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PROGRESS EDITION

A LOOK AT DEVELOPMENTS IN LOCAL BUSINESS, EDUCATION, & INDUSTRY IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS



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PROGRESS 2018

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our 2018 Progress special section. Each year in our Progress section we take a reflective look at the past 12 months and highlight some of the events that have impacted the local community in education, business and industry and government. Inside this year's special section, you'll find a recap of local business happenings, a timeline of events related to the local hospital as well as highlights in education news.

We hope that our 2018 Progress special section gives readers insight into where several Baldwin County projects and programs are in their development and that it gives you a better sense of the local climate and how it is helping shape the future.

Natalie Linder

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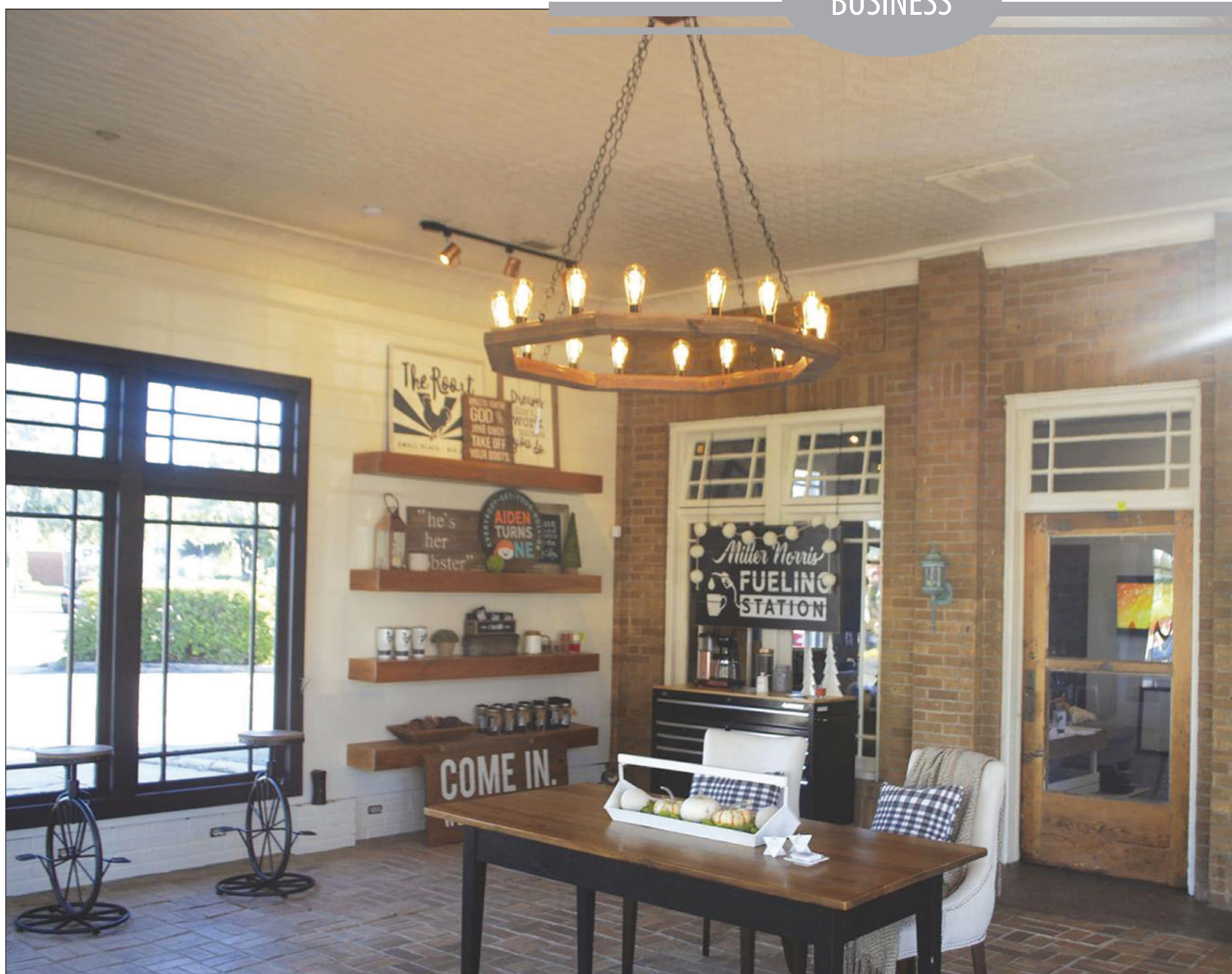
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PROGRESS 2018

BUSINESS



U-R file photo

The Roost, located at 133 E. Hancock St., is the brick and mortar space for Codee Rainey Designs, a graphic and interior design business owned by Codee and Ross Rainey. It is one of a handful of new and unique service-based businesses in downtown Milledgeville.

Downtown business growth reflects evolving trends



U-R file photo

Located at 116 N. Wayne St., The Mod Podge Mama is a combined art studio, exhibit space and a venue for private art events and classes.

By CATHERINE DEAN

newsroom@unionrecorder.com

Over the past year, the overall landscape of downtown Milledgeville has not changed. A few businesses have left, while new ones with a more service-based approach moved in to replace those lost.

“Entrepreneurs are constantly evolving as our community and trends change,” said Carlee Schulte, executive director for the city of Milledgeville’s Main Street/Downtown Development Authority. “Businesses develop more flexible models when filling a niche need.”

Although retail shops and restaurants continue pulling people to downtown, a few new businesses seek to supply unique experiences for clients.

“We have three new service-based business that fulfills specific wants and needs within our community — Mod Podge Mama, The Roost and The Apothecary,” said Schulte.

The Roost, located at 133 E. Hancock St., is the brick and mortar space for Codee Rainey Designs, a

graphic and interior design business owned by Codee and Ross Rainey. Her studio occupies the rear half of the building while the front space is available for small gatherings such as meetings, baby showers and personal consultations.

