



90 pounds collected during drug take-back

Approximately 90 pounds of unwanted prescriptions were collected by members of the Lincoln County Sheriff's office including Captain Leighton Taylor (left) and Sheriff Paul Reviere (right) and Family Connection Executive Director Daravious Cullars during the DEA National Prescription Take-Back Day held on Saturday, April 24, at Bell's Food Market. While inclement weather shortened the event time, Cullars expressed his appreciation to the sheriff's office and community for their participation in the event, which was sponsored by the sheriff's office and Lincoln County Community Partnership.

Two additional roads added to LMIG

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Curry Colvin Recreation Complex. At the request of the Recreation Director LeTrellis Glaze approximately \$25,000 will go towards the purchase of a jumping pillow measuring 50x33 feet. The cost of the inflatable trampoline includes the installation and all the needed equipment, winter cover, and the installation of a permanent shade structure.

The remaining balance will go toward the required fencing between the basketball and tennis courts and the playground area. Norman stated that enclosing the playground area which includes the splash pad, playground equipment, concession, and restrooms will keep children from entering the adjacent complex parking lot.

According to Norman, there can be 200-400 children using the complex during this time of year. Families attending Little League games are using the splash pad and playground equipment to entertain siblings that aren't playing. The addition of the jumping pillow will add another feature to the

county's growing recreation complex. The added fencing around the playground area will keep children safely confined and provide peace of mind to parents.

Commissioners also approved the request by Public Works Director Roby Seymour to add Lewis Crook and CE Norman Roads to the Lo-

cal Maintenance and Improvement Grant approved for Metasville Road and Lovelace Road for resurfacing. Seymour explained that the cost to resurface both Metasville and Lovelace came in under budget allowing the addition of the two roads.

DPH reports on COVID-19 cases

The number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Lincoln County was reported at 508 with twenty-four reported fatalities as of the 3 p.m. posting by the Georgia Department of Public Health on Monday, April 19.

Neighboring Wilkes County lists 670 cases and twenty-one deaths, McDuffie County reports 1663 cases and 41 deaths, Columbia lists 10,983 cases and 159 deaths, and Richmond County reports 19,768 cases and 407 deaths.

Also reported as of 3 p.m. Monday, 876,146 Georgians had tested positive for COVID-19. Of those pa-

tients, 61,126 were hospitalized, and 17,421 deaths have been reported.

To register for the vaccine in Lincoln County, go online to ecphd.com [East Central Public Health District] to register. The online system gives people the opportunity to see where appointments are available around them so they can choose their preferred travel options. It also provides for email or text confirmations and reminders. There is no waiting for a callback - pre-screening, date and time are all handled online.

For those without internet access or who are just no computer-savvy, call 706-721-5800.

Unemployment claims declining

First-time unemployment claims in Georgia declined last week, welcome news after an increase reported the week before.

Jobless Georgians filed 32,381 initial unemployment claims last week, down 6,001 compared to the previous week, the state Department of Labor reported Thursday.

Claims had gone the other way the week before, increasing by 4,759 during the first week of April.

Since the coronavirus pandemic broke out in a serious way in Georgia in March of last year, the state has issued more than \$20.9 billion in state and federal unemployment benefits.

The labor department has processed nearly 4.7 million first-time jobless claims during that time, more than during the nine years prior to the pandemic combined.

The job sector accounting for the