



Unofficial Election Results: 32.57% Voter Turnout

Webster Wins Judge; Hope Wins Commissioner

PROBATE/MAGISTRATE JUDGE		COUNTY COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 4	
Nathaniel Hicks, Jr.	1144	William E. Harrell	317
Harold A. Webster III	1789	Henderson Hope	363

County to require permits for special events

By Kathleen Russell

McIntosh County Commissioners presented to first reading at its May meeting on May 14 for a Special Event Ordinance that will require application of a permit by any person, group, organization, association, club or other entity conducting any special event in unincorporated McIntosh County.

County Manager Patrick Zoucks said that several commissioners and the Office of the Sheriff had requested the county have a special event ordinance in place to allow the county to know what is going on and to ensure the county is properly prepared to handle the event.

The proposed ordinance defines a special event as any organized activity having as its purpose entertainment, recreation and/or education, such as a festival or celebration, foot or vehicle race, parade or march, rally or assembly, which takes place on a public street, sidewalk, or right-of-way, or occurs on private property and impacts government services on public rights-of way.

Exemptions from required special event permit are if the special event expects less than 75 people; occurs at a private residence, in which is hosted by at least one of the occupants of the residence; event occurring a city or county-owned sports facility in which it is intended to be used, regardless of the number of attendees; an event hosted by a church on property owned by the church; events hosted by a school on property owned by the school or a governmental entity; funeral processions under supervision of a funeral director; or a governmental agency acting within the

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Governments, organizations provide State of the Community

By Kathleen Russell

(Editor's note: The State of the Community report will be provided to our readers in a series over the next several weeks, so that there will be more complete details given by each speaker.)

Darien-McIntosh Chamber of Commerce held its inaugural State of the Community breakfast on May 16 at McIntosh County Academy, with food provided by the Culinary Arts classes.

Amy Spinks, Chamber Chairman, provided an update for the Chamber, and speakers included City of Darien Manager Richy Braun, Darien Downtown Development Authority Chairman Rusty Quarterman; McIntosh County Manager

Patrick Zoucks, McIntosh County Industrial Development Authority President Tom Draffin, McIntosh County Office of the Sheriff Lieutenant Mike Ward and McIntosh County School Superintendent Melissa Williams.

STATE OF THE CHAMBER

Spinks provided an update of the Chamber: "Over the past three years, the Chamber has experienced a truly remarkable journey of growth and expansion from less than 100 members...to a vibrant community of over 325 members as of May.

"The staggering growth is a testament to our tireless

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Participating in the State of the Community Breakfast are, pictured above from left, School Superintendent Melissa Williams; Industrial Development Authority President/CEO Tom Draffin; Sheriff's Lt. Mike Ward; Chamber President/CEO Kat Hoyt; Darien Downtown Development Authority Chair Rusty Quarterman; County Manager Patrick Zoucks; and City Manager Richy Braun

Golden Rule Winners honored at gala

McIntosh County Schools Golden Rule Winners were honored by the Katz-Whittle Foundation, Inc., and the McIntosh County Board of Education at its meeting on Monday, May 13, with a gala celebration ceremony.

The Golden Rule Awards were created by the Katz-Whittle Foundation because the foundation believes and wishes to teach students that "doing unto others as you would have them do unto you" is an important and vital universal law of life; what you do to others, good or bad, will ultimately return to you.

Tommy Howard, McIntosh County Golden Rule Student of the Year

The Katz-Whittle Foundation Golden Rule Character Award named third grader Tommy Howard, right, as the McIntosh County Student of the Year. He is described by McIntosh County School Board Chair Missy Brigman, left, "Our 2024 McIntosh County Student of the Year is a perfect example of The Golden Rule. Our winner's teacher stated, 'Golden Rule type behavior is shown every day by this student. You can tell that he has a large heart for others and goes above and beyond to do good to them.' The Katz-Whittle Foundation selection committee applauds this student for showing Golden Rule qualities at such a young age and being someone who deserves special recognition."



