmore.

Then they worked to recruit better physicians and staff.

"There are a lot of physicians out there who recognize the value of a community like Hinesville, where you know a lot of the people," Kroell said.

Today, all 25 of the hospital's medical staff are board certified and trained in the United States, and the physicians practice more than 21 types of medicine.

Recently, Liberty Regional has boasted new developments in technology including the transition to electronic medical records, new patient monitors and beds, digital mammography and a stroke telemedicine partnership with St. Joseph's/Candler Health System in Savannah, which gives patients fast access to the region's top neurologists around the clock via teleconferencing.

In recent years, members of the Hospital Authority have honed a strategic plan with the help of the University of

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Georgia's Fanning Institute and associate professor and community economic developer Skip Teaster.

"They've given us a good road map," Kroell said.

That road map includes moving forward with the newest plan for expansion, estimated to cost at least \$8 million.

"The metrics indicate that our emergency department is about half the size it needs to be," Kroell said.

Leaders also saw a greater need for perinatal services and expansion of the hospital's labor and delivery unit.

Currently, women in labor must be moved from the labor and delivery unit on the second floor to the operating room on the first floor if they require a C-section. The expansion will provide labor and delivery with its own operating room.

"Cardiopulmonary (services) —

that's another big issue we see every day, both within the rehab and acute care," Kroell said. "You begin to look around at all of the needs, and all of a sudden, you have a pretty big project."

"The folks working with us now on the expansion are probably some of the best health-care designers in the country. They really understand health care and ask the right questions."

— *Liberty Regional Medical Center CEO Scott Kroell*

The Hospital Authority has hired HKS Architects of Atlanta to design an

expansion and renovation of the emergency department and perinatal services (labor and delivery) and to add a step-down unit. The firm has completed similar projects for regional hospitals in Demorest, Ga.; Yukon, Okla.; and others throughout Texas.

The hospital authority also is in the planning stages for a clinic that will serve residents on the coastal end of the county. Utility work has begun at the site of the clinic on Highway 84 in Midway next to the Tradeport East Business Center. Kroell has said that the clinic likely will be a rural health center and should be completed around summer 2013.

"The folks working with us now on the expansion are probably some of the best health-care designers in the country," Kroell said. "They really understand health care and ask the right questions."

HEALTH CARE

CARDIOLOGISTS

Liberty Cardiology

Bryan Ristow, MD
455 S. Main St., Suite 205, Hinesville
876-5620

SouthCoast Medical Group

Geoffrey Peters, MD
445 S. Main St., Suite 204, Hinesville
368-6226

CHIROPRACTORS

Regan Chiropractic Center

Duncan Regan, D.C.
200 E. Gen. Stewart Way
Hinesville
876-3964
www.reganchiro.com

Arrowhead Clinic

Dr. Monica Gilbert
809 Willowbrook Drive, Suite 107,
Hinesville
368-7246
www.arrowheadclinics.com

Advanced Chiropractic Center

514 E.G. Miles Parkway, Hinesville
876-2011

Liberty County Clinic of Chiropractic

David Peer, D.C.
951 E.G. Miles Parkway, Hinesville
368-4002
www.libertyccc.com

DERMATOLOGISTS

Dermatology and Skin Care Center

Michael Sharkey, M.D.
510 E. Oglethorpe Highway, Hinesville
369-7546

DENTISTS

Wege Dental

William E. Wege, D.M.D.
124 W. M. L. King Jr. Drive, Hinesville
876-2155
www.wegedental.com

Johnson Dental Group

John P. Johnson, D.D.S.
Joyce M. Roberts, D.M.D.
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877-3070
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Howard Family Dental

Dr. Daisy Broadhead
Dr. Steve Schmitt
319H Gen. Screven Way, Hinesville
368-6881
www.howardfamilydental.com

Advent Dental

Dr. Donna Phillips
102 West St., Hinesville
876-3200

Robert Simmons, D.D.S.

101 E. Gen. Stewart Way, Hinesville
368-3333

T. Alan Lyle, D.D.S.

103-B Ryon Ave., Hinesville
876-9331

Townsend Family Dental Center

Darin Townsend, D.M.D.
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Hinesville
877-6453
www.townsendfamilydentalcenter.com

Midway Family Dental

Dr. Rollin B. "Tad" Jackson III
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EMERGENCY MEDICINE

Liberty Emergency Group

Bobby Herrington, M.D.
462 E.G. Miles Parkway, Hinesville
369-9400

South Georgia Immediate Care Center

Dr. Reginald Davis
Dr. Diane Harris
780 E. Oglethorpe Highway, Hinesville
332-7262

FAMILY MEDICINE

Liberty Family Medicine

Ophelia Gherman, M.D.
455 S. Main St., Suite 104, Hinesville
876-5644

Dr. Robert G. Carter

109 W. Oglethorpe Highway, Hinesville
368-2290

Diversity Health Center

303 Fraser Drive, Hinesville
877-2227

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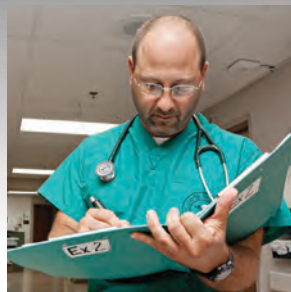
Southeast Georgia Surgery

Christina Berenguer, M.D.
Stephen Weiss, M.D.
455 S. Main St., Suite 102, Hinesville
876-5505

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Low Country Cancer Care Associates

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Calin Badea, M.D.
502 E. Gen. Stewart Way, Suite B,
Hinesville
368-4169

SouthCoast Medical Group

Firas Bannout, M.D.
455 S. Main St., Suite 201, Hinesville
877-6822

Ludowici Medical Center

Traiana Pacurar, M.D.
15 N. McDonald St., Ludowici
545-9511

Bryan Medical Associates

Adewunmi Sobowale, M.D.
740 Gen. Stewart Way, Suite 101,
Hinesville
876-5452

MENTAL HEALTH

American Brain

938 E.G. Miles Parkway, Hinesville
877-7924

Darsey, Black and Associates

William Darsey, M.A., LPC
215 E. Court St., Hinesville
876-4010

Hope, Care & Consulting

Suzanne Baroody, LPC, NCC
455 S. Main St., Suite 103, Hinesville
369-4673

Comfort Behavioral Health and Social Services

445 E.G. Miles Parkway, Hinesville
492-4739

Fraser Counseling Center

203 Mary Lou Drive, Hinesville
369-7777

Helen's Haven (Child Advocacy)

Hinesville
369-2326

Gateway Behavioral Health

750 Tupelo Trail, Hinesville
877-2060

NEPHROLOGISTS

SouthCoast Medical Group

Nizar Eskandar, M.D.
455 S. Main St., Suite 201, Hinesville
877-6822

OBSTETRICIANS & GYNECOLOGISTS

Hinesville Women's Clinic

4540 E. Oglethorpe Highway, Suite B,
Hinesville
369-7800

Comprehensive OB/GYN Health Center

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Zorana Sifford, M.D.
Kathleen Cools, M.D.
455 S. Main St., Suite 202, Hinesville
877-2228

ORTHODONTISTS

Vaught Orthodontics

Robert A. Vaught, D.M.D., M.S.D.
601 Gen. Stewart Way, Hinesville
368-7000
www.vaughtorthodontics.com

Dr. Leon Wills

715 Courtland Drive, Hinesville
876-4435

South Georgia Orthodontics

230 W. Gen. Screven Way, Suite 104,
Hinesville
876-3880
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ORTHOPEDICS

Southeastern Orthopedic Center

1146 E.G. Miles Parkway, Hinesville
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OPHTHALMOLOGISTS

Georgia Eye Institute of the Southeast

Mark Manocha, M.D.
455 S. Main St., Suite 204, Hinesville
368-2522

Professional Eye Care

Joseph "Jody" Pittman, O.D.
556 W. Oglethorpe Highway, Hinesville
368-2020
www.doctorpittman.com

Low Country Eye Care

Tim D. Hendricks, O.D.
Angela Appleman, O.D.
127 Gen. Screven Way, Hinesville
877-2422
www.lowcountryeye.com

Walmart Vision Center

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369-3432

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Hinesville
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Phillip Ajayi, M.D.
Tometricia Brown, M.D.
455 S. Main St., Suite 101, Hinesville
876-6868

Pajaro Pediatrics

Julio Pajaro, M.D.
300 N. Main St., Hinesville
912-876-2298

Liberty Pediatrics Association

103 E. Gen. Screven Way, Hinesville
876-3555

Eric L. Hall, M.D.