“We are now finishing up renovations we started last August,” said Rainey. “I conduct most of my interior design business online and at the home or business of my client. There are no specific hours of operation at The Roost for that reason.”

Rainey says the renovation of the site has gone so beautifully that she wanted to share it with the community by offering it as rental space. She will eventually fill the front area with custom designs.

She added: “I look forward to creating a showroom for my custom interior designs, but, that will take a while to achieve.”

Located at 116 N. Wayne St., The Mod Podge Mama is a combined art studio, exhibit space and a venue for private art events and

classes. Art camps for children will also be held at the location this summer.

The business is owned by life-long artist Susan Bergeron, who wanted to create a local center for learning how to create and exhibit art. She wanted to offer services that most people traveled to other cities, such as Athens and Augusta, to receive.

The Apothecary is the office of realtor and historic preservationist Ross Sheppard. Located at 125 S. Wayne St., the facility is a collaborative workspace that is available to rent for events as well as cottage industry endeavors.

Another business new to downtown is Miles of Styles, a high-end resale boutique, which relocated to 134 S. Wayne from North Columbia/ U.S. Highway 441.

“I am overall pleased with the move away from the speedway of 441,” said owner Heidi Martin. “I would recommend to city officials that more focus could be placed on the businesses of Wayne Street. A lot of foot traffic

stays on Hancock, and so many wonderful shops occupy Wayne.”

Milledgeville Main Street consistently works

to attract new businesses to downtown through financial incentives. Once such program is the 50/50 Façade Match — a

program to improve the outside appearances of the occupied buildings.

See **GROWTH**, page 3C

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Blackbird Coffee's new multi-use space, located right next door, is accessible through a double-door opening near the rear of the existing storefront.

Blackbird unveils expansion, new performance space

Downtown fixture and small back coffee roaster Blackbird Coffee recently opened its new multi-use space, creating an arena for musical, comedic and theatrical performances as well as private events.

Overflow seating for Blackbird is now available, and the new 90-seat theater features a functioning light grid and full sound system.

Owners Jimmy and Iona Holder came up with the idea to expand back in 2015, and they began pursuing the space next door that most remember as Puebla's Mexican Restaurant. They wanted more seating for their customers and to create a permanent home for their theater group — Birdhouse Theatre. They achieved both when a sale agreement was reached in late 2016 and renovations began in February of last

year to turn the building into what it has become today.

Now the space aesthetically fits what Blackbird faithful have become accustomed to since the coffee shop opened in 2004. The walls transition from black in what will become the performance space to exposed brick in the seating area. When used strictly in an overflow seating capacity with tables and chairs, Holder said the new space seats 50 to 60 comfortably. For performances and private events that number can be upped to around 100.

Earlier this month, curtains opened in the new space as Birdhouse Theatre presented its first stage production, 'Leveling Up.'

Birdhouse's next big endeavor will be EDGE fest, an annual contest consisting of 10-minute

play entries submitted from all over the world. They will be produced by Birdhouse Memorial Day Weekend and winners (judges' choice and audience choice) will receive \$100. Once finalists are chosen, casting will begin soon after, and she is hoping to find some local talent to put on display.

Now that temperatures have warmed up, both locals and college student sippers can also take their drinks outside to enjoy them in Blackbird's new outdoor covered area.

"It was something we'd kind of always thought about and wanted to have," Jimmy Holder said back in February when asked about the new outdoor space. "We never really knew how that could happen, but as this project kind of unfolded we saw the opportunity to be able to add the outside seating."



Growth

Continued from page 2C

Proceeds from the annual Deep Roots festival completely fund the grant program.

In addition to the

successful Deep Roots festival, Main Street holds other events throughout the year that boost business as well as provide residents and visitors a fun and entertaining time. One upcoming occasion that is growing every year is the Hometown Celebration, this year slated for

May 4.

"It is essentially just a block party for the community to come together, listen to music, enjoy our downtown and celebrate our historic downtown," said Schulte.

Despite a few businesses closing or relocating outside

of downtown, progress has been made, especially in the renovation of spaces that were not previously available for purchase or rent. Blackbird Coffee owners, Jimmy and Iona Holder, have renovated the connecting space next to their business for this purpose.

"They renovated the space specifically to attract new business to downtown," said Schulte. Schulte remains positive about the gains made by the historic town center.

"Downtown has continued to improve over the past ten years. Although we do

see some businesses closing, the past several years we still have had a net gain of businesses in our downtown, despite any closings," added Schulte. "We have a good mix of businesses right now, and I think that is such a positive attribute for any downtown."



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A month by month look at business ventures



Cogentes

April 2017
The Baldwin County Board of Commissioners names Milledgeville-based C&A Aviation as the new fixed-base operators of the Baldwin County Airport. The company assumed control of the airport Jan. 1.

May
Mac's Yaks kayak rental service opens in Milledgeville. The business offers kayak rentals and shuttle services to those wishing to paddle the Oconee River.

Officials with the Oconee Regional Medical Center announce the hospital's sale to Macon-based Navicent Health, allaying fears that the hospital might close its doors due to financial difficulties. The hospital's continued existence has had a massive effect on the local economy.

June
The Milledgeville-Baldwin Chamber of Commerce names Milledgeville Information Technology firm Cogentes its 2017 Small Business of the Year. Cogentes joined the Market Basket restaurant, the

Goebel Media Group, and Bodyplex as recent winners of the award.

Cravings soup, salad, and sandwiches opens on West Hancock Street downtown. The business offers traditional American and Taiwanese dishes including Bubble Tea, a Taiwanese beverage made from tea, fruit, and other ingredients.

July
The Mod Podge Mama art studio opens on North Wayne Street downtown. Specializing in parties, special events, and group art classes, the studio provides a space for amateur and advanced artists to show off their work in a social setting.

