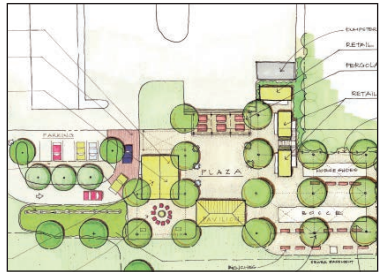




The Oconee Enterprise



Chick-fil-A looks at a new locale

Restaurant eyes Butler's Crossing. Business, **B4**



Oconee native gets scholarship

Teen undergoes military training. Lifestyles, **A7**



Lady Titans claim first title

North Oconee beats Marist in soccer finals. Sports, **B1**

Coming next week

We'll report on the city candidate forum.

Inside

TWO SECTIONS
16 PAGES
20 MAY 2021

- Business **B4**
- Classifieds **B7**
- Crime **A2**
- Crossword **B7**
- Forum **A4**
- Legals **B6**
- Lifestyles **A6**
- Neighbors **B8**
- Obituaries **B6**
- Public Matters **B6**
- Sports **B1**

This issue was mailed Wednesday, May 19 from Watkinsville and Athens, GA. Please inform your post office if it arrives late.



Woman arrested for killing paramedic in car wreck

BY MICHAEL PROCHASKA
Megan Elizabeth Kingston, 34 of Statham, was arrested last week in connection to the September 2020 death of 43-year-old medical responder Jennifer Patrick.

Georgia State Patrol obtained warrants for first degree homicide by vehicle, which is a felony, as well as driving under the influence of multiple substances, open container, driving on the wrong side of the road and reckless driving.

Kingston was allegedly on drugs when she drove the wrong way on Ga. 316 near Dials Mill Road and crashed head-on into Patrick's vehicle.

According to WSB-TV, a witness blew his horn to get Kingston's attention while another driver flashed his lights.

Patrick was a paramedic for National EMS. The company released the following statement after Patrick's death: "Jennifer has served as a dedicated EMS professional for over eight years and has always been committed to providing the best care for her patients during their great-



Kingston

est time of need."

According to her Facebook page, Kingston studied kinesiology and exercise science at Georgia Southern University.

In other crime news, Oconee Sheriff James Hale released a statement on Facebook cautioning citizens about a criminal group prevalent in metro Atlanta that targets members of the Asian and Indian community for burglaries. Hale said there have been several incidents in the Oconee area too.

"The items that are typically taken include money, jewelry and other precious metals," said Hale, who gave the following sugges-

tions to homeowners:

- Do not keep large quantities of money at home.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of money.
- Do not let others know you have a large amount of money or valuables at home.
- Place money and valuables in a bank or safe deposit box.
- Ensure personal safes are bolted or secured to the floor and cannot be removed.
- Make sure home alarm systems are working.
- Use video surveillance systems.
- Don't let others know you are

away from home or out of town.

■ If you notice a suspicious vehicle or person following you, call 911 and do not return home.

"Often times, burglars will check to see if anyone is home by first knocking on your door or ringing the door bell," said Hale. "If an unknown person comes to your residence, make it known that you are home by making noise, turning on a light or speaking to them through the locked door."

Hale continued, "If you are not comfortable or are scared, do not open the door to a stranger. If you feel you need help, call 911 immediately."

Lady Titans on Top



North Oconee High School's girls soccer team members launch into an excited celebratory dog pile moments after winning the 2021 Georgia High School Association Class AAAA state championship. North Oconee beat Marist last Thursday at Duluth High School to claim the trophy. The 3-2 victory marked the first-ever state title win for the Lady Titans, and it gave the North Oconee athletics program its 16th all-time state championship, **B1**. [Photo by Justin Hubbard]

Brodrick becomes mayor

Brodrick addresses role with local bank

BY MICHAEL PROCHASKA

Peter Steckel dropped out of the Watkinsville mayoral race on Tuesday because he is purchasing a house outside of the city limits.

Mayoral candidate Brian Brodrick, who had no other opponents, has won the election by default.



Brodrick

Brodrick and Steckel will still appear on the ballot for the June 15 election.

For Watkinsville City Council Post 1, Carolyn Maultsby will challenge Chuck Garrett. That post was formerly held by Brodrick until he stepped down to run for mayor.