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876-8637

Ankle & Foot Associates

Robson Spinola, D.P.M.
Candice Escalea, D.P.M.
481 E.G. Miles Parkway, Suite C,
Hinesville

Parkwood Podiatry Associates

600 E. Oglethorpe Highway, Hinesville
368-3036

PULMONARY & SLEEP MEDICINE

Coastal Medical Specialists in Lung & Critical Care

Adewumi Oguntunmbi, M.D.
John Cortina, D.O.
508 E.G. Miles Parkway, Hinesville
369-5864

REHABILITATION

West Rehab

475 S. Main St., Hinesville
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www.westrehab.com

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Hinesville: 369-7777

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369-7777

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Liberty County Health Department
1113 E. Oglethorpe Highway, Hinesville
876-2173

Diversity Health Center

303 Fraser Drive, Hinesville
877-2227

Gateway Behavioral Health Services

1113 E. Oglethorpe Highway, Hinesville
368-3502

Hospice Savannah

912-355-2289

Scale Solutions

203 West Court Street, Hinesville
877-7546

VETERINARIANS

Flemington Veterinary Hospital

Dr. Peter Martin
3263 E. Oglethorpe Highway, Flemington
368-3226

Beatie Animal Clinic

Dr. David Beatie
1001 Beatie Blvd., Hinesville
368-4080

Liberty Veterinary Clinic

1094 E. Oglethorpe Highway, Hinesville
Dr. Maurice Sweat
876-3357

**Effective May 1, 2012, Frank Cochran Drive became Veterans Parkway.*

Hinesville welcomes first immediate-care center

Local residents now have a resource for their aches, pains and ailments that don't rise to the level of an emergency room visit.

The South Georgia Immediate Care Center opened in November 2011, at 780 E. Oglethorpe Highway at Gen. Stewart Way. It is open from 9 a.m.-8 p.m. Monday through Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturdays and noon-5 p.m. Sundays.

The walk-in urgent-care center treats adults and children older than 9 months of age for minor illness and injuries and offers a full range of employer health-care services as well as school and sports physicals and flu shots.

The clinic has full X-ray and laboratory facilities in house and is staffed by board-certified physicians and trained staff.

The center accepts most commercial insurance, including TRICARE and Medicare. Some services are discounted for cash-paying patients.

"We are excited about the opportunities in Hinesville because it is a fast-growing area, and nonhospital urgent care is in high demand in both the military and civilian communities."

— Georgia Emergency Associates President and CEO Dr. Brian Kornblatt

South Georgia Immediate Care Center is the fourth urgent-care clinic location opened by Georgia Emergency Associates, a Savannah-based medical group.

"Our immediate-care centers are all about meeting the community's need for quality medical care at convenient times, in convenient locations and in a

comfortable setting," Georgia Emergency Associates President and CEO Dr. Brian Kornblatt said.

"We are excited about the opportunities in Hinesville because it is a fast-growing area, and nonhospital urgent care is in high demand in both the military and civilian communities."

Expanded optometry center opens

Hinesville's only full-time, full-service optometry center is expanding its services with a new, larger facility along Highway 84 across from Kroger.

Professional Eye Care is scheduled to reopen in a newly built 8,000-square-foot, energy-efficient complex in late July or early August 2012.

Practice owner Dr. Joseph "Jody" Pittman said he expects the new center to offer the capacity to serve more patients



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and more options in regular frames and sunglasses.

“We’re bringing in a bunch of designer lines like Coach, Brooks Brothers and Adrian Vitini,” said Pittman, who purchased the 50-year-old practice in 2003 from Dr. George Grant.

The practice serves most insurance companies, including TRICARE.

The center fills about half of the new complex. The other half has two 2,400-square-foot professional office condos.

State offices provide resources to those in need

The Liberty County Health Department and the Liberty County Division of Family and Children Services also are dedicated to providing care and resources to area residents.

The health department, which is

part of the Coastal Health District, operates two dedicated Women, Infants and Children (WIC) nutritional clinics, one in Riceboro and one on Fort Stewart.

Its Hinesville clinic, which is located at 1113 E. Oglethorpe Highway, offers an array of clinical services, including WIC. The department includes a dedicated nutritional clinic and an independent, dedicated clinic to serve those living with HIV/AIDS.

The clinic provides STD testing and treatment as well as immunizations, pap smears and family-planning services.

A bit west on Oglethorpe Highway, the Liberty County DFCS is making a new 26,500-square-foot facility its home.

A division of the Georgia Department of Human Services, DFCS has two branches that serve both Liberty and Long counties. The Office of Family Independence handles eligibility programs, while the child welfare department administers social services.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT CLINICS

The Hinesville Clinic Community Service Center

1113 E. Oglethorpe Highway, Hinesville

876-2173

Hours of operation: 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday

Fort Stewart WIC Clinic

1183 W. Bultman Ave., Fort Stewart

877-3330

Hours of operation: 7:15 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Thursday; 7 a.m.-4 p.m. Friday

Riceboro WIC Clinic

Highway 119, Head Start Center, Riceboro

884-3889 (only on third Tuesday of each month. At all other times, call 876-2173)

Hours of operation: 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. only the third Tuesday of each month.



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Community connections

Military, veterans have strong ties to civilian community

By Randy C. Murray



Family members and soldiers alike are eager to celebrate 3rd Infantry Division homecomings when troops return from deployments.

Many cities welcome newcomers with a claim to fame, such as a championship athletic team or a native celebrity. In Liberty County and Hinesville, we're proud to announce our ties to the U.S. Army's 3rd Infantry Division.

The areas surrounding Fort Stewart make one strong military community whose culture, values and economy are intricately connected with the Army

and its affairs.

More than 25,000 active-duty soldiers, more than 4,700 civilian employees and nearly 36,000 family members work and live on or near Fort Stewart. Another 32,250 military retirees and their family members reside in the surrounding communities, where they can maintain their ties to the "Rock of the Marne."

Their combined payrolls, along with annual expenditures from Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield, have an economic impact on Southeast Geor-

gia of \$4.35 billion a year, according to the installation's Command Data Summary for fiscal year 2011.

While the economy is largely connected to Fort Stewart, its soldiers, military civilians and their family members also are an integral part of the larger community, alongside retirees and their families.

Military residents are important members of the community because this is their home, too — whether it's for the time they're stationed here or for the rest of their lives. They live

“I decided to stay here when I retired from federal service because Coastal Georgia has everything I was looking for — great people, mild weather and access to outstanding facilities for health and recreation, both on and off post.”

— Paul Andreshak, a retired soldier and the executive director of Southeast Georgia Friends of Fort Stewart and Hunter

here. They pay taxes, vote and serve jury duty here. Their children go to school here. And many of them retire here.

“My wife and I decided to stay here in Liberty County when I retired from the Army because we love the moderate climate and the slower pace of life,” said Luis Carreras, who now serves as the Army Reserve Ambassador for Georgia. “This is a great place to raise a family. Even though I’m a city boy from New York, I’ve made Coastal Georgia my home.”

The ever-growing number of military retirees and the fact that Stewart-Hunter has won the Army Community of Excellence award five times indicate why this area is called The Southern Living Station of Choice and why it is the fastest-growing community in Southeast Georgia.

“From where I view things, we have the Army’s habitual premier community of excellence in Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield and the Southeast Georgia counties, cities and residents that support it,” said Paul Andreshak, a retired soldier and the executive director of Southeast Georgia Friends of Fort Stewart and Hunter. “I decided to stay here when I retired from federal service because Coastal Georgia has everything I was looking for — great people, mild weather and access to outstanding facilities for health and recreation, both on and off post.”

Carreras, Andreshak and most military retirees don’t simply retire

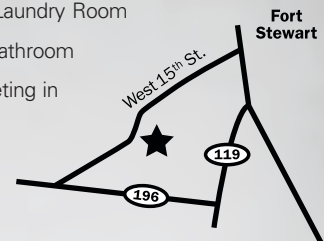


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Local veterans groups mark federal holidays with ceremonies to honor those who served in the past and those who currently serve. They also support the Fort Stewart Warriors Walk with wreaths at the holidays and provide meals for soldiers on the Fourth of July.



MILITARY AND VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS

American Legion and Auxiliary, Post 168

1121 Highway 84 West, Hinesville
876-0168

American Legion and Auxiliary, Post 321

Meets at the Old Dorchester Civic Center, Midway
First Thursday of every month
at 6:30 p.m.
Call Dennis Fitzgerald,
884-2830

Association of the United States Army

Hinesville
Call Mark Baker,
706-566-5165

Disabled American Veterans and Auxiliary, Chapter 46

Hinesville
368-2546

Hinesville Military Affairs Committee

Meets at the Hinesville Police Department, Hinesville
Fourth Monday of each month
at 7 p.m.
Call Linda Blanchard,
368-8211

Southeast Georgia Friends of Fort Stewart and Hunter

300 S. Main St., Hinesville
408-6225

Veterans of Foreign Wars and Auxiliary

931 Highway 196 West, Hinesville
876-6602

Vietnam Veterans of America, Liberty Chapter 789

Hinesville
369-5378

then play golf or go fishing. Many of them start new careers. Most stay active through a myriad of military and veterans' organizations. These veterans strongly support each other, their active-duty counterparts and the communities they now call home.