August
Bob's Vacuum Cleaner Center celebrates 40 years of operation in Milledgeville. Originally started in 1977, the business specializes in vacuum cleaner and sewing machine sales and repair.

Local music producer Rafi San Inocencio opens a music studio, Rafasan Music, in Milledgeville. Specializing in music production and mastering, the studio furthers the rapid growth of the city's burgeoning music scene.

September

Zaxby's Chicken relocates from its former home to a new building on North Columbia Street. Located across the street from the original, the new location is equipped with a larger parking lot and accounts for less traffic congestion during peak hours.

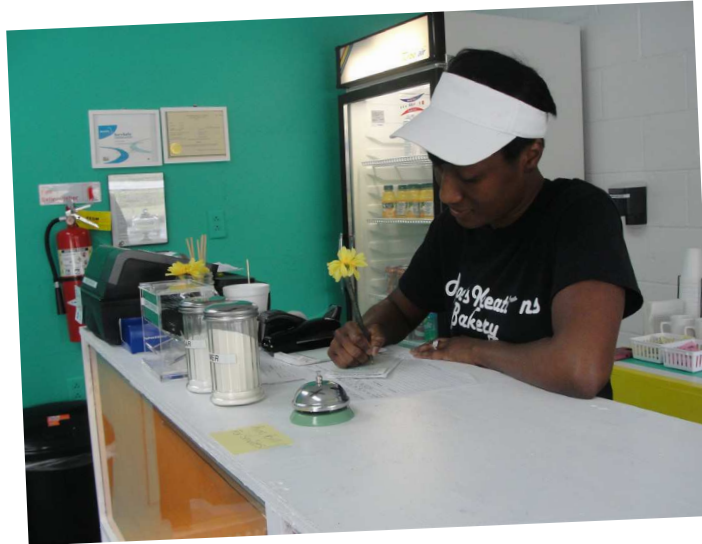
October
Aubri Lane's restaurant announces plans to close its downtown location and serve as the full-time chefs at The Club at Lake Sinclair. While the restaurant is located in the country club, it remains open to the public.

After more than 30 years of operation inside Hatcher Square Mall, Stage 1 Family Haircutters comes under new management. Now run by longtime employee Tammy English, the salon now operates on Log Cabin Road in the Twin Lakes Library shopping center.

November
The Georgia Restaurant Association names Amici franchisees Bob Ewing and Jon Joiner as its 2017 co-Restaurateurs of the Year. Given in recognition for Amici's year-by-year success, the award comes amid a massive expansion for the chain that will culminate in more than 20 stores across the Southeast.

The Georgia Downtown Association names Milledgeville Main Street Director Carlee Schulte as President of its Board of Directors for 2018. A former graduate of Georgia College, Schulte earns the appointment after helping Milledgeville on the map with its 2014 Great American Main Street award.

December
The Georgia House Rural Development Council meets in the former state legislative chambers in the Old Capitol building at GMC. Discussing issues such as rural railroads, hospitals, property tax rates, and broadband internet, the council is expected to issue a recommenda-



Hope's Kreations

tion on the steps necessary to improve rural Georgia's economy this year.

January

its huge selection of hot food and baked goods closer to the center of town.

February

The Knight Founda-

for local entrepreneurs to develop their plans, library officials hope to renovate the Milledgeville City Hall Annex for use as the business incubator.

Blackbird Coffee opens an additional space adjoining their downtown shop. A renovation of the suite that formerly sat next door, the new space will serve as overflow seating for the coffee shop and a performance space dubbed the "Birdhouse Theatre".

Krispey Kreme Doughnuts advertises openings for managerial positions at its planned location in Milledgeville. Fpunded in Nashville in 1934, the doughnut shop plans to move into the former home of Zaxby's Chicken.

March
Freddy's Frozen Custard and Steaks announces plans for a new restaurant in Milledgeville. Founded in Wichita in 2002, the restaurant specializes in fast-casual sandwiches and ice cream.

April
National ride-sharing firm Lyft expands its Macon coverage area to include Milledgeville and the Baldwin County area. Essentially an affordable taxi service that operates via an app on customers' smart phones, the company provides a taxi service for cheaper rates than local providers.



Zaxby's

Hope's Creations Bakery opens its new location on North Jefferson street downtown. Formerly located several miles out of town on Highway 49, the bakery brings

tion of Central Georgia awards Baldwin County's Twin Lakes Library System with a \$50,000 business incubation grant. Aimed at providing a physical space