The winners of the June election will still have to run again in November. Brodrick said he has not made a decision on whether or not he will seek re-election in the fall.

Brodrick said he will still participate in the candidate forum Monday at 6:30 p.m. at Bethel Baptist Church.

"People have questions," he said. "I'm happy to sit and answer the questions."

The forum is hosted by the church and the Oconee County Republican Party. Tim Bryant is moderating.

In the past week, there has been significant discussion on the Facebook page "Oconee411," which has about 5,000 members, about Brodrick's position as a board member of Oconee State Bank.

Last year, the city of Watkinsville moved all of its accounts into Oconee State Bank following a committee's recommendation. Brodrick was not part of that committee and recused himself from those discussions. Brodrick said he will not resign from his position with Oconee State Bank.

"Should any issues come up related to Oconee State Bank, I will recuse from those matters as I have previously," Brodrick said.

Brodrick explained that he would recuse himself if the city were to again negotiate the terms of interest rates with Oconee State Bank or the city's relationship with the bank.

However, Brodrick said he does not believe it would be a conflict of interest to be involved in city budget discussions, even though the city's assets are held at Oconee State Bank.

Early voting will be held at Watkinsville City Hall Monday, May 24 through Friday May 28. Advance voting will continue Tuesday, June 1 through June 4 and Monday, June 7 through Friday, June 11. All hours for those dates are from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

State EPD finds tire dump in Farmington

Property has long history of environmental problems going back to the 1980s

BY MICHAEL PROCHASKA
Thousands of tires from a defunct trucking company in Farmington were recently discovered by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division in a wooded area next to the 76 gas station.

This spring, a contractor for the state agency was performing environmental remediation efforts on the 12.14-acre property at 3361 Macon Highway when he found the tires. The landowner is Henry "Buddy" Murrow.

From the 1960s through 1980s, the Murrow family sold seeds, pesticides and fertilizer to the farming community. They also operated a trucking company for a number of years. To delint cotton seeds, they'd soak them in concentrated sulfuric acid. The spent sulfuric acid was disposed of in an onsite earthen impoundment. The property where the tires were found has been the subject of multiple environmental inspections and remedial efforts for over 36 years.

The Environmental Protection Agency issued an administrative order Jan. 4, 1985 to remove all drums containing hazardous substances as a result of improper storage of pesticides.

A story in the Feb. 7, 1985 issue of The Oconee Enterprise



The property where the tires were found once housed a cotton seed delinting operation as well as a trucking business. [Photo by Michael Prochaska]

read, "Under the eyes of state and federal environmentalists, Murrow began the cleanup of leaking cotton poison drums at a storage building."

On May 7, 1987, EPA personnel found a large leachate seepage area with several acres of stressed or dead vegetation.

"Effluent was draining into an unmaten intermittent tributary of Freeman Creek," according to a site chronology provided by the Georgia Environmental

Protection Division.

In October 1989, numerous rusting or deteriorating 55-gallon drums, plastic containers and bags of pesticides were found littering the premises following an EPA site inspection.

An investigation conducted from April 30 to May 4, 1990 found that pesticides had migrated to groundwater. A poisonous chemical was found at "16 times the minimum quantitation limit in an onsite industrial well," accord-

ing to an EPA report. "Elevated levels of inorganic substances near the surface impoundment indicated the leaching of highly acidic waste."

An April 11, 1991 issue of The Enterprise reports that a water source on the property was devoid of aquatic life. County Attorney Daniel Haygood said he remembers that the water was "crystal clear, but nothing alive in it."

Danny Rice of the Georgia Environmental Protection Division of the Department of Natural Resource told this newspaper in 1991 that the pH level of the stream registered high in acidity.

In a letter dated June 29, 1994, the EPD notified Murrow of the site's inclusion on the Georgia Environmental Protection Division Hazardous Site Inventory. The site was listed based on a known release of carbon tetrachloride to groundwater and a known release of lead to soil. Then-EPD Director Harold Reheis said both substances heighten the risk of cancer.

According to a July 7, 1994 issue of The Enterprise, the Board of Commissioners tabled a rezone for the property because of environmental concerns.

SEE TIRES PAGE A2