



Internet photo
REMEMBERED - The headstone of Laurens Police officer Hosea Ocala Martin and wife Julia in the Friendship Baptist Church cemetery in Gray Court. Hosea Martin was killed in the line of duty in 1921.

LPD officer killed in 1921 to receive honors nearly a century later

By John Clayton
Editor

Laurens Police Officer Hosea Ocala Martin, who was killed in the line of duty just before Christmas in 1921, will receive the honors his current-day counterparts believe is long overdue.

Laurens Police Chief Chrissie Cofield said Martin's nomination for the South Carolina Law Enforcement Officers Hall of Fame Memorial Room has been accepted. The Memorial Room induction ceremony is held on the first Wednesday in May each year.

A search for Martin's descendants ended quickly this past week after the Laurens Police Department shared a Facebook post asking for help in finding any of Martin's descendants.

"We got a response within a half hour of the post going up," Cofield said.

Peyton Crowder, a student at Laurens District High School, is Martin's great-great-great-grandson. Peyton's mother Angie is the great-great-great-granddaughter of Rossie Martin, who was one of six children left behind after Martin's death.

Hosea Martin had been widowed about 6 months prior to the shooting, and the Martin children were reportedly split up after his death.

"We assume there are cousins out there," Peyton Crowder said. "We think some of them moved out to California, and we assume that they had kids. The whole thing has a lot of us fascinated, so we'll probably start doing some research."

When Martin was killed on Dec. 14, 1921, at the age of 37, the U.S. was nearly two years into the prohibition era. Martin and other officers from the Laurens Police department and what was known as the Laurens Rural Police were involved in a car chase with two alleged bootleggers on Lisbon Road about 7 miles outside of Clinton.

AgSouth distributes \$34.2 million in profits

AgSouth Farm Credit CEO Pat Calhoun announced that the customer-owned cooperative is distributing \$34.2 million in profits from 2018 to its member-borrowers this weekend.

CFO Bo Fennell explains "Stockholders will receive checks in the amount of \$10.3 million (30 percent of the total distribution), with the remaining 70 percent, or \$23.9 million, going into an allocated surplus account to be released at a later date at the discretion of the board."

Calhoun adds that, "AgSouth has historically returned allocated surplus on a five-year revolve-ment, and this money we hold in reserve allows us to continue to remain financially strong and able to serve the financial needs of our members."

In February AgSouth distributed allocated surplus from 2013 in the amount of \$20.2 million to its members, for a total cash distribution this year of \$30.5 million.

AgSouth Farm Credit provides loans for land, equipment and production agriculture; crop insurance; leasing; and home mortgages. The association serves 93 South Carolina and Georgia counties and is headquartered in Statesboro, Ga. AgSouth is an equal housing lender and an equal opportunity provider.

Martin was shot in an exchange of gunfire and later died at the Clinton Hospital. Luther Timmons and Monroe Willard were convicted of manslaughter in the case, and both were sentenced to 10 years' hard labor.

After Martin's death, then Laurens Chief of Police James T. Crews lauded Martin's service.

"He was always ready to do his duty in every emergency of danger, and I can confidently say that our city has never had a more zealous, though kind and sympathetic, officer, nor his brother officers, a cool-

er headed and braver comrade," Crews wrote in *The Advertiser*.

Cofield said former Laurens Police Chief Robin Morse began the search for Hosea Martin's family during his tenure with the city, but was unable to complete the work.

"This man gave his life for the service of the county and the city, and he needed to be recognized for that," Morse said of the search. "We wanted to get some of the family involved. I know it's late, but this lets them know that we don't forget."

Council approves capital tax referendum

By John Clayton
Editor

Laurens County Council decided Tuesday night to open the door for a potential Capital Projects Sales Tax in the county.

Council members voted 5-2 to send the referendum on the 1-percent sales tax to referendum in the 2020 November General Election. The first step is the formation of a committee that will prioritize projects being considered by county leaders and form the question that will appear on the ballot.

