

The Lincoln Journal



"To thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man."

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Red Devil junior players are anticipating stepping into the role of senior leadership for next year's season according to (l-r) C.J. Zellars, Tevin Gartrell, and Donald Owens. The boys are proud of the season they had this year, and are looking forward to the future.

Red Devil junior players are excited to step into leadership roles in 2021

With a glint in their eyes and grit in their craw, next year's leaders for the Lincoln County Red Devils are ready to step into their roles as senior players. After what was deemed a "surprise season" by the kids and coaches, the challenging start for the overall young team ended strong in the playoffs, leaving expectations for the future bright.

Campuses close after an increase in COVID cases

The Lincoln County School District shut down in-person learning on Friday, January 8, returning to virtual learning, according to a statement released on the school district's website, on Thursday afternoon, January 7, due to a growing number of employees and students in quarantine.

All students began learning virtually on Friday and will continue through January 15. Students and teachers will return to face-to-face learning on January 19. Should the closure need to be extended, families will be notified as soon as possible. Sporting events and practices were also cancelled.

The website also included the district's reported positive COVID-19 cases as of January 5. LCES two students, three school personnel members; LCMS one student, two school personnel members; and LCHS four students and two school personnel members as of January 5.

DPH reports eleventh fatality as COVID cases rise to 359

Lincoln County had its eleventh reported COVID-19 fatality according to the Georgia Department of Public Health's (DPH) website as of Monday, January 11.

The report shows the individuals were a 68-year-old male and a 55-year-old female both with pre-existing conditions.

The Lincoln County Health Department was unable to confirm the fatalities as of press time.

The drive-through COVID-19 testing has been discontinued at the Lincoln County Health Department.

Drive-through testing continues at the Wilkes County Health Department from 9-11 a.m. every Wednesday.

Those wishing to make an appointment online should visit covid19.dph.ga.gov and following the online instructions. Re-

sults are faster and can be received via email. Free COVID-19 testing appointments can also be made by calling 706-721-5800.

The number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Lincoln County increased to 365 with eleven reported fatalities as of the 3 p.m. posting by the Georgia Department of Public Health on Monday, January 11.

Neighboring Wilkes County lists 505 cases and eight deaths, McDuffie County reports 114 cases and 25 deaths, Columbia lists 8111 cases and 95 deaths, and Richmond County reports 14,237 cases and 237 deaths.

Also reported as of 3 p.m. Monday, 636,373 Georgians had tested positive for COVID-19. Of those patients, 44,635 were hospitalized, and 10,282 deaths have been reported.

plus for us."

With dedication from both the coaches and the players, the season's end has seen the boys finishing in the playoffs, along with other notable accolades, including that of a first road playoff victory since 2012, which came in the win against Chattahoochee County. This particular accomplishment was last seen during Larry Campbell's last season as head coach.

"It makes us feel great, like we accomplished something that many teams haven't accomplished in many years and I'm just really proud of us that we did," Gartrell said.

"It feels real good to win," Zellars added. Furthermore, nine Red Devil players made All-Region 8A this year, which Gartrell, Zellars, and Owens are all a part of.

"When he first came here, we really didn't respect coach, but time passed and now we give him all the respect we can, we love him to death," Gartrell said. "It's been a pleasure playing for him."

"He told us we just have to give him a chance, and we did. He just wants us to buy into what he's telling us and it's paid off so far," Zellars added. "Since our first game we've gotten way better."

For Head Coach Chomskis, however, the honor is all his as he praised the up-and-coming seniors for their good hearts and dedication to the Red Devils.

"I'm excited about their leadership for next year, however they are also our leaders in the junior class" he said.

"Tevin is full speed all the time. He has the ability to walk into a room and charm everyone in it, which gives him a great leadership quality. He's a very hard worker for us, and gives his all at practice," the coach explained.

"C.J. has been one of our leaders since late August," Chomskis continued. "He's a defensive leader – he's truly a worker – he knows the calls and formations. He even worked through an injury this season, which showed a lot of toughness in him."

"Donald is one of the best and toughest players by far," the coach said. "He works hard, always answers 'yes, sir' and 'no, sir' – he's the guy you long for as a coach. He's blue collar and truly has a workman's mentality, so he's not afraid to roll his sleeves up and lead by example."

"But for all of them, these are qualities that come from the home, it's nothing that I've done," Chomskis further praised. "They each

Council approves rate increase; Lively to enforce new stop signs

The City of Lincolnton's water and sewer rates will increase by two percent for 2021 and each year thereafter as provided by a resolution adopted by the City Council last week.

Mayor Henry Brown asked for Council's approval of a resolution which included a two percent increase in water and sewer rates for 2021.

