

# Passage of T-SPLOST means funding for roads

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 application has also been approved, pending funding.

- Applied for a \$21,331 Firehouse Subs Grant, for the purchase of three self-contained breathing apparatus for OES firefighters.
- Received a \$5,000 Association of County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG) Cancer Prevention Grant, for the purchase of a carcinogen washer/extractor machine for fire turnout gear.
- Created a UV light decontamination room to clean Personal Protection Equipment, installed UV light and High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filtration

in the HVAC system of the ambulances, using funds from the county's allocation of Coronavirus, Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act money.

The Recreation Department under the direction of LeTrelis Glaze, hosted several mobile food drives in conjunction with the Lincoln County Food Pantry, Golden Harvest Food Bank of Augusta, with the assistance of many volunteers, who delivered much needed food to citizens.

Other LCRD accomplishments included hosting the Smiles of Joy Toy Drive in collaboration with Road Legends Chevy Truck Club, which provided Christ-

mas gifts to children in Lincoln County.

- Worked with the Lincolnton-Lincoln County Chamber of Commerce to make possible the annual Christmas parade.

The Curry Colvin Recreation Complex also saw several improvements which included the conversion of the swimming pool into a first class splash pad at the Jesse Gunby Aquatics Facility; upgrading of the Lincoln County Family Connections offices; paving of the road that leads to the new Lincoln County Agriculture Building, which houses the offices of the UGA County Extension and 4-H; seal coating and

striping all existing roads, as well as the walking track, tennis, and basketball courts; and installed cameras and additional lighting at the complex to improve security and safety.

Norman also noted that under the direction of County Extension Agent Robyn Stewart, along with Director Seymour, the first phase of the county's new agriculture building was completed. Stewart moved into the new building located at the Curry Colvin Complex in September 2020.

The new agricultural building was constructed with all funds coming to the county as grants from USDA (\$138,000), and the State of Georgia (\$200,000) totaling \$338,000.

"We would like to thank Senator Lee Anderson and Representative Tom McCall for their help in acquiring the money from the state," Norman said.

Stewart's report also showed she had face-to-face contact with over 2,300 people in 2020, on-site consultations with 47 clients, and received three state awards through the Georgia Association of County Agriculture Agents.

Other achievements included the enrollment of three hundred students in the 4-H program.

- The office hosted a Hobby Flock Seminar Series which had seventeen attendees that attended in person and 248 registered virtually.
- Won first place poster at the Northeast District.
- Hosted a horse owners virtual seminar series where 286 registered to attend and a sport-fish pond management program with 14 attendees.

Under the direction of Shirley Dawkins, the library received new computers for the computer lab and opened the Dova Partridge room from September - November for distance learning students.

A new computerized LED sign was installed, replacing the old sign in front of the library, and new cameras were installed around the building.

Norman went on to congratulate Lincoln County voters on approving the Transportation Improvement Act (TIA) in the June election for another 10 years beginning in January 2022.

The Chairman explained what the approximately \$18 million in Transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (T-SPLOST) will do for the county over the next decade beginning in 2022.

- Resurface Chamberlain Ferry, Double Branches, Colvin-Kennedy, Mercier, and Partridge Town Roads; and pave McGill and Goldman-Johnson Roads.
- Be included in the \$9.6 million is the traffic circle at Clatt Crossing, located at the intersection of Georgia Highway 47 (Augusta Hwy.) and Georgia Highway 220. Lincoln County will contribute \$2 million from T-SPLOST funds and GDOT will fund \$2 million.
- Another \$8.4 million will be used for resurfacing, paving, and patching roads included in the county's 200 miles of roads, as well as purchase equipment to maintain the county's road system.
- Commissioners voted in February of 2020, to hire an engineering firm to provide a scope of work and fee proposal for Georgia Department of Transportation, so the county would be eligible to file an application with GDOT for a transportation alternative program grant in the amount of \$1.8 million. Counties applying for the grant have to be under 40,000 in population for the minimum grant of not less than \$1 million. Lincoln County will provide up to a 20-percent match, which can be covered by local T-SPLOST funds.

Norman explained that the grant will fund curbs/gutters, sidewalks, and street lighting that will tie in with the traffic circle at Clatt Crossing. The project will extend southeast down Georgia Highway 47 for approximately 1.1 miles.

"I am honored, once again for the privilege to serve as your chairman," Norman said in conclusion, "and I look forward to working with these commissioners over the next several years, as together we continue to make Lincoln County a better place to call home. May God bless you and may God bless the United States of America."



Whether its General Beauregard Lee or Punxsutawney Phil, the nation awaits the forecast of either an early spring or extended winter on Groundhog Day, February 2.

# COVID-19 vaccine rollout in Georgia awaits more doses from administration

BY DAVE WILLIAMS  
 Capital Beat News Service

Georgia officials overseeing the state's COVID-19 vaccine program are awaiting word from the new Biden administration on whether more doses will head their way amid an early shortage.