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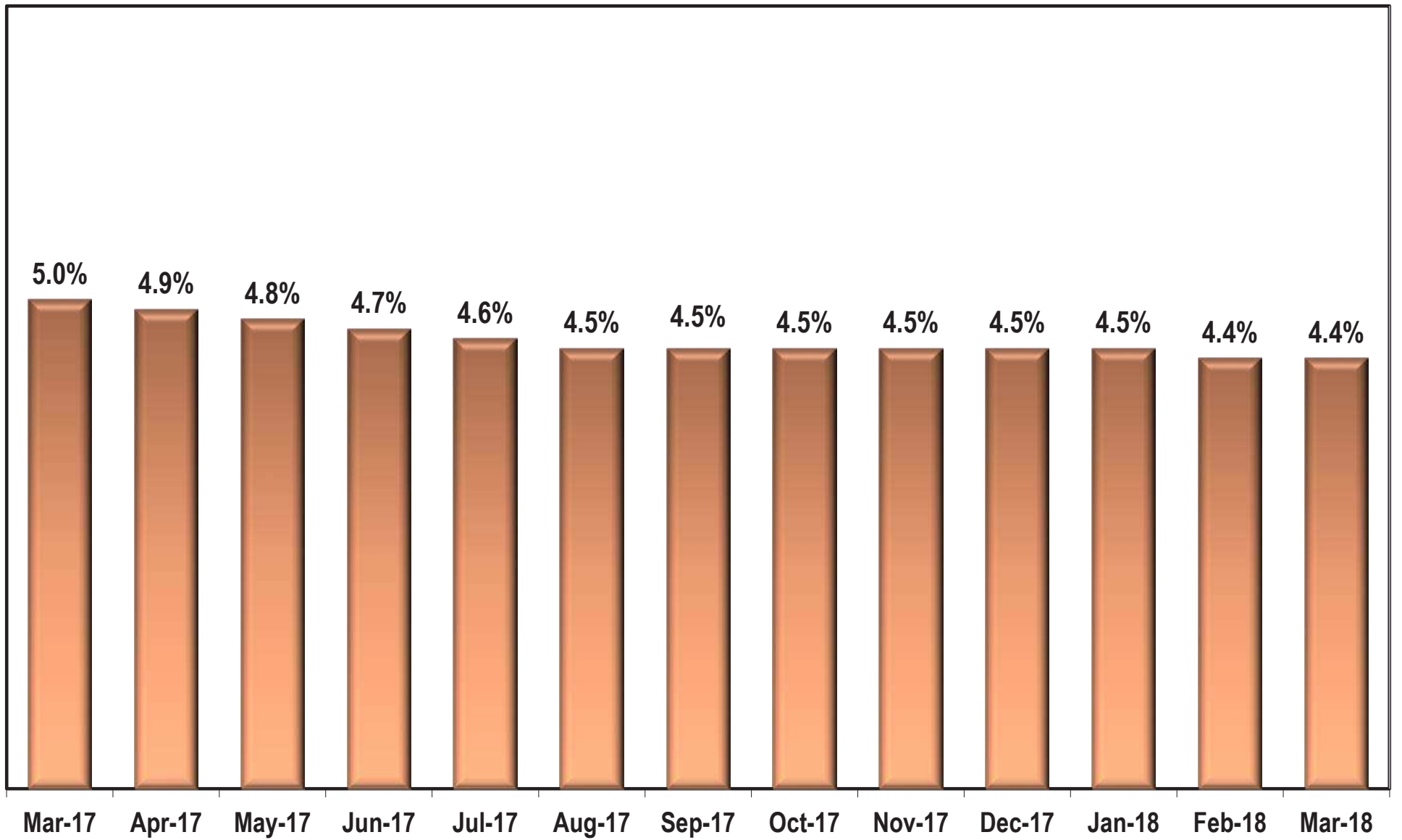
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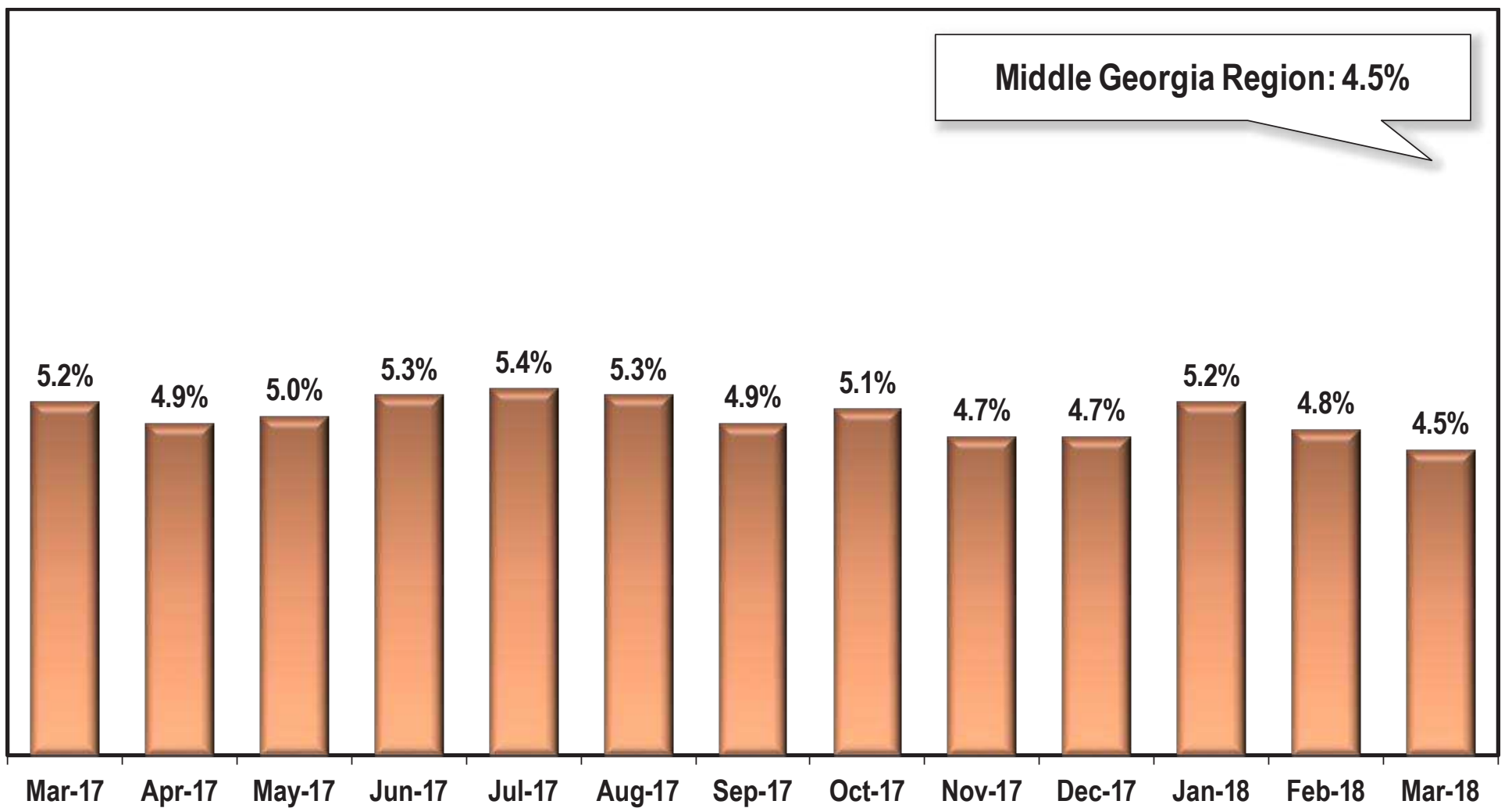
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Georgia Unemployment Rate (Seasonally Adjusted)



Source: Georgia Department of Labor - Mark Butler, Commissioner

Middle Georgia Region Unemployment Rate (Not Seasonally Adjusted)



Note: Middle Georgia Region includes Baldwin, Bibb, Crawford, Houston, Jones, Monroe, Pulaski, Peach, Putnam, Twiggs and Wilkinson counties.