To show support for those who serve, many local businesses offer military discounts, and several organizations have committees and consultants to offer a military perspective.

The Fort Stewart Growth Management Partnership, funded by the Department of Defense Office of Economic Adjustment, is a four-county multi-governmental entity dedicated to ensuring that future growth in Bryan, Liberty, Long and Tattnall counties will promote the general welfare of the region. The partnership specifically

focuses on education, housing, infrastructure and quality of life.

Still, other organizations such as the Disabled American Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion are dedicated to connecting former and retired service members to the resources they need.

The community also rallies to commemorate patriotic and veterans' events, such as the birthdays of various service branches, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Sept. 11 observances, Veterans Day and Pearl Harbor Day.

Groups lay wreaths at memorial ceremonies, retire the American flag for private organizations and government agencies, provide food to soldiers and their families at public events and visit their own at the VA hospitals in Dublin and Charleston.



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CHURCHES

Celebrating spirituality

Churches offer community ties, divine support

By Evanne Floyd



To hear some locals tell it, this area has a church on every corner.

Although there aren't quite that many, there is no denying the strong presence of religion in the community.

"Liberty County is a progressive community with a diverse cultural and spiritual history," said Pastor Richard D. Hayes, president of the United Ministerial Alliance.

The area has more than 200 churches that represent 20 different religions, so newcomers have an array of options for spiritual engagement. Whether they enjoy small, intimate parishes or larger, more robust congregations, most newcomers can find their niche in one of

the area's houses of worship. Southern Baptists, Catholics, Presbyterians and Jehovah's Witnesses alike should be able to satiate their religious desires.

For newcomers, the UMA offers information about local churches, pastors and ministries to help find everyone a place of worship, Hayes said.

The organization also acts as a beacon to strengthen the community and ensure its entire needs are met, based in the scriptural theme of Psalms 133:1: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

In addition to praise, churches also offer camaraderie and connections. Many local churches have youth groups, Bible studies, musical groups,

Churchgoers forge spiritual connections during a service at First United Methodist Church, one of more than 200 churches in the area.

ministries and more.

Churches improve the quality of life throughout Liberty County by providing the chance to interact with like-minded people and gather as a family, even when your own may be thousands of miles away.

Houses of worship also offer support to those in need.

"When we come together we're able to clearly deal with challenges that are affecting the people we serve," Hayes said. "We are united in facing those

challenges to ensure the people get the help they need.”

The Joseph House, a local food pantry and clothing closet, was founded by Live Oak Church of God and helps provide the essentials to numerous people throughout the community. Another faith-based operation, the Manna House, also aims to ease hunger through its soup kitchen.

Congregations often are the backbone of charitable and celebratory events such as parades, Relay for Life, blood drives, area cleanups and international efforts. Pastors serve as business owners, chaplains for the Georgia State Patrol, event organizers and educators. Some area churches offer scholarships and sponsor students for religious activities.

The idea of entering an established congregation could be intimidating, but don't let that scare you. The churches of Liberty County encourage new members and quickly will make you feel at home. Take a look at the churches compiled in the directory — one of them may be your next “family.”



A Manna House volunteer packages meals for the soup kitchen's outreach.



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Apostolic Ministry

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Pillar in Zion Apostolic Church

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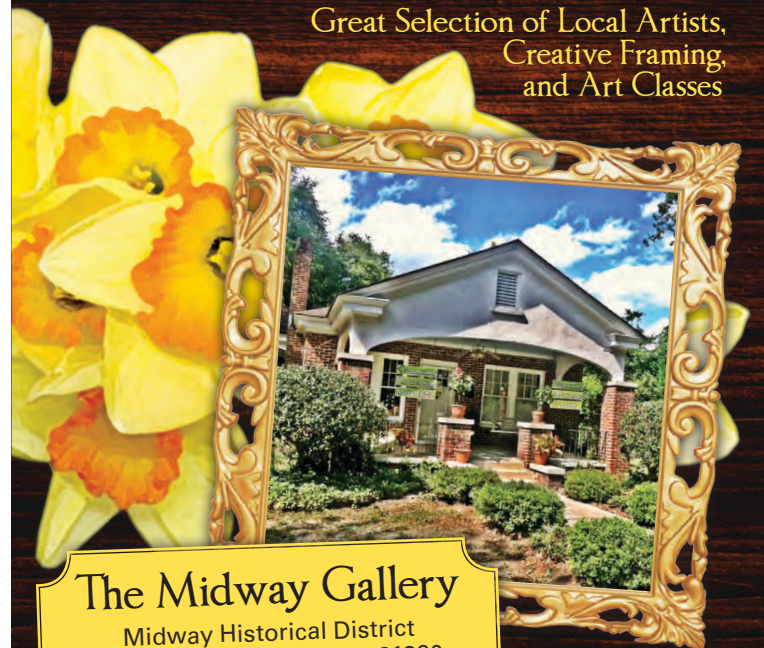
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368-8780

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Newlifefamilychurch.net

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**Effective May 1, 2012, Frank Cochran Drive became Veterans Parkway.*



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Exploring the Liberty Trail

Historic points shed light on past, present
By Patty Leon



Struggles against Spanish and British rule, Southern plantations rich with rice, and conflict during the Civil War have defined and influenced Liberty County, which has a rich and storied history.

The historic Liberty Trail, a 10-stop driving tour with points throughout the county, preserves and displays locations that have contributed to the history, culture and ecology of the area.

In addition to offering outdoor family fun, the trail also supports the local economy, according to Leah Poole, CEO of the Liberty County Chamber of Commerce and Liberty County Convention and Visitors Bureau.

“The Liberty Trail is important because Americans do spend a great deal on outdoor recreation,” Poole said. “A 2006 Outdoor Industry Foundation study found that active outdoor recreation contributes \$730 billion annually to the U.S. economy, supports 6.5 million jobs and generates \$88 billion in annual state and national tax revenue.”

Because the trail offers visitors a little bit of everything—including history, bike riding, kayaking and fishing—it’s a valuable treasure with infinite possibilities.

And those possibilities may expand in the future, as new sites, such as the old Liberty County Jail on South Main Street, may be added to the trail, Poole said.

For now, the trail begins near the coast at the Sunbury Cemetery and works its way west. The self-guided structure means visitors can follow the path in a single day or plan longer stays at each of the locations.

Sunbury Cemetery

Established in 1758, Sunbury was the second-largest town in Georgia before the Revolutionary War. At one point, Sunbury's seaport was a major shipping port in Colonial Georgia. But in 1778, during the Revolutionary War, British troops captured Sunbury for three years and left it in ruins. A yellow fever epidemic and two hurricanes turned Sunbury into a ghost town by the mid-1800s.

The Sunbury Cemetery is the final resting place of the early settlers of Sunbury and members of the Midway Congregational Church. While many of the cemetery's burials were from the Colonial and Revolutionary periods, most of the grave markers were destroyed by the 1870s. Thirty-four original markers remain, with the oldest dating back to 1788.

Hours: Self-guided tours from sunrise to sunset

Directions: From I-95, take Islands Highway east to Fort Morris Road. Turn left onto Fort Morris Road and follow Fort Morris Road to Sunbury Road. Turn left on Sunbury Road and turn right on Dutchman's Cove Road.