Brown, reading from the resolution, stated that the actual cost of operating the water and sewerage systems increases each year and it is in the best interest of the customers to ensure that these expenses are paid so that the city can continue to provide reliable service. The City also wishes to avoid large rate increases that would be necessary if rates are not periodically adjusted for inflation.

City Attorney Barry Fleming explained that over the course of a 10-year period the average rate increase in other local governments is about two percent. "Two percent is very common, it may be one percent one year – if you have a good year – and three percent another, but over the course of time it averages out to be about two percent," Fleming said.

The resolution also included that at the first of each calendar year the rates shall be increased by two percent, or some other amount as council sees fit as a reasonable estimate of inflation.

Council will have the option to amend the rate at the first of each year, otherwise the two percent will be applied automatically.

"We all hate to see bills go up, but two percent will be pennies on the dollar. On an approximate bill of \$25 the increase would be about 50 cents. Our water and sewer departments have had some serious issues. We've had to borrow money and had to increase rates when we didn't want to. The two percent would eliminate those big increases," Brown said.

Council voted to approve the resolution and the two percent increase.

Chief of Police Brandon Lively informed City Council that additional stop signs have been installed, along with "stop ahead" signs, at Dallas and Goshen Streets in an attempt to slow down drivers in the residential area.

"Drivers need to be aware that the new stop signs are in place and that the department will increase its patrol to make sure drivers are stopping," Lively said.

Lively also reported that the department answered 356 calls for service in the month of December, which included 16 incident, 48 miscellaneous, and five accident reports, along with 35 citations and 72 warnings.

Fleming swore in Larry Goolsby as the new Building and Code Enforcement and Planning and Zoning Officer for the City of Lin-



Larry Goolsby (center) was administered the oath of office by attorney Barry Fleming (left) assisted by Councilman Dwaine Biggerstaff as the Building Code Enforcement and Planning and Zoning Officer for the City of Lincolnton.

colnton. Goolsby is no stranger to City Council having just come off serving a 12-year term as councilman.

After the swearing in, Goolsby requested that the city look at implementing an ordinance regulating flashing signs since there isn't one at the present time. Mayor Brown suggested that the issue be sent to committee for recommendations.

The Planning and Zoning monthly report showed that the city had issued seven building permits and one sign permit, and had assigned one Emergency 911 address totaling \$619.75. Six inspections were performed on building permits, one certificate of occupancy was issued, and three meetings with property owners/contractors was held.

Three reappointments were approved by City Council for the Planning and Zoning Board which included Jane Mattison, Theresa Norman, and Pat Moss, all currently serve and have agreed to continue.

Council approved a change order request from G. Ben Turnipseed Engineers on the refurbishment of the Drinkard Street water tank. Councilman Alana Burke commented that the deletions and additions on the change order showed a reduction in cost of \$5,850.

Burke also informed Council about repairs being made by Ashland Contracting around the city including repairs on the waterline located on Highway 378, which included a new fire hydrant, drainage issues on School Street, the driveway at Don Pennington's, and another drainage issue on Ward Avenue.

Councilman Dwaine Biggerstaff complimented Burke on all the hard work she put in to get these issues taken care of.

In other departmental reports, Fire Chief Matt Goldman reported that all issues with the ladder truck have been fixed and it's back in

full service. Issues with the service trucks transmission were repaired and the water gauge on Engine 21 has issues and is scheduled for repair. The report also showed that the department answered two calls in December.

Goldman informed Council that requests for bids on ladder inspections for all trucks has also gone out.

Wastewater Treatment Supervisor Ben Alligood's monthly report showed that the approximate influent for Lincoln County was 626,000 gallons, while the influent for the city was approximately 8.4 million gallons. Treated effluent that was discharged was a little over 9 million gallons. Routine facility, equipment, and grounds maintenance was performed, along with the line repairs and the clearing of clogged sewer mains. Sampling data has also been completed and recorded.

The report also indicated that the department lost no time due to accidents or incidents.

Water Treatment Plant Supervisor Jodi Lee informed City Council that the Georgia Department of Natural Resources has tightened its restrictions on water discharged into the lake. "We will have to do a little more testing on phosphorus, chlorine levels, and an E Coli test but it shouldn't be anything we can't handle," Lee said. The monthly chlorine level is testing at .03 and we need to get it down to .01 which should be fairly simple to take care of. A certified lab will have to do the E coli test.

Lee's reported showed that 14.5 million gallons of water were treated, with 14 million gallons sent to distribution, and 6.1 million gallons sent to the county during the month of December. Rainfall for the month of December was recorded at 3.08 inches and the Clarks Hill reservoir stands at 327.2 feet.

In other business City Council

(continued on page 10)



Lincolnton Police Chief Brandon Lively reminds residents that stop signs have been installed at Goshen and Dallas Streets. Motorist can expect an increase presence in law enforcement to ensure compliance with the new signs.

(continued on page 10)