Source: Georgia Department of Labor - Mark Butler, Commissioner

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PROGRESS 2018

GOVERNMENT

Mary Parham-Copelan shares unlikely path to politics



U-R file photo

Mary Parham-Copelan takes the oath of office on the steps of Milledgeville City Hall in this December 2017 file photo.

By CATHERINE DEAN
newsroom@unionrecorder.com

The possibility of making history was not the motive that spurred Mary Parham-Copelan to join the 2017 Milledgeville mayoral race. According to her, she cared deeply about the community and wanted to make a difference through public service.

"I have witnessed so much struggle in our city — in education, in securing and retaining jobs, in keeping talented students from leaving us — I just

wanted to help our community and residents be as successful as possible," said Parham-Copelan.

Native to Milledgeville, Parham-Copelan credits a Christian upbringing, as well as the support and love of her family, for gifting her the power to believe in herself. The oldest of two children, she was raised by her father, stepmother and aunts and uncles.

"My parents worked hard and instilled in me a solid work ethic," she said. "It was my father that showed me how to have a

compassionate heart and a strong commitment to helping others."

Parham-Copelan stresses that her life story is neither unique nor different than most people in town.

"As a young single mother, I struggled to provide for my children while bettering myself for a brighter future," she said. "I always had the hope that I could create a better life through hard work."

Seeking a profession that would provide for her family, Parham-Copelan became a correctional officer

at the Georgia Department of Corrections Women's Institution. She quickly moved up the ranks, serving as a sergeant, lieutenant, captain and adjunct instructor in the training department. In addition to being as a correctional officer, she worked several part-time jobs to make ends meet for her family.

She reflects upon her time at the women's prison as an enriching experience that taught her to have empathy for others in difficult situations.

"Being a struggling single mother myself, I could relate to the challenges the female inmates faced in their own lives," she observed. "I witnessed the heartbreak of separation that affected the mothers as well as the children."

Devotion to family remains one of the most important aspects of life for the mayor. Married for 10 years to husband Charlie Copelan, a retired nurse, they have a blended family — two daughters, one son, and four grandchildren.

She added, "We are very proud of our children and grandchildren. Our family is truly a gift from God."

The mayor is currently employed as a licensed realtor for Century 21 Old Capitol Realty and as a bus operator for the Baldwin County Transportation Department. She also serves as the pastor and CEO of Word of Life Interdenominational

Bible Church.

As a religious leader, Parham-Copelan feels a profound responsibility to uplift others. Her ministry contributes to many charitable causes including helping needy families with food and utility bills, as well as providing safe houses and hotel rooms for battered women organizations.

As mayor, she is hyper-focused on creating a city that moves forward positively and progressively.

She said, "My desire as mayor is to revive our economic growth and development to make our community stronger for current and future generations of Milledgeville residents."

One of her greatest passions is education and she takes pride in that she, along with her children, are products of the Baldwin County schools. She holds a degree in theology and is seeking to further her education with a master's degree in divinity.

"I believe education is the key to lifting someone out of poverty," she explained. "I take every opportunity to encourage high school dropouts to return to school or earn their GED."

As mayor, she believes she has an opportunity to be a role model for young women. Along with other prominent women in the community, she is developing a nonprofit to help the rising generation of women succeed.

"Women Working

Together to Help Others Achieve Success (WVWOAH) will focus on instilling self-respect and confidence in young women," she said. "Young ladies need to learn to love themselves and feel self-worth."

Being new to politics, Parham-Copelan brings a fresh perspective and positive energy to the mayor's office. She admits her first six months on the job have come with a learning curve but feels she can help the city move forward.

"I am looking forward to holding town hall meetings to listen to our residents' concerns and desires," she stressed. "I think there is a great need to listen to your constituents and harness their ideas that will uplift the entire community."

In addition to holding town hall meetings, the mayor wants to educate the population on voting rights. She would like to teach people that their efforts will count, and everyone has the responsibility to vote their values.

Making history as the first woman elected to the office is just one part of the mayor's story. She wants to convey her commitment to making Milledgeville the best city possible.

"I want everyone to know that with every issue that arises, I will do my homework, see all sides, and will do my best to make the right decision for our residents and our city."

New county manager welcomes new challenges

By CATHERINE DEAN
newsroom@unionrecorder.com

A transplant to the deep south from California, the newly hired manager for Baldwin County, Carlos Francisco Tobar, along with his wife Rebekah and their children, have embraced small town living with ease.

"My wife loves small, close-knit communities where everyone connects personally to each other," said Tobar. "That environment is supportive of family life in so many ways."

A native of San Francisco, Tobar moved his family from the west coast to Jacksonville, Fla. in 2009, to begin work as the city's director of mass transit. He subsequently moved into county administrator positions for Jeff Davis and Grady counties in Georgia.

It was on a family trip to the north Georgia mountains that first exposed the Tobars to the beauty of the former

state capitol.

"We could not believe how breathtaking downtown Milledgeville was," he observes. "We wanted to know more about this lovely town."

Tobar commutes to Milledgeville each day from his current home in Cairo. His wife is a preschool teacher at Pine Level Baptist Church (PLBC) where the family attends worship. The couple has four children: Solomon, 21; Emily, 19; Noah, 15; and Miqueas, 14.