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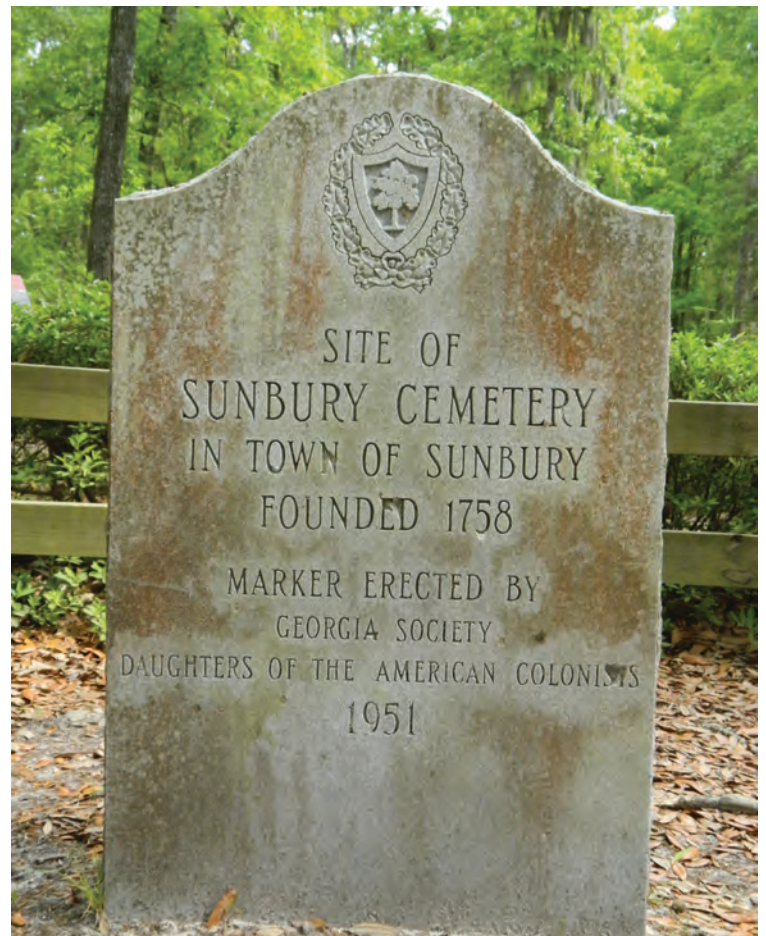
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Fort Morris State Park

Fort Morris State Park is the site where three forts once stood, and it has been instrumental in protecting Coastal Georgia. The first fort was built in 1741 to protect the plantation home of Sunbury settler Capt. Mark Carr from Indians who were allied with the Spanish Colonial Forces in Florida. The fort was dormant for a few years before it was refortified in 1756 against a rumored invasion of Creek Indians and French pirates during the French and Indian War.

In 1776, delegates from the Colonial Congress recognized the importance of Sunbury's emerging seaport and authorized the building of two ports — one in Savannah and the other in Sunbury. Fort Morris was built entirely of earth and wood at the site of the existing fort. It mounted 24 guns and housed more than 200 men.

British troops barged the fort Nov. 25, 1778, while it was under the command of Col. John McIntosh. The British demanded that McIntosh surrender the fort, to which he



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infamously replied: "Come and take it!" The British troops withdrew, but they conquered the fort in January 1779 and renamed it Fort George. During the War of 1812, it was renamed Fort Defiance but never was called into active service.

Today, Fort Morris is known as the last spot on Georgia soil where the old Colonial flag was flown. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places on May 13, 1970. The state now owns the site, where earthworks show the size of the fort that once defended the Medway River and seaport of Sunbury. Scenic trails overlook St. Catherines Sound, and the museum offers a glimpse of the fort's role during the wars.

Fort Morris hosts annual events, such the "Come and Take It" American Revolution encampment. The 2012 event is from 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Nov. 17 and will feature re-enactments of Col. McIntosh's defiance against the British troops. There will be demonstrations of cannon and musket firings and 18th-century music. The fort also will host an Independence Day Colonial Fair



from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. July 4, a Labor Day commemoration from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Sept. 3 and Colonial Christmas from 5-8 p.m. Dec. 8.

Hours: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Thursday through Saturday. Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day.

Admission: \$3-\$4.50

Location: 2559 Fort Morris Road, Sunbury

Contact: 884-5999

Directions: From Sunbury Cemetery, get back onto Fort Morris Road and travel one-fourth of a mile to the fort entrance on left.



Seabrook Village

Award-winning African-American living history museum Seabrook Village offers a glimpse at African-American life from 1865-1930. The community was established by Gen. William Sherman's Field Order 15, which confiscated a strip of coastline from South Carolina to Florida and redistributed roughly 400,000 acres to newly freed black families in 40-acre plots. Seabrook Village allowed African-Americans to become landowners, many of them on the same lands they once worked as slaves.

"Our motto was making do," Seabrook Village operations manager Florence Roberts said. "We made do with whatever we had or whatever we could gather together. ... People had to really pull their resources together, but that was the one thing about this community back then. They pulled together and worked together — it was a true sense of community."

Visitors can tour the one-room Seabrook School and browse artifacts. During planned group visits, costumed

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interpreters re-create life as it was in the old village, where corn was hand-ground into meal and clothes were washed on a scrub board. Exhibits include remnants of grave art of Cyrus Bowens, whose concrete work and wood carvings elaborately decorated his family's graves at the Sunbury Baptist Church.

Hours: 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Tuesday through Friday.
Saturday tours by appointment only.

Location: 660 Trade Hill Road, Midway

Contact: 884-7008

Directions: From Fort Morris, turn left to take Fort Morris Road back toward Islands highway. Travel 2.5 miles and make a right at Trade Hill Road. The museum office is on the right.



Melon Bluff Nature and Heritage Reserve

Although it is part of the historic trail, Melon Bluff is a private section of the Colonial Coast Birding Trail. The reserve once was a rice and row crop plantation, and its interpretive trail now features a 1.5-mile loop through the maritime forest and along the marsh edge. Visitors will learn about the time when the Southern live oak was the most valuable tree in the world. Bird watchers can visit the treetop viewing platform that rises 45 feet above the marshes of the North Newport River.

Hours: By appointment only for groups of six or more

Location: 2999 Islands Highway, Midway

Contact: 884-5779

Directions: From Seabrook Village, take Trade Hill Road back to Islands Highway. Head west on Islands Highway for 1.5 miles and Melon Bluff will be on the left.



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Cay Creek Wetlands Interpretive Center

Boasting a 1,900-foot boardwalk, a 20-foot observation tower and a dock off the marsh, the Cay Creek Wetlands Interpretive Center is another jewel for bird lovers and nature enthusiasts. Oak, Palm, Palmetto and Magnolia trees line the wooden deck. Visitors will delight in the animals that call Cay Creek home. The trail cuts across dikes once used to grow and cultivate rice that flourished in the area.

Hours: Cay Creek Wetlands is wheelchair accessible and open daily from dusk to dawn.

Location: 189 Charlie Butler Road, Midway
Contact: 884-3344

Directions: From Melon Bluff, continue east on Islands Highway (which becomes Highway 84 and Oglethorpe Highway) for approximately 6 miles. Turn left onto Charlie Butler Road and the entrance to Cay Creek is down one-tenth of a mile on the right.

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Midway Museum, Church and Cemetery

Settled by Puritans in 1752, the city of Midway was home to two signers of the Declaration of Independence, Lyman Hall and Button Gwinnett. It also is the final resting place of two Revolutionary War generals, Daniel Stewart and James Screven. The town, which thrived on agriculture, was named for being midway between Savannah and the Scottish settlement of Darien. In the center of town, on what is now U.S. Highway 17, Midway had an artesian well where travelers stopped to quench their thirst, water their horses and make trades.

The original Midway Church was built in 1756 but was burned to the ground in the Revolutionary War. A new church, which stands today, was constructed in 1792. African-Americans were allowed to attend services along with Caucasians. A separate entrance gave African-Americans entry into the upstairs gallery while Caucasians used the pews downstairs, according to Midway Museum Executive Director Diane Kroell.

“Many churches in the South had African-American and Caucasian



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members,” Kroell said. “The Midway Church had 752 Caucasian members and 1,238 African-American members.”

The Midway Museum, which documents and displays the city’s history, was built in 1957 with inspiration from an 18th-century Riceboro inn. The raised cottage-style museum houses exhibits, documents, artifacts, paintings and a large collection of genealogy books referencing many of the prominent families and settlers of Midway and Liberty County.

The museum even has ties to presidents Thomas Jefferson and Theodore Roosevelt.

“Teddy Roosevelt’s mother is Mittie Bulloch, and she was Daniel Stewart’s granddaughter,” Kroell said. “Of course, Fort Stewart is named after Daniel Stewart.”

Across the street from the museum is the historic Midway Cemetery. In the center of the cemetery stands a

tall monument paying tribute to Revolutionary War heroes Stewart and Screven, both buried in the cemetery.

The cemetery also has its fair share of folklore, as several residents seem to refuse to rest in peace.

The two-acre cemetery hosts an annual “Tales and Legends” tour every October. The 2012 event will be at 6 p.m. and 7 p.m. Oct. 26-27.

The museum hosts several annual events, including the Colonial Christmas Tea, which is scheduled for 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Dec. 8.

Hours: Cemetery and church tours are coordinated through the museum, which is open from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Reservations required for groups.

Location: 491 North Coastal Highway (U.S. Highway 17), Midway

Contact: 884-5837

Directions: From Cay Creek, take Charlie Butler Road to Highway 84, turn left and follow Highway 84 for 2.5 miles to U.S. 17 (North Coastal Highway), turn right. The museum, church and cemetery will be two-tenths of a mile down the road.





