

- Clock -

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"It needs a little cosmetic work," Whitmore said of the find. "If not for that base, it never would've survived. That room was dark and dirty and the floor was full of water because of all the rain we've had. It's amazing it survived to this point."

The POP Jubilee Parade is a former Laurens spring tradition that pre-dated the Squealin' on the Square fall festival, and the clock was from the glass plant's Ball-Incon era. Ball-Incon was formed in 1987 and later became a subsidiary of the Ball Corporation, according to a 1990 UPI article.

The Ball-Incon logo is featured prominently on the clock face.

The former Laurens Glass plant was closed less than a decade after Ball-Incon took over, shuttering in 1996. Around 400 employees lost their jobs.

Whitmore said salvaging pieces from such a vital part of Laurens County history is important for the museum.

"Laurens Glass was one of the highest-paying places around," he said. "If your folks worked at Laurens Glass, you were somebody."



Photo by John Clayton

TIME AND AGAIN — Robert Whitmore sizes up the clock — a prop for a POP Jubilee parade float before taking it into the Laurens County Museum on the square in Laurens.

In addition to the clock, Whitmore also found old signage, bricks from the kiln and pieces of glass that he brought back to the museum.

"There were a bunch of those vintage signs and things, and they're really going to enlarge our display of Laurens Glass," he said. "There are a lot of good memories of Laurens Glass, and even though we lost Laurens Glass, the memories are still with us."

Local financial advisor wins award

Dan Wilson was one of 1,808 financial advisors out of the firm's more than 18,000 to receive the Talent Acquisition Recognition Award.

Wilson's office is located at 111 E. Laurens Street (on the Square), Laurens.

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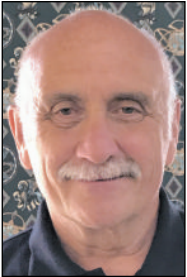
Dan Wilson

- Pitts -

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Thomas L. Copeland's mandatory retirement takes effect this weekend, and Mareno Foggie was dismissed earlier this year in the wake of legal issues, so the confirmation of Wham and Pitts and reappointment of Bron this week proved to be very good timing, according to District 9 Sen. Danny Verdin.

"It was going to be an extreme hardship on the two judges, D.J. Bron and Tracy Richards, because we'd have had to wait until January or February of next year for new magistrate nominations," Verdin said. "We are very thankful that we had this fortuitous opportunity for gubernatorial appointment and Senate confirmation."



Mike Pitts

Pitts and Wham had already been through the required experience evaluations and SLED background checks, and when the legislators were called back into open session for the day, many counties from across the state took advantage of the chance to also have magistrates confirmed, Verdin said.

Pitts was well known as a member of the statehouse for nearly two decades, both as a committee chair within the House Ways and Means Committee and for his sometimes controversial actions, some of which made national headlines.

Pitts suffered a severe heart attack in October, but was already on the ballot and was elected to another term in November. In late December, he opted to follow doctors' advice and step down from his elected office.

Later in January, however, Pitts came under attack during Senate confirmation hearings for a potential director job with the South Carolina State Conservation Bank. Since his confirmation as magistrate was confirmed, Pitts said he has seen some criticism from outside Laurens County for his appointment as magistrate, but he is considered highly qualified and the Senate confirmation Tuesday passed unanimously.

"I'm sure there are always

going to be people out there that think I should never work again," Pitts said, "but it's gratifying that personally I have gotten nothing but positive respect for this from people across party lines, in Laurens County and from the staff I knew in Columbia."

Prior to his time in the state House, Pitts was a career law enforcement officer and he was a trained mediator for family court. He also served as a mediator on a volunteer basis in Greenwood.

With Pitts and Wham set to take their oaths of office, Jim Todd, president of the Laurens County Bar Association, said the local bar association was never contacted about the openings as is protocol in some areas.

"While the Laurens Bar was not officially consulted, we wish Mr. Pitts and Mr. Wham the best of luck and look forward to working with them in the future," Todd said.

Verdin said he feels that the Laurens County Magistrate's Office is in good hands, especially as the newer judges complete their training.

"I am very confident in the competency of the current judges who makes up of the Laurens County Magistrates Office," he said. "It has given good service to the people of Laurens County, and I am certain that the exemplary service will continue."

Martha Franks

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