Catherine Taylor Golden Rule MCA Senior of the Year

McIntosh School Superintendent Melissa Williams, from left, announced the winners for the Katz-Whittle Foundation Golden Rule Character Award MCA Senior Year: Catherine Taylor, second from left, was named



MCA Senior of the Year and received \$3,000. Jaylyn Ellison, second from right, was first runner-up, winning \$1,500; and Chasity Hawkins, right,

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Obituaries.....4 Public Notices7 Classifieds8	<i>"To all who mourn in Israel he will give: Beauty for ashes; Joy instead of mourning; Praise instead of heaviness. For God has planted them like strong and graceful oaks for his own glory."</i> <i>Isaiah 61:3</i>	First Quarter: May 15 Full Moon: May 23 Last Quarter: May 1 New Moon: May 8	Wednesday, May 22 7:59 a.m., 8:24 p.m. Thursday, May 23 8:38 a.m., 9:00 p.m. Friday, May 24 9:17 a.m., 9:37 p.m.	Saturday, May 25 9:57 a.m., 10:18 p.m. Sunday, May 26 10:41 a.m., 11:04 p.m. Monday, May 27 11:32 a.m., 11:58 p.m.	Tuesday, May 28 12:29 p.m. Wednesday, May 29 12:58 a.m., 1:31 p.m. Thursday, May 30 1:59 a.m., 2:32 p.m.



Winners

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was second runner-up and won \$1,000. Superintendent Melissa Williams, left, made the presentations.

Dr. Williams related to the group, "Catherine is described as someone who demonstrates the Golden Rule on a daily basis. She is a leader, a caring student who helps others and is an overall great friend. Our winner is a positive role model for her peers.

She was nominated by her classmates for her infectious enthusiasm and willingness to go above and beyond what is expected of her. She is a hard worker who is very dedicated in her academics, athletics and relationships. When interviewed, she said, 'It's important to be nice and respectful to others as you don't know what people are going through.' "



2024 McIntosh County Staff Award nominees are, from left, Jessica Joseph, MCA; Breanna Chaffin, TG; and LaQuida Royal, MCMA; shown with Katz-Whittle Foundation Executive Director Kelly Howe.

2024 Staff Award winner is LaQuida Royal. Howe spoke about Royal, saying, "What sets this staff member apart is not only her exceptional work, but also her warm and friendly demeanor. She consistently engages with students and staff in a kind and approachable manner, helping to create a positive atmosphere within the school. Students and staff alike appreciate her friendly greetings and the genuine care she demonstrates for the well-being of the school community. Her positive attitude is truly infectious. Despite the challenges that may arise, her cheerful disposition remains resilient. This is also the second year in a row that our winner had been named the Golden Rule Staff winner at her school."



2024 McIntosh County Paragon Award nominees are, from left, Maria Ekberg, Todd-Grant; Dr. Connie Reece, MCMS; and Jamey McMahan, with Katz-Whittle Foundation Executive Director Kelly Howe on the right.

2024 Paragon Award winner is Jamie McMahan. In her comments, Howe said, "Our 2024 McIntosh County Paragon Award winner is described as a great teacher, who does so much for the youth in McIntosh County and is truly making a difference. During our interview, our winner stated, 'If there's somebody I can help, I am going to help them.' This Paragon winner has a heart for students and said, 'I will never give up on a student, and will do what I can for them not to fail.' It is evident that this teacher goes above and beyond and makes every effort to build relationships with students so that they can be successful. He is one that truly demonstrates Golden Rule qualities by investing his time and giving back to others.



2024 Todd-Grant Elementary Students of the Month are, from left, Anastasia Ryals, Jayce Patterson, Michael Thomas, and Tommy Howard. (Xzavier Carter and Kingston West were not present for photo)

Tommy Howard was named the Golden Rule Todd-Grant Student of the Year and he was described by Principal Delmar Mitchell, "Our 2024 McIntosh County Elementary School Student of the Year exemplifies the Golden Rule of doing unto others as you would have them do unto you. This student has a kind and caring heart. When a new student joined the class, our winner brought in a dollar the next day to purchase the new student's ice cream 'just in case' the new student was unaware or forgot. In addition to this, this student also wrote a letter to the new student welcoming him to our class which made the new student's day."