Pharmacies and health clinics had given out more than 550,000 doses to Georgia nursing homes, hospitals, and people at least 65-years-old as of last Thursday, marking roughly half of the vaccines Georgia has received so far, said state Public Health Commissioner Dr. Kathleen Toomey.

That's far short of the two million Georgians now eligible for the vaccine who will need two doses each.

Gov. Brian Kemp said officials will move "as quickly as we can" to distribute vaccines if Georgia's current allotment of 120,000 doses per week increases with the new president.

"I can't control the supply we're getting," Kemp said at a news conference on Thursday, January 21. "But if we get more ... we will do everything in our power to empower not only the government, but also private-sector partners to get this vaccine in people's arms."

Biden, who was inaugurated last Wednesday, has pledged to distribute 100 million vaccines over the next three months by using the federal Defense Production Act to spur vaccine production and setting up Federal Emergency Management Agency-run vaccination centers.

More than 1,600 clinics, pharmacies, doctors, and grocers have signed up to administer vaccines in the month or so since Georgia's rollout started, Toomey said. Their success depends on how much supply the federal government and manufacturers Pfizer and Moderna can muster in the coming weeks.

"This is a federal program," Toomey said. "All the logistics

are done at the federal level."

Despite concerns, Kemp and Toomey said COVID-19 vaccines are now stocked enough to ensure Georgians already vaccinated once will be able to receive the necessary second dose for full inoculation. That's due to a federal program making headway on vaccinating residents and staff in nursing homes through CVS and Walgreens pharmacies, Kemp said.

"These additional doses in the short term will allow existing providers and public-health departments at the county level to expand the number of appointments that they are currently scheduling," Kemp said. "But our total supply ... does not fulfill the demand from seniors and other at-risk eligible Georgians."

Georgia's vaccine rollout kicked off in mid-December at a slow pace, hindered by short supplies and an imbalance in demand between health-care workers in rural areas who have shown less zeal for vaccination than metro Atlanta hospital employees who have rushed to schedule appointments.

Meanwhile, deaths stemming from the highly contagious virus have ticked up in recent weeks, Kemp said. The grim news comes during spike in COVID-19 infections over the winter months that's showing signs of a slowdown, Kemp said - but which is still hammering communities even harder than the devastating outbreaks of summer.

The governor urged Georgians to continue wearing masks, washing hands, and keeping distance from each other as fatigue over safety measures takes root nearly a year after the pandemic began.

"Our hospitals cannot handle another surge of COVID-19 patients on top of their current workload," Kemp said. "This is not an all-clear signal. We've got to continue to keep our foot on the gas."

More than 700,000 people had tested positive for COVID-19 in

Georgia as of last Thursday afternoon, with nearly 150,000 more reporting positive antigen tests indicating likely positive results. The virus has killed 11,511 Georgians.

## Vaccine information

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General information about the vaccine as provided by the DPH reports that COVID-19 vaccines have passed rigorous reviews and are highly effective. Scientists had a significant head start developing the COVID-19 vaccines. COVID-19 is very similar to other viruses, which already have vaccines and testing was thorough and successful.

More than 70,000 people participated in clinical trials for the two vaccines to see if they are safe and effective. To date, the vaccines are nearly 95% effective in preventing COVID-19.

There is no COVID-19 virus in the vaccine. The vaccine imitates the infection so that bodies create antibody defenses to fight off COVID-19.

Side effects of the vaccine are usually mild, temporary, and normal signs that your body is building protection. You may experience pain and swelling in the arm of the injection. Throughout the rest of your body, you may experience fever, chills, tiredness, and headaches.

According to the DPH, "vaccines are a safe and effective way to limit serious illnesses, hospitalizations, and deaths from vaccine-preventable diseases. In fact, vaccines have been so successful at combating some infectious diseases, many of us don't know much about the disease's vaccines prevent, because we've never known someone who has had them.

"To ensure the continued success of vaccines in the United States, public health professionals are committed to making sure that vaccines are safe.

"Most people do not have serious side effects from vaccines. Most side effects from vaccines are mild and go away on their own. Many common side effects after vaccination, like muscle aches or mild fever, are signs that our bodies are building a healthy immune response to protect us from disease."

A hotline for questions about COVID-19 only, not for scheduling appointments for vaccinations is 888-357-0169.

# COVID-19 cases rise to 430

The number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Lincoln County increased to 430 with fourteen reported fatalities as of the 3 p.m. posting by the Georgia Department of Public Health on Monday, January 25.

Neighboring Wilkes County lists 584 cases and twelve deaths, McDuffie County reports 1353

cases and 29 deaths, Columbia lists 9317 cases and 110 deaths, and Richmond County reports 16,336 cases and 272 deaths.

Also reported as of 3 p.m. Monday, 722,062 Georgians had tested positive for COVID-19. Of those patients, 48,498 were hospitalized, and 11,854 deaths have been reported.

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