County Administrator Jon Caime said voting on whether or not to go forward on the referendum could not be delayed because of the amount of work that needs to be done leading up to the General Election.

"This gives people the right to vote on the projects that are put on the ballot," County Council Chairman David Pitts said.

Caime, other members of the administration and members of the public have introduced several potential projects to council members over the past three months, including the renovation of the historic county courthouse, an agricultural center, a park at Lake Greenwood, a new library in Clinton, new EMS and 911 headquarters and a Career and Technical Education (CATE) center for Laurens County School Districts 55 and 56.

The courthouse renovation project could cost as much as \$10 million alone. All of the projects could total around \$100 million.

"Every county around us is

doing this," said Councilwoman Diane Anderson, who voted for the measure. "It can be beneficial to (the taxpayer). ... Sometimes you have to step up to the plate and do something to help yourself. You can't always wait for somebody else to do it."

Councilmen Joe Wood and Stewart Jones voted against placing the referendum on the ballot.

Jones expressed concerns over additional local taxes on top of the state's 6-percent sales tax.

"In some areas, you'd have as much as a 10-cent tax," Jones said. "That could hurt a lot of our local restaurants and businesses."

Jones also said he would consider the capital sales tax if the state legislature drops the current 6-percent sales tax to 3 percent as is being discussed in Columbia.

If the referendum passes in 2020, the tax would sunset after eight years, but could raise more than \$40 million, Caime said.

Council members also received an "unmodified" audit report from the accounting firm of Mauldin and Jenkins for the 2017-18 fiscal year.

"Unmodified" is the best opinion you can get," said Grant Davis, who presented the report for Mauldin and Jenkins.

Council also rejected a resolution presented by Jones that would have turned Laurens County into a "gun sanctuary county."

The resolution failed by a 4-3 vote with Jones, Wood and Kemp Younts voting for the resolution.

"I am a gun owner. I pledged an oath (to the constitution), but I don't like the stigma attached to a 'gun sanctuary,'" said Councilman Garrett McDaniel.

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Plant Sale

GREENHOUSE SALE DATES:

Fri., March 29 – LCSD56 Employee Pre-Sale 3:30-5 p.m.
Sat., March 30 – Spring Festival Plant Sale 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Mon.-Fri., April 1-5 • 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Mon.-Fri., April 8-12 • 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Mon.-Fri., April 22-26 • 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

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Better Health Together

GHS & Palmetto Health are now Prisma Health!

Safe Kids Night at the Drive
Sunday, April 7 • 3:05 p.m. • Fluor Field, Greenville
Enjoy a Greenville Drive baseball game and check out safety games, helmet giveaways and fittings, Buddy's Safety House, the Teen Driving and Pedestrian Safety Road Course, hands-only CPR demos and more.

Diabetes 101
Thursday, April 11 • 10-11 a.m. • Laurens County Hospital, Women's Life Center
This free class offers practical tips for those with diabetes including meal ideas, lifestyle changes and products that help manage the condition. No registration required. Learn more at 864-885-7654.

Diabetes Support Group
Thursday, April 11 • 5:30-7 p.m. • Laurens County Memorial Hospital, Women's Life Center
Those with diabetes are invited to learn from others with the condition and from monthly guest speakers. Free; no registration required.

Vascular Screening Fair
April 22-26, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. • Laurens County Memorial Hospital, Vascular Lab
Take the opportunity to have several preventive screenings performed under one roof. Early detection of issues identified by these screenings can protect you from stroke, aneurysm and peripheral artery disease. Cost: \$40/screening. For an appointment, call 864-454-8272.

Stroke Camp
Friday-Sunday, April 26-28 • Unicoi State Park Lodge, 1788 Hwy. 356, Helen, Ga.
This camp provides stroke survivors, their caregivers and family members an opportunity for support, socialization, relaxation and education in a beautiful setting. Activities are tailored for stroke survivors. Cost: \$125/camper. Register at strokecamp.org. Learn more at 864-455-8848.

Unless noted otherwise, registration is required for each event. To register, learn more or see a schedule of events, visit prismahealth.org/upstateevents.

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