Dorchester Academy

The American Missionary Association guided the creation of the Dorchester Academy, which was the first post-Civil War school built by and for African-Americans. It served as a

boarding and day school, where children and adults learned to read, write and study the Bible.

“People came from all around,” said Debra Robins, Dorchester Academy’s director.

The school opened with 15 students

and grew each year; people often paid their tuition with vegetables or services.

Dorchester Academy also was a meeting place for several organizers of the civil rights movement, including Martin Luther King Jr.’s Southern

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Christian Leadership Conference. King and his instructors used the center to train thousands of teachers in the basics of voter education and nonviolent social change.

The academy was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1986 and was declared a U.S. National Historic Landmark in 2006.

Hours: 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 2-4 p.m. Saturday. Group tours by appointment.

Location: 8787 E. Oglethorpe Highway, Midway

Contact: 884-2347

Directions: From the Midway Museum, take U.S. Highway 17 back to Highway 84 and turn right. Travel on Highway 84 for 3 miles. The Dorchester Academy will be on the left.



Fort Stewart Museum

The Fort Stewart Museum was founded in 1977 and contains exhibits, research and more than 5,000 objects that chronicle the service of the military and the Army's 3rd Infantry Division.

Visitors can view tanks, uniforms, weapons, helicopters and photographs depicting the sacrifice and service of the 3rd ID, which is headquartered at the largest military installation east of the Mississippi River.

Hours: 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday.

The museum is open to the military and civilians.

Civilians must show photo ID, vehicle registration and proof of auto insurance to enter post. The museum is closed on federal holidays, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day.

Location: 2022 Veterans Parkway,* Hinesville.

Contact: 767-7885

Directions: From Dorchester Academy, head west on Highway 84 for 10.5 miles to Veterans Parkway*. Turn right onto Veterans Parkway and follow the road for 2.3 miles. The museum is on the right.

* Effective May 1, 2012, Frank Cochran Drive became Veterans Parkway.



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LeConte-Woodmanston Plantation and Botanical Gardens

The former inland rice plantation home of renowned scientist and botanist Louis LeConte is a jewel of flora and fauna known as the LeConte-Woodmanston Plantation.

LeConte's father, New Jersey native John Eatton LeConte, established the plantation in 1760, and it later became home to his son's world-renowned botanical garden.

The younger LeConte, who trained as a medical physician, established the gardens with rare plants and herbs with a variety of medicinal purposes. By the early 19th century, botanists from around the world were drawn to LeConte's garden and research. The botanist introduced the camellia to Georgia, and he may have cultivated 40 different species of flowering bulbs.

Visitors also can walk along the trails and see the tidal flow system



that the plantation used to cultivate rice. The trails provide opportunities to learn about native birds, plants and animals. Bird species, such as waterfowl, herons and egrets, are especially plentiful during the migratory season. The Coastal Audubon Society classified the trail as a unique birding habitat.

Hours: By appointment only

Location: 4918 Barrington Ferry Road, Riceboro

Contact: 884-6500

Directions: From the Fort Stewart Museum, take Veterans Parkway* back to Highway 84. Turn right on Highway 84; continue for 3 miles and turn left on Dunlevie Road. Follow Dunlevie for 2 miles and turn right onto E.B. Cooper Highway. Follow E.B. Cooper Highway for 9 miles; turn right onto Barrington Ferry Road. Follow Barrington Ferry Road for 3 miles and turn left at the sign indicating LeConte-Woodmanston Plantation.

* Effective May 1, 2012, Frank Cochran Drive became Veterans Parkway.

Geechee Kunda Cultural Center

Riceboro attraction Geechee Kunda pays tribute to the Geechee/Gullah, who descended from African-Americans brought to the Southeast as slaves. Known as Gullah in the Carolinas and Geechee in Georgia, descendants preserved their African linguistic and cultural heritage largely through isolation.

Jim and Pat Bacote, who are dedicated to preserving and sharing the Geechee language, culture and legacy, run the interactive center out of their home. Located on the site of the former Retreat Rice plantation where many Geechee slaves were forced to work and where many died, the facility houses many African artifacts dating back to the 1700s and offers workshops, demonstrations and lectures about the culture's rich traditions.

"It's wonderful, entertaining and educational, and I enjoy it. There are outstanding performances. I tell people



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about it and hope the word spreads more,” Brunswick resident Vanessa Thomas said during the center’s “Rice, Riddum ’n’ Rime” event in March.

Visitors will see artisans making and selling fishing nets, baskets and pottery. They also can sample many foods considered Southern traditions that were derived from Geechee culture, including black-eyed peas, collard greens, chitlins, rice and peanuts.

Every April, Geechee Kunda hosts The Gathering, a chance to take in meals, art, history lessons and music. In November, direct descendants of the slaves gather for a homecoming and reunion. The Saturday after Thanksgiving, the group gathers for its annual sugar cane grinding festival.

Hours: 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday

Location: 622 Ways Temple Road, Riceboro

Contact: 884-4440

Directions: From LeConte-Woodmanston Plantation, get back on Barrington Ferry Road and turn right on Sandy Run Road. Travel 4.3 miles to South Coastal Highway (U.S. 17) and turn right. Travel about 1 mile and turn left on Ways Temple Road. Follow the road to the Cultural Center entrance.

Liberty Life writer *Patty Leon*, who has made several visits to most of the sites along the trail, compiled this story with facts from the *Liberty County Convention and Visitors Bureau*, “*Liberty County: A Pictorial History*” and “*Sweet Land of Liberty*.” For more information about the trail, go to www.libertycounty.org.



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Cay Creek Wetlands Interpretive Center

189 Charlie Butler Road, Midway

Dorchester Academy and Museum of African-American History

8787 E. Oglethorpe Highway, Midway
 884-2347

Dorchester Village Civic Center

1804 Islands Highway, Midway
 884-3342

Dunham Farms

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Fort Morris

2559 Fort Morris Road, Midway
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 884-5999

Fort Stewart Museum

2022 Veterans Parkway,* Building T904, 2, Fort Stewart
 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday; closed Sundays, Mondays and federal holidays
 767-7885

Geechee Kunda Cultural Arts Center and Museum

622 Ways Temple Road, Riceboro
 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday
 884-4440 or 272-8061
www.geecheekunda.com

Hinesville Area Arts Council Gallery

102 Commerce St., Hinesville
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www.hinesvillearts.com

LeConte-Woodmanston Rice Plantation and Botanical Gardens

4918 Barrington Ferry Road, Riceboro
 Tours are by appointment from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday
 884-6500
www.leconte-woodmanston.org

Melon Bluff Nature and Heritage Preserve

2999 Islands Highway, Midway
 880-4500

Midway Museum

Includes Midway Church and Cemetery
 491 N. Coastal Highway, Midway
 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday
 884-5837
www.themidwaymuseum.org

Old Liberty County Jail & Museum

302 S. Main St., Hinesville
 Generally open 9 a.m.-noon and 1-4 p.m. Monday-Friday
 Tours scheduled by appointment
 877-4332
www.discoverdowntown.com

Seabrook Village

660 Trade Hill Road, Sunbury (Midway)
 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday
 884-7008

**Effective May 1, 2012, Frank Cochran Drive became Veterans Parkway.*

Appreciating the arts

Hinesville Area Arts Council enhances quality of life

By Danielle Hipps



Artist Benjamin F. Turner Jr. shows his work to gallery visitors in the spring of 2012.

Whether your inner artist follows in the footsteps of Pablo Picasso, Sir Laurence Olivier or Rachael Ray, one local cultural group is on a mission to help you unleash it.

Founded in 1989, the Hinesville Area Council for the Arts, Humanities and Literature — more commonly known as the Hinesville Area Arts Council — is a driving force for cultural events in Liberty County, and it celebrates art in any medium.

“We have a firm belief that most progressive communities have a strong

arts organization working somewhere in the background to provide an outlet for the creativity and synergy that people bring to the table,” HAAC Chairwoman Leah Poole said. “We think that the arts are not an ‘extra’ part of life; rather, they are in everything that we do whether it’s realized or not.”

The group has several recurring events aimed at boosting arts in the area, such as quarterly book signings, free family movie nights every other month and special events.

In October 2011, the group opened the doors to a downtown Hinesville storefront, and its programs have boomed ever since.

GET INVOLVED

To get involved with the Hinesville Area Arts Council, attend a meeting at 5:30 p.m. on the second Tuesday of every month or email chairman@hinesvillearts.com. The HAAC gallery is open weekdays with hours subject to change.

Hinesville Area Arts Council
102 Commerce St., Hinesville
www.hinesvillearts.com

ABOUT THE HINESVILLE AREA ARTS COUNCIL

Individual membership in the HAAC is open to all at an annual cost of \$20.