"We have fallen in love with Georgians," said Tobar. "The people of this state have been warm, welcoming, and supportive of us. We are enjoying making the south our home."

Raised Catholic by his parents, Salomon and Elvira, Tobar had never been exposed to an evangelical congregation until he was invited to attend a Baptist church in Sacramento.

"I was originally invited so I could get introduced

to a couple of single young women," he said laughing as he admitted to his initial intentions. "I instead met another young lady who would become my wife. We would end up taking over the church's youth ministry together for the next three years."

Tobar was not only immediately drawn to his wife Rebekah, but also the new style of worship that contrasted with his Catholic upbringing.

"I had never heard the gospel preached with such passion before," he added.

He stresses that faith is center of his family life and church is the foundation that never shifts — despite moving to new towns and states for his career. He and Rebekah continue their ministry by serving as fifth grade Sunday school teachers at PLBC.

He has volunteered his time to several charities throughout his life, including the Salvation Army, the Boys & Girls Club of America, and Big Brothers/Big Sisters. He

is a current member of the Kiwanis Club of Cairo.

Tobar takes pride in his extensive public works history, which includes experience in city mass transit, development and construction of public facilities and infrastructure, and county administration and management. He has received many professional accolades for his efforts including local, state and national awards.

"I enjoy solving issues and helping communities live up their potential," he said.

He was attracted to the position in Baldwin County because it proposed new and exciting challenges.

He said: "I believed the commissioners wanted to move this county forward and I could assist in that journey."

Although he admits the county does have challenges that other communities may not he assures the problems will be solved with the dedication of all county officials working together.



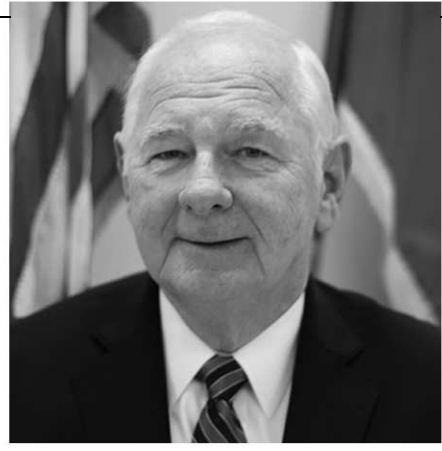
U-R file photo

Carlos Tobar took the helm as Baldwin County's newest county manager late last year. 'I believed the commissioners wanted to move this county forward and I could assist in that journey,' he says.

"I truly believe the commissioners want to make our community attractive for its residents as well

as industry and tourism," he added. "And I plan to do my best to make this happen."

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EDUCATION

BHS graduation rate sets new mark

Baldwin High School's graduation rate increased to a record high during the 2016-2017 school term.

The rate for the 2016-17 school year grew from 86.1 to 88.8 percent, marking a record high for the district as well as a 22.2 percent growth over the past four years. This was the third consecutive year that a new record has been set for Baldwin High School after posting a rate of 86.1 percent in 2016 and 79.8 percent in 2015.

Not only has a new record been set locally, but this is also the third year in a row that Baldwin High's rate has been higher than the state. The statewide 2017 graduation rate was reported at 80.6 percent.

"Thanks to the hard work of our students, teachers, administrators and support staff, along with strong collaboration with parents and community partners, we have been able to significantly increase our graduation rate in a short period of time. It is exciting to see our efforts pay off," said Baldwin County Schools Superintendent Dr. Noris Price in a press release.

She added: "We are making steady progress and seeing a greater percentage of our students graduating from high school with more options. This is another great victory for our school district and the Baldwin County community."

Area school districts' 2017

graduation rates

■Baldwin County: 88.8 percent

■Hancock County: 95.2 percent

■Jones County: 85.4 percent

■Putnam County: 90.7 percent

■Washington County: 87.9 percent

■Wilkinson County: 93.3 percent

■State of Georgia: 80.5 percent

According to data on the state department of education website, www.gadoe.org, Baldwin 262 students out of the 295-student cohort. At the state level, this is the first year the statewide graduation rate has risen above the 80 percent mark using the adjusted cohort formula that is required by federal law.

Last year's statewide rate was 79.2 percent and the adjusted cohort calculation was first used for the 2010-11 school term. The adjusted cohort graduation rate is defined by the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) as the number of students who graduate in four years with a regular high school diploma divided by the number of students who form the adjusted cohort for the graduating class. More simply put, students who enter the ninth grade together make up a cohort and that number is subtracted or added to based on the number of transfers into or out of the cohort.



Cyber security degree offered at GMC

By ALAINA MINSHEW
newsroom@unionrecorder.com

Georgia Military College offers an associate of science degree in cyber security that allows students to develop basic programming, networking and information security skills.

"It's goes along with computer science, but has an element added to it of looking at software called Python, which is used in cyber security for protecting systems," said Tianna M. Marynell, division chair of business and computer information systems at GMC. "That's just the language we chose. They get an

introductory course into cyber security."

With the degree students can go on to get a bachelor's or master's at a four-year institution such as Georgia Southern and Georgia Tech.

"There are several institutions that have a cyber security program," Marynell said. "One is Augusta University, and as we were actually developing this program we were talking with professors over there and having them look at our program."

There are a number of career options in the cyber security field in the military and also as real-world businesses

need their information protected.

"I think we decided to offer this at GMC because we have that connection with the military," Marynell said. "Of course here in Georgia, Fort Gordon is the cyber command center and we felt like there was a niche there we could fill."

GMC student Nicholas Epstein finds a real need for cyber security in the world today.

"It started back in high school. I started doing a program where I could get Cisco certified by the end of my senior year and I also competed in cyber competitions," Epstein said. "It showed me all

the possibilities I could do with cyber security. I knew it was up and coming."