2024 McIntosh County Middle School Students of the Month are, from left, Blake McMahan, Janie Starling, Nathan Howard, MacKayla Crook, Ashonti Evans and T'Naeja Evans.

MacKayla Crook was named the Golden Rule MCMS Student of the Year and Principal Scott Brooker said, "Our winner is kind-hearted and thoughtful. She has been a beacon of positivity since her first day at our school. Her innate qualities of kindness and care radiate effortlessly, positively impacting our school climate and fostering a more inclusive supportive environment. She approaches her studies with dedication and respect, treating her peers with empathy and compassion. Her intelligence, integrity and unwavering commitment to justice make her an exceptional student who has enriched the lives of those around her."

2024 McIntosh County Academy Students of the Month are, from left, Olivia Hutcheson, Jackson Coley, Chasity Hawkins, Catherine Taylor and Jaylyn Ellison. (Rineke Runoalds was not present for photo.)

Olivia Hutcheson was named the Golden Rule MCA Student of the Year. Principal Todd Willis said, "Our winner is described as one of those students you can't help but be inspired by. She is a responsible and dedicated student. She is always willing to help teachers, admin, or fellow students and does it with a positive attitude and a smile on her face. She is an inspiring leader and an exceptional young lady with outstanding character who is very deserving of this honor."



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Tentative budget for county schools shows 1.6% increase from last year

A tentative budget for FY25 of \$18,788,243 was adopted by the McIntosh County Board of Education on May 13, which is a 1.6% increase from the FY24 Budget of \$18,488,166.

Financial Officer Tammy Franklin presented the budget to the board.

"Salaries and benefits comprise 78% of the anticipated expenditures and the remaining 22% of the expenditure budget includes other operating costs.

Salary increases for certified staff will be \$2,500 across all levels of the state salary scale, and non-certified salary scale has increased of 4%.

Employer State health insurance premiums will increase for both certified and non-certified

staff. Franklin told the board that certified staff insurance premiums increased to \$21,120, up from \$18,960; and non-certified staff increased to \$17,420, up from \$13,340.

Teacher's retirement rate is increased to 20.79%, up from 19.98%. Also, Franklin noted, a second grade teacher position has been added.

FY25 state QBE funding of \$8,159,298 is a 5.5% increase over the FY24 initial QBE allotment. This funding increase is to support the mandated salary and benefit increases.

State funding accounts for 45% of budgeted revenues. Local taxes and revenues account for the remaining 55%.

Franklin explained,

"Property taxes are based on the 2023 tax digest, which includes the millage rate of 16.2 and the property tax collection rate has been increased to 94% for estimating the FY25 tax revenue.

The federal ESSER ARP funds provided to help reopen schools during and after the pandemic are no longer available for FY25. Last year, the funding was \$1,292,298.

Additional funds included in the FY25 Budget are: School Nutrition, \$1,294,691; ESPLOST Projects, \$850,000; and Debt Service payments on the energy lease of \$1,219,922 for a total Consolidated Budget of \$22,152,856.

Public hearings are scheduled for Monday, June 3, and Monday, June

10, at 6 p.m. at the McIntosh County Board of Education office. The budget will be considered for final adoption at the regular session meeting on June 10 at 6 p.m.

In other business, the School Board approved the Superintendent's recommendations for the resignation of Heather Donn, MCMS Business Teacher, effective June 6; transfer of Alisha Durant, TGES Teacher to MCA Science Teacher, effective July 31; new hire of Stephanie Largent, School Psychologist, effective July 22; Nicole Rigdon, TGES Teacher, effective July 31; and Emily Waddel, TGES Teacher, effective July 3.

The Fishermen A Salute to the African American Fishermen in McIntosh County

This painting by Ethel Wilson is for sale.



Contact 912-269-2045 or jimjoejake@darientel.net

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