The group is a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation that is funded primarily through the Margaret Martin Trust Fund. It continues to operate through support of its members and organizations such as Osteen & Osteen Trial Lawyers, the Liberty County Board of Commissioners, the city of Hinesville, Target and the Hinesville Downtown Development Authority.

The 102 Commerce St. facility features a gallery with rotating monthly exhibitions that introduce locals to arts created within their community.

Past exhibitors include longtime quilter Dewayne Stewart, coastal landscape painter Benjamin F. Turner, photographer Steve Berg and folk artist Jerry Poppell.

“I’ve called myself a closet artist, because when I paint something, it just goes in the closet, and I start painting another one,” said Poppell, who co-owns Farmer’s Natural Foods.

But Poppell’s work was unveiled in May thanks to an exhibition opportunity at the space.



Left: One of the council's French cooking classes made this ratatouille with rice, bread and apple tart. Above: Contestants called on the "The Wizard of Oz" for the Magic Cupcake War in the spring of 2012.

"Most everybody was saying, 'I had no idea you liked to paint,' or 'You really surprised me,'" Poppell said about the opening reception for his art.

"I know that a lot of people don't have a lot of confidence when it comes to art. I think it's going to make it a social environment, so people don't take themselves so seriously — we don't want them to be too hard on themselves."

— Artist and art teacher
Ashley Cuevas

"I just want to encourage and inspire others to find their passion," he said. "Like me, you may not be the most gifted and talented, but the spark of creativity is inside all of us."

And that spark is just what HAAC leaders hope to ignite.

Artist and art teacher Ashley Cuevas, who also exhibited at the space, offers several series of fine arts classes

geared toward participants of all ages.

For children, past class topics include multicultural art for kids, comics cartooning for teens and tweens and drawing for adult beginners.

And for more timid adults, the group hosts wildly popular adult painting parties, where attendees can bring their own inspirational adult beverage of choice and unlock their inner artist while an instructor guides them, step-by-step, through completing a piece.

"I know that a lot of people don't have a lot of confidence when it comes to art," Cuevas said before the first event in February. "I think it's going to make it a social environment, so people don't take themselves so seriously — we don't want them to be too hard on themselves."

"Flowers are still flowers if you change the shape and proportion, so it's not as intimidating because you don't have to have any proportion correct. ... We're hoping it's something that people feel like, 'OK, I can try that, and not, 'Oh, there's no way I could paint that.'"

Now known as Liberty County Stroke by Stroke, the parties usually require a \$25 registration fee that

JOIN THE CO-OP

The HAAC also operates an application-based artist co-op, where artists trade two hours of their time to keep the facility open during weekdays in exchange for one hour of their time to use the space for instruction.

For more information on the program, email chairman@hinesvillearts.com

covers all materials and supplies.

In May, calligraphy expert Havie Youngblood began offering classes in the handmade typography medium that spans a range of eras and styles.

The group also launched a series of yoga classes in May, taught by Liza Xilot. The classes include yoga for everybody, Spanish yoga, mom and baby stretching and a prenatal class aimed at relaxation.

Visual arts not your forte? The group also offers classes for drama and cooking and a host of other events.

In the spring of 2012, drama teacher Jessi Dye offered weekly classes for students in grades six through 12 that covered every aspect of theater, from acting, props and costumes to directing and house management.

Emerging and experienced thespians will have the chance to try their hands at two Liberty Theatre



Hinesville native Jerry Poppell stands with his folk art, which was on display in May 2012 at the gallery.

Company shows in 2012 and one in February 2013, according to HAAC Vice Chairwoman Jennifer Buehler.

As the HAAC performing arts arm, Liberty Theatre Company has offered local actors several opportunities to showcase their talents with productions of “Steel Magnolias,” “A Doll’s House,” and the original play “Pieces of Home,” written by Poole.

In the 2012-13 season, Buehler said the group is in talks to produce a dinner theater show in October, a children’s show in December and an adult drama in the spring.

The group also offers more sensory experiences with cuisine-oriented programming, such as cooking classes.

Poole said cooking classes are available every other month, and instructors offered passports to Italy and France in previous classes.

During the classes, attendees learn how to prepare the foreign dishes before savoring their complex flavors.

In the winter and spring, the group also hosts a Cupcake War, where bakers show off their kitchen prowess with intricately decorated miniature cupcakes. It’s a good-hearted competition where everyone wins — because judging is open to the public, and it’s a job that requires a whole lot of sampling.

The group’s largest annual event is Blues & BBQ, a day-long festival filled with live blues musicians and plates of finger-lickin’ good barbecue. The 2012 event will be held Saturday, Sept. 29.

Writing workshops also are on the horizon, Poole said. In the summer of 2012, the group also will begin the second phase of facility renovations, which will accommodate concurrent classes and a wider array of offerings.

With so much going on, the Hinesville Area Arts Council is likely to have something for everyone.



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Compiled by Patty Leon

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The coastal marshes are a perfect place for outdoor enthusiasts to explore by boat or kayak and where anglers cast lines for miles of inshore and offshore fishing. Several hunting preserves and nature preserves also offer a chance to get up close and personal with wildlife.

For those keen on sports and man-made diversions, area organizations provide opportunities for recreational activity for children and young adults, while six area golf courses offer a place to tee off and appreciate Coastal Georgia's sun and warmth.

Locals stay active with competitive sports and playgrounds made possible through the county recreation department and other groups.



The Liberty County Recreation Department

offers sports and activities for children and adults of all ages throughout the year, including leagues for baseball, softball, basketball, soccer and volleyball. The LCRD also keeps kids moving and entertained with summer programs held at several parks and facilities throughout the county.

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<http://lcrd2.homestead.com>**

The Liberty County/Armed Services YMCA

aims to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirits, minds and bodies for all. The Liberty Y, a branch of the YMCA of Coastal Georgia, serves individuals and families in Liberty County and Fort Stewart with sports and activities for children, workout facilities for adults and group fitness programs.

**201 Mary Lou Drive, Hinesville
368-9622
www.ymcaofcoastalgeorgia.org**

The St. James Sports Center

offers children on the east end of the county a variety of sports and academic programs ranging from AAU and YBOA basketball to day camps and after-school programs. St. James also provides adults with recreational opportunities. The center has a weight room, game room, concessions, a full kitchen and a basketball court in addition to the recently added baseball field and soccer field. The center also anticipates expanding the gym with a second basketball court and

sporting area for wrestling, tae kwon do and music venues.

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PARKS | GOLF COURSES | PASS AND PERMITS | CIVIC CLUBS NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS | SERVICE GROUPS

PARKS

Bradwell Park

Commerce Street and East M.L. King Jr. Drive, Hinesville
Gazebo and park benches

Hinesville Swimming Pool

Highway 84, Hinesville
Pool, benches, playground, restrooms, softball fields, walking trail

Irene B. Thomas Park

Sharon Street, Hinesville
Fishing pond, full kitchen, gas and charcoal grills, park benches, picnic tables, playground, restrooms, walking trail

Jack Carter Park

East Mills and Rebecca streets, Hinesville
Basketball court and playground

James A. Brown Park

Patriots Trail, Hinesville
Restrooms, walking trail, softball fields

Liberty County Recreation Department Skate Park

Highway 84, Hinesville
Ramps and rails

Liberty Independent Troop Park

Highway 84, Hinesville
Football field, park benches, playground, restrooms, softball fields, swimming pool, walking trail

Jones Creek Park

Isle of Wight Road, Midway
Public landing for small boats

Riceboro Dock

Highway 17 South, Riceboro
Public boat landing with large fishing pier

Sunbury Dock

Sunbury Road off of Highway 38
Public land with direct access to the Intracoastal Waterway

Gum Branch Park

Highway 196, Gum Branch
Playground, picnic pavilion with kitchen, restrooms, basketball/tennis court, softball fields, walking trail with workout stations

Joseph Miller Park

Highway 84, near Midway
Picnic pavilion, restrooms, basketball court, walking trail, softball field

Eve Park at Half Moon

Next to Colonels Island Marina
Screened-in picnic tables, restrooms,

kitchen with charcoal grill, playground

Briar Bay Park

Barrington Ferry Road, near Riceboro
Playground, picnic pavilion with kitchen, restrooms, basketball court, volleyball court, workout station, lighted ball field, walking track

Hillery Park

Carter Road, Walthourville
Picnic tables, restrooms, kitchen, charcoal grill, playground, walking trail, softball field

Jesse Stevens Park

Highway 84 East at Dorchester
Academy
Playground, ball field, picnic table seating, restrooms, kitchen, charcoal grill

Holmestown Park

Westfield Road, Holmestown
Playground, basketball court, picnic tables, restrooms, kitchen, charcoal grill