While the program is fairly new to GMC, only up for three years now, it's still an in demand field. Businesses need someone capable of keeping hackers out of their system.

"It's a popular field to be in and there is a demand there for it because of all the cyber security breaches that we have that go on. It's a very lucrative field for students to get involved with," Marynell said.

For more information on courses for the degree, please visit <https://www.gmc.edu/academic-programs/cybersecurity.cms>.

gmc.edu/academic-programs/cybersecurity.cms.

"Anybody that is taking cyber security has to take calculus. We bumped up the level for cyber security because of the challenges that come with it. There's a special skill set that's required for that.

Epstein wants to be able to help people in the future and is glad he is at GMC to learn how to make a difference in the lives of individual people as well as companies.

"I want to be able to make a difference," Epstein said. "Right now there isn't one person that's the best at cyber

security, but we really don't know that much."

Both Marynell and Epstein think cyber security is very important to learn about. Without people learning about it, people and businesses could be losing their identities and money. The program will lead students on the path to helping to make a difference.

"It's very important. A lot of people think they can download McAfee or Norton, but for huge companies there has been billions of dollars stolen throughout the recent years," Epstein said. "People think they are safe, but no one is really safe."

PROGRESS 2018



Above: Andalusia's landscape is getting a few upgrades by removing dead trees and cutting the grass. Left: The interior of the house is also under renovation, as rooms are painted, floors are cleaned and windows replaced.

Alaina Minshev/The Union-Recorder

Andalusia upgrades taking shape

By **ALAINA MINSHEW**
newsroom@unionrecorder.com

Andalusia, the home of Southern Gothic writer Flannery O'Connor and inspiration to local authors, is under renovation.

The historic home was gifted to Georgia College last August by the Andalusia Foundation. Since that time, the landmark has been closed as repairs are made to the mid-19th century home where O'Connor spent hours writing each day.

"Our process here has really been to look at and evaluate what were the most critical needs on the interior and exterior of the main house itself," said Matt Davis, director of historic museums at Georgia College. "We also wanted to take care of some needs with landscaping and do a general assessment of the building."

The repairs taking place are to make the home more stabilized, as well as be a more accurate depiction of what life was like for O'Connor living at Andalusia. The farm was her world, depicting what everyday life was like for her.

"The work we have been doing is to repair some broken glass on the main house. We've removed some dead trees, improved landscaping on the property, and we have stabilized the plaster and painted Flannery O'Connor's bedroom, her dining room, and what was the former office of Regina O'Connor," said Davis. Future guests visiting

Andalusia can expect landscaping to be tailored and clean, but also to expect changes done to the home itself. There will be new items added to the museum as well.

"O'Connor's bedroom will be in a much closer condition and state to what O'Connor experienced while she was here on the site," Davis said. "We have also brought back some original objects that were not in the museum previously. We've brought back her desk, her chair and both of her bookcases."

Those wanting to visit Andalusia and learn more about O'Connor will have to wait a little bit longer for its reopening. To find out about the opening date, please visit <http://andalusiafarm.org> and <https://www.facebook.com/Andalusiafarmpage/> for updates.

"We do not have a definitive opening date yet. We are targeting sometime late spring or summer, but we will make announcements when that official opening date comes into play," Davis said. "We continue to ask people to check out social media and website because we will certainly make a big announcement when that date is set."

O'Connor, who graduated from Georgia State College for Women, now Georgia College, in 1945, lived at Andalusia from 1951 until her death in 1964. Many of her famous works were written during that time.

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Andalusia is brought

to life on many occasions in O'Connor's published letters. In the 1950s, Andalusia was a dairy farm operated by O'Connor's mother, Regina Cline O'Connor. The agricultural setting of Andalusia not only provided O'Connor a place to live and write, but also a landscape in which to set her fiction.

"The gift of the sight made perfect sense because O'Connor is Georgia College's most famous alumni. It's a resource that can be used by a number of different students and faculty," Davis said.

Georgia College students have used other historical locations around Milledgeville to gain inspiration. Andalusia could also become one of those locations after the repairs are finished.

"We had talked about some of the English and literature departments using some of the spaces for creative writers and students like that. Classes can come out here," said Eric Jones, office and special initiatives coordinator at Georgia College.

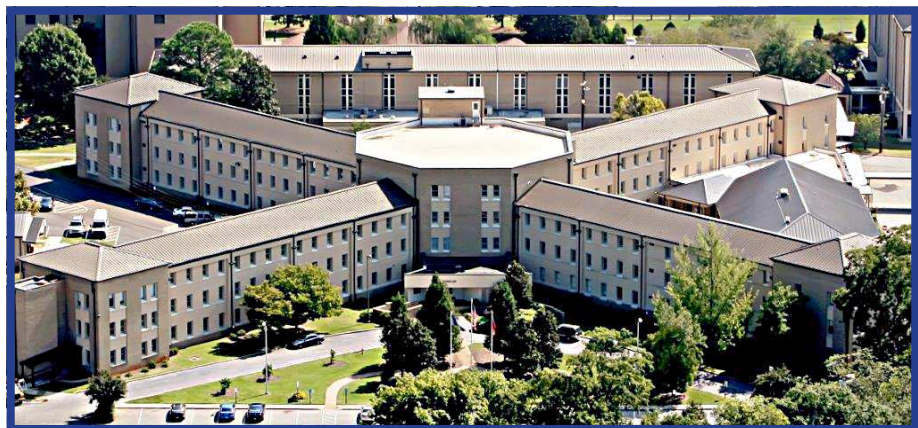
O'Connor returned to Andalusia in 1951 after she developed lupus. The home was a reflection of what her life was like, making the repairs to the home even more important.

"She went to mass first and then until about 9 a.m. to noon, health depending, Flannery would write," Davis said. "Then she would go to lunch, do social calls, travel, and retire back here at the home, so Andalusia was her world."