Main Street Park/Liberty Trail

South Main Street, Hinesville
Gazebo, park benches, walking trail

Stafford Pavilion

Highway 84, Hinesville
Football field, full kitchen, picnic table seating, playground, restrooms, softball fields, swimming pool

GOLF COURSES

Cherokee Rose Country Club

225 Cherokee Trail, Hinesville
Semiprivate, 18 holes
876-5503

Sterling Links Golf Club

53 Sterling Links Way, Richmond Hill
Public, 18 holes
727-4653
www.sterlinglinksgolf.com

Taylor's Creek Golf Club

2150 Gulick Ave., Fort Stewart
Public, 18 holes
767-2370

Waterford Landing Golf Club

731 Waterford Landing Road,
Richmond Hill
Public, 18 holes
727-4848

Black Creek Golf Club

Bill Futch Road, Ellabell
Semiprivate, 18 holes
858-4653
www.blackcreekgolfclub.com

Sapelo Hammock Golf Club

500 Marshview Drive, Shellman Bluff
Semiprivate, 18 holes
832-4653
www.sapelohammock.com

PASS AND PERMIT OFFICE

Fort Stewart Pass & Permit Office

Ga. Highway 144, Fort Stewart
435-8061 or 435-8033

Located in front of the gun and archery ranges, the Fort Stewart Pass & Permit Office is the place to go to purchase on-post hunting and fishing permits. After purchase, remember to pick up your instructional package, which will guide you through the automated check-in process.

The office is open from 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Friday and from 7 a.m.-3 p.m. on holidays, Saturdays and Sundays.

For information on hunting and fishing at Fort Stewart, go to www.stewart.army.mil/dpw/wildlife/Home%20page.htm or www.stewart.army.mil/dpw/fish/default.htm.

CIVIC CLUBS

Al Sarrar Shrine Club

572-4823

Hinesville Lions Club

631-1046
hinesvillelions@yahoo.com

Hinesville Rotary Club

432-8577

Hinesville/Fort Stewart Shrine Club

368-7470

Liberty County Branch of the NAACP

376-2578
libertycountynaacp@gmail.com

Liberty Coastal Lions

876-8324
gbruce2006@yahoo.com
www.libertycoastallions.org

Liberty County Kiwanis

libertykiwanis@gmail.com

Knights of Columbus

Council 10210 – Franciscan Martyrs of Georgia
271-1126

MASONIC GROUPS

Hinesville Masonic Lodge #271

368-5619

Button Gwinnet Chapter 497 Order of Eastern Stars

368-8076

SORORITIES

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority

Hinesville Alumnae Chapter
884-2024
www.hinesvilledst.com

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority

Nu Rho Omega Chapter
npoaka@yahoo.com
www.nurhoomega.org

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

American Cancer Society

Relay for Life of Liberty County
912-355-5196
www.cancer.org

American Diabetes Association

Kiss-A-Pig
912-353-8110
www.diabetes.org

American Heart Association

678-224-2000
1-800-257-6941
www.heart.org

March of Dimes

912-354-5900
www.marchofdimes.com/georgia

United Way of the Coastal Empire — Liberty Office

Brantley Building, Suite A
135 E. M. L. King Jr. Blvd., Hinesville
368-4282
www.uwce.org

SERVICE GROUPS

Dorchester Improvement Association

369-3407

Keep Liberty County Beautiful

9397 Oglethorpe Highway, Midway
880-4888
www.keeplibertybeautiful.org

Liberty Humane Shelter

279 Briarwood Circle, Hinesville
876-3647
www.libertyhumaneshelter.com

American Red Cross

218 Frasier Drive, Hinesville
876-3975
www.savannahredcross.org

Junior League of Savannah

28 E. 41st St., Savannah
912-790-1002
www.jrleaguesav.org

LEISURE

Hot Happenings

Annual events are sure to please

By Evanne Floyd



MLK Jr. parade

Every January on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, a procession of community members winds its way through the streets of Hinesville to mark the great leader's social and political contributions. King was known to visit the Midway area for rest and relaxation, and his ties still run deep. Local businesses, family groups and organizations participate in the parade, which ends with a ceremony at Bradwell Institute. Parade entry fees go toward supporting the following year's celebrations and scholarship funds. This event is organized by the Liberty County Martin Luther King Jr. Observance Association.

Colonels Island

St. Patrick's Day Parade

If the Savannah St. Patrick's Day festivities are too wild for your taste, ride out to the east end of Liberty County for a special show of emerald, usually held during the day on March 17. During this neighborhood event, you'll find a long line of decorated golf carts, homemade floats and lots of laughs.



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The best part of our trip to Jacksonville:

We never got there.



Liberty County...amazing what you can do here.



Arts



Nature



Fort Stewart



History

We had heard a lot of good things about Jacksonville. The beaches, the shopping, the restaurants! But along the way, we stopped off in Liberty County for a bite to eat. What we found was a feast of authentic American culture--with delightfully unexpected touches. Blue Herons nestled in marsh grasses. Blooming Red Bud trees, a tribute to the fallen soldiers of the 3rd Infantry Division. Sumptuous dining at a riverfront tree house. A historic Liberty Trail that leads all the way to a fascinating Colonial past.

As for Jacksonville, we never got there. For the price of a fancy four star dinner, we spent a weekend in the natural, unpretentious Liberty County. Unbelievable, but true.

www.libertycounty.org www.discoverlibertyga.com 912.368.3580





Hinesville farmers market

The official Hinesville Downtown Farmers Market runs from May through the end of October on Thursday nights from 4-8 p.m. — but high demand has led to spring and fall markets, too. Patrons can find a variety of vegetables, homemade breads, desserts and handcrafted goods in Bradwell Park. Visit www.hinesvilledowntown.com.

Midway Arts Festival

Typically held on a Saturday in April, this festival explores various arts of Liberty County. Attendees can meet and greet exhibition artists and authors and watch masterpieces come together at the event, which is held at the Midway Museum. Visit www.themidwaymuseum.org.

Small World Festival

Generally held in late spring, the Small World Festival is a celebration of world cultures that have taken root in Liberty County. Music, dance, food, demonstrations and crafts from around the globe bring Bradwell Park to life. Visit www.hinesvilledowntown.com.

Fort Stewart's July 4 celebration

The annual Independence Day celebration on Fort Stewart draws thousands of supporters from all over the state to enjoy a carnival, petting zoo, entertainers and a free outdoor concert. Held every year on July 4, the festival is one of the largest events in Liberty County and is known to showcase diverse talents. In 2011, "American Idol" winner Fantasia and the Zac Brown Band performed. Visit www.stewartmwr.com.

Summer Slam

The annual outdoor family festival that began as an outdoor sporting and music event now draws close to 20,000 people per year in early July. Visitors can expect a large car, truck and bike show and concerts featuring local and national artists at Salter's Field.

Back-to-School rally

Each year, community organizations unite for the back-to-school rally, which offers parents and guardians a chance to obtain information and supplies for the upcoming school year and allows children to let loose before returning to the classroom. The event features games, rides, food and concerts. The 2012 rally will be Saturday, July 14, at Briar Bay Park in Riceboro.

Blues and BBQ

This annual event is the perfect opportunity to tickle your taste buds and delight your ears. The 2012 event will be Sept. 29 in downtown Hinesville. We're not sure which we like more: the blues musicians and performers or the booths featuring some of the best finger-lickin' barbecue around. Don't miss the cook-off competition between backyard chefs, restaurants and area businesses. Visit www.hinesvilledowntown.com.

Sunbury Blue Crab Festival

Every October, the Sunbury Crab Festival draws crowds to the coast to enjoy seafood and music. The all-day event features a 5K run in the morning, several live music performances and more food than you can eat beginning in the afternoon. Located at the Sunbury Crab Company, this is a

party you won't want to miss.

Scarecrow Stroll and Beggars Night

An annual children's favorite, this event offers safe spooks like downtown trick-or-treating, storytelling, a tour of the "haunted" Liberty County Jail and an outdoor movie. In 2011, more than 10,000 people turned out for the festivities, which usually are held the Friday before Halloween.

Veterans Day parade

Join the East Liberty County American Legion Post 321 as it commemorates living and fallen service members during the annual parade. Every year around Veterans Day, the parade marches through the streets of downtown Hinesville to showcase one of Liberty County's strongest allies: the 3rd Infantry Division. Soldiers, law-enforcement officers and other area organizations make this parade a fun time for all.

Christmas festivities

Community members in Liberty County and Hinesville are dedicated to creating Christmas cheer and keeping it alive. Beginning Dec. 4, 2012, the Hinesville Area Arts Council will host its second annual Christmas Cupcake Wars, a chance for bakers to compete head to head and earn the title of the cupcake victor — and it's a competition where the judges always win. Festivities continue Dec. 5 with a tree-decorating and display contest as well as the annual community Christmas tree lighting. Stay tuned to the Liberty County Chamber of Commerce, www.libertycounty.org, and the Hinesville Area Arts Council, www.hinesvillearts.com.

Christmas in the Park

The annual Christmas in the Park is dedicated to ensuring every child experiences the magic of the holidays with a Santa visit, live choral performances, games, activities and more in Bradwell Park. In 2012, the Liberty County Chamber of Commerce will host the event at 5:30 p.m. Dec. 6. Visit www.libertycounty.org.

Illuminated Christmas parade

Thousands line the streets every December to see downtown Hinesville brightly lit by an assortment of cars, floats and trucks decked to suit a holiday theme. Area businesses, churches and other organizations participate in this opportunity to spread cheer throughout the town, and shops along the route usually stay open late for the spectators.

Business shows positive economic outlook

By Evanne Floyd



Thomas Hill Jewelers sales associate LaVay Sphar discusses rings with shoppers Angela McIntosh and Michelle Thompson. The store is one of several locally owned businesses that are going strong.

Liberty County is one of the few areas to emerge from the economic downturn relatively unscathed. In a time when many businesses are shutting their doors and closing for good, this region has seen growth in the business sector.

Throughout the county, entrepreneurs have opened their doors to consumers. Small businesses have dominated the area, and their numbers continue to grow. In 2006 — the last year of growth before numbers lev-

eled off amid the economic downturn — only 64 of the 970 business licenses issued in Hinesville were for new businesses. Those numbers stalled for a few years before rebounding in 2011, when entrepreneurs requested 115 licenses for new business out of the 956 licenses requested.

In 2011, trade-based businesses inundated the Hinesville market. Thirty-four new plumbing, landscaping, electrical and handyman services obtained business licenses in the city, followed by 17 emerging businesses in manage-

ment, photography, event planning and real estate.

According to Small Business Labs, an offshoot of Emergent Research, small-business markets are expected to continue increasing in 2012, as industry experts say customers want to have personal interactions when purchasing. Because they already are entrenched in the community, private business owners have the upper hand in offering intimate service — and many are using social networks to compete with larger businesses.

Social media has played an active role in increasing the competitiveness of small businesses. While traditional advertising drives business to the stores, social media can help provide the personal feel many are seeking.

The Liberty County Chamber of Commerce saw an uptick in involvement in 2011, with 159 new members recruited and another 289 renewing their memberships. As of January 2012, the group's member-to-member discount program had 93 participating businesses that keep commercial connections alive.

“We almost doubled our membership in 2011 and set a goal for 2012 of 100 new members and have already obtained 52 of that number,” chamber CEO Leah Poole said in April. She views the growth as a sign that the chamber is encouraging “folks to get involved in their community, start businesses and ultimately be encouraged by a supportive business climate.”

“We certainly encourage our members and their employees to shop locally as well, specifically with our member-to-member discount program, which members can use throughout

the community,” Poole added.

The chamber also has seen a surge of home-based and female-owned businesses, which adds to the diversity found in Liberty County. The diversity lends itself to a successful market where individuals can find many goods and services without crossing the county line.

“The chamber is encouraged by area business growth and looks forward to a tremendous 2012,” Poole said. “For anyone who has done a little research about Hinesville/Liberty County, you should be extremely excited to be a part of what is predicted to become a boomtown by 2020, according to Inman News.”

According to The Census Bureau, the Hinesville-Fort Stewart metropolitan statistical area was the third-fastest-growing metro area in the country between April 1, 2010, and July 1, 2011. In that time, the area grew 3.4 percent — despite the fact that the Hinesville-Fort Stewart area was not listed among the 100 fastest-growing areas between 2000 and 2010.

“For anyone who has done a little research about Hinesville/Liberty County, you should be extremely excited to be a part of what is predicted to become a boomtown by 2020, according to Inman News.”

— Liberty County Chamber of Commerce CEO Leah Poole

Due to this unprecedented growth, area businesses are quickly expanding to meet the needs of community members. Both GeoVista Credit Union and Professional Eye Care plan to leave their former buildings for newer and more efficient offices. There are plans in the works for new GeoVista facilities to be built behind its current location off of West Oglethorpe Highway, and construction is under way for the

eye physician’s new office.

Other businesses around town also are considering expansion because of a high volume of sales. Grace and Mercy Consignment Store opened in October 2010, and by the beginning of 2012, owner Sandra Fullmore already was considering expansion. Stores specializing in selling the old as new have seen some of their busiest years yet.

Resale stores like the New & Not Consignment Shop and Goodwill Industries of the Coastal Empire have reported a swell in sales. Inventory is more diverse because locals are interested in selling and buying used items. Stores attribute an increase in sales to people trying to stretch their funds.

New & Not co-owner Linda Barnes said business has been booming for both sales and purchases at the downtown Hinesville mainstay.

“They like to save money in the first place (if) they’re shopping here,” she said.

The store also has seen a slight uptick in consignments among its 4,500 active accounts.



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Industries embrace Liberty County

By Evanne Floyd

Some are reaping rewards by capitalizing on voids in local business.

CrossFit Hinesville owners Tina and Rowdy Carlson braved the economy to open the alternative fitness center. Now, they plan to double their space on Highway 196 West due to growing interest.

The CrossFit program, dedicated to versatility and group workouts, provides locals with an exercise experience not available at traditional facilities.

“CrossFit [worldwide] is growing 1 percent a day,” Tina Carlson said in early 2012. “People see how different it is from other gyms. It is the sport of fitness.”

Another business owner, Gennaro Esposito, is sticking with what he knows to keep the customer satisfied. After owning several businesses in other parts of the country, Esposito decided to open That’s Italian, a casual restaurant just outside the main gate of Fort Stewart.

The menu, with pizza and pasta, is a lunchtime hit. Esposito is open to future expansions, but he says he’ll stick with authentic favorites to keep customers coming back.

“We are a labor of love. We are not an assembly line,” Esposito said. “We do this with love and passion.”

PROFESSIONAL GROUPS

Hinesville Area Board of Realtors

213 E. Court St., Hinesville
368-4227
www.usamls.net/hinesville/

Hinesville Downtown Development Authority

302 S. Main St., Hinesville
877-4332
www.hinesvilledowntown.com

Liberty County Chamber of Commerce

425 W. Oglethorpe Highway, Hinesville
368-4445
www.libertycounty.org

Liberty County Convention and Visitors Bureau

425 W. Oglethorpe Highway, Hinesville
368-3580
www.discoverlibertyga.com

Liberty County Retired Educators Association

368-0044



Tradeport East Business Center in Midway is home to a Tire Rack distribution center, Target distribution center and Firth Rixson Forgings.

Local enterprises and military operations aren’t the only ones budding in Liberty County — larger and foreign-owned industrial corporations also are claiming their stake on the land and labor pool.

The Liberty County Development Authority, which was created in 1958 by a state constitutional amendment, is dedicated to developing and promoting industry for the public good and welfare of the county.

With business and industrial parks such as the Hinesville Technology Park, the Walthourville and Midway industrial parks, the Riceboro Industrial Complex and Tradeport East and West

business centers, the authority helped bring big-name industries and their jobs to the area.

Firth Rixson Forgings, an industrial presence in Midway, is expanding its 200,000-square-foot manufacturing facility by 20 percent and plans to boost its total employees to 304 when in full production mode.

Floquip Engineering Company (SNF Floquip) also is expanding. The French-owned water-soluble polymers company with a facility in Riceboro recently acquired a 90,000-square-foot facility in the Midway Industrial Park. With the expansion, the company plans to employ 50 additional individuals and increase that number to 100 within five years.

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Liberty County's Tradeport East Business Center is home to the Tire Rack's 242,000-square-foot distribution center.

CTech, or Component Technologies, Elan Technology, Hugo Boss, International Greetings USA, Miller Protective Coating, Truss Mart, Interstate Paper Corporation, Newport Timber, RB Lumber, Target, The Tire Rack, Pace Shave and Waltrich Plastics are among the area's existing industries.

The newest recruit, Florapharm Tea-USA Holdings Inc., which plans to open with 50 employees, is a German manufacturer and distributor of more than 400 varieties of tea.

The authority also is the administrative arm that oversees the MidCoast Regional Airport at Wright Army Air-

field, a joint venture supported by the county, city of Hinesville and the authority.

Seven board members govern the authority, with the chairperson of the county commission and the mayor of Hinesville having automatic seats. The county board of commissioners appoints four positions, and the Hinesville City Council appoints another.

The Liberty County Development Authority

425 W. Oglethorpe Highway, Hinesville
368-3356
www.lcda.com

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