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PROGRESS 2018

INDUSTRY

Ware takes over as interim Navicent Health Baldwin CEO



Judy Ware took the helm as Navicent Health Baldwin's interim CEO in February, helping lead the hospital's continued transition.

She replaced Darren Pearce in the interim role after he resigned earlier this year.

Ware and Pearce were part of the executive transition team that came to Milledgeville after Navicent Health System Inc. acquired the former Oconee Regional Medical Center last year.

Ware has vast experience when it comes to finances. For the past 26 years, she has been an accountant in both the public and private sector. The last 17 of those years, she has worked with Navicent Health System, Inc. in the audit compliance department.

For the last four years, Ware has also served as the chief financial officer for Navicent Health's Rural Area Health Service, which oversees four hospitals including Navicent

Health Baldwin, Putnam General Hospital in Eatonton, and the hospitals in Peach County and Monroe.

A timeline of events over the past several months related to the local hospital.

July 2017
Navicent Health Inc. announces plans to purchase Oconee Regional Medical Center for more than \$13 million. U.S. Bankruptcy Court Judge Austin E. Carter ruled that ORMC should be

sold to Navicent Health following a two-hour hearing in U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Middle District of Georgia in Macon.

August 2017
The proposed sale of Oconee Regional Medical Center in Milledgeville to Navicent Health Oconee, LLC in Macon is approved by the Georgia Attorney General's Office.

October 2017
Navicent Health Inc. of Macon officially takes over day-to-day operations of Oconee Regional Medical Center in Milledgeville where many changes are planned, including a reclassification of a number of employees. The new hospital is rebranded as Navicent Health Baldwin.

November 2017
Darren Pearce takes over as CEO of Navicent Health Baldwin after serving as interim CEO.

January 2018
A new board of directors is named to govern Navicent Health Baldwin, Inc., as the Milledgeville hospital embraces what appears to be a much brighter future than in

recent years. Maj. Gen. Peter J. Boylan (Ret.) is named board chair. Other board members include Mollie Thomas, retired hospital employee, Rhonda Perry, executive vice president and chief operations officer for Navicent Health Inc., Jack Dennis, a retired local businessman; David Waddell, a local lawyer; and Dr. Chris Hendry, chief operations officer of enterprise operations at Navicent Health Systems, Inc.

January 2018
The Partnership for Health and Accountability (PHA) presents its prestigious Quality and Patient Safety Awards to Navicent Health Baldwin (NHB) in Milledgeville and The Medical Center, Navicent Health (MCNH) in Macon for projects that improved patient safety and care.

February 2018
Judy Ware takes the helm as Navicent Health Baldwin interim CEO.

February 2018
Navicent Health Baldwin recognized for 2018 Medical Excellence distinction for Cardiac Care

and Heart Failure Treatment, ranking in the top-10 percent of hospitals at the national, regional, and state levels.

February 2018
Darren Pearce steps down as chief executive officer at Navicent Health Baldwin hospital in Milledgeville. He had held the position since November 2017.

February 2018
Navicent Health announces new partnership with Atrium Health of Charlotte, N.C. Atrium Health, previously known as Carolina's Healthcare System, is one of the nation's leading and most innovative health care organizations. Atrium Health provides a full spectrum of health care and wellness programs throughout the Southeast region.

March 2018
Navicent Health Baldwin names three new members to its board of directors — former Baldwin County manager and pastor Ralph McMullen, former Georgia College professor Dr. Lucretia Coleman and local dentist Dr. Janet Harrison.

Georgia College nursing enters partnership with Navicent Health Baldwin

Georgia College nursing programs will now have a center dedicated to simulation and translating research into practice within

Navicent Health Baldwin, previously Oconee Regional Medical Center in Milledgeville.

This collaboration will

give students unique learning opportunities that can only be acquired through interactions with health care professionals working



Contributed photo

A new collaboration between Georgia College nursing and Navicent Health Baldwin gives students unique learning opportunities that can only be acquired through interactions with health care professionals working in diverse clinical environments that are informed by evidence-based practice.

in diverse clinical environments that are informed by evidence-based practice.

The goal of this collaboration is to provide undergraduate and graduate nursing students with the educational foundation that enables them to deliver the highest level of safe and effect nursing care possible in a complex and changing health care environment. The center will also create a hub for university students to better serve the surrounding health care communities.

"It's a combined effort between the School of Nursing and Navicent Health Baldwin, and we're very excited about it," said Dr. Deborah MacMillan, director of Nursing Programs. "It's hard to teach students everything they need to be competent on their first day of work. One of the things I think is incredibly important to nursing in general is to create robust academic-practice partnerships."

The acquired space comes after a decision by

the university to phase out operations at the Macon Graduate Center and redirect academic activities to main campus. The facility is approximately 5,500 square feet and will be on the third floor of the Cobb Tower. The simulation labs used by nursing students are meant to mimic a variety of patient acuity levels in diverse health-care settings. Housed within the new center will be adult and pediatric simulations using both high fidelity mannequins and standardized patients. The new center is already equipped with patient rooms, nursing stations and labs.

"Navicent Health has long been dedicated to training the next generation of nurses. We believe that education and training provided on-site are key to developing the healthcare leaders of tomorrow. We are proud to partner with Georgia College & State University at Navicent Health Baldwin, and add this component

of education to our rich history," said Dr. Ninfa M. Saunders, President and CEO of Navicent Health.

MacMillan said this new center opens doors for students when it comes to exposing them to a community hospital setting. The partnership also serves students focusing in community health, as they will have the potential to work with Navicent Baldwin Health staff and directly serve local community members. Additionally, the proximity to main campus opens up more collaboration between graduate and undergraduate nursing students.

"I see this collaboration as a symbiotic relationship. The hospital will continually help Georgia College to define what competencies nurses need to demonstrate... Hopefully, what Georgia College can give back to the hospital is assistance with such things as continuing education, research development, and assistance with evaluation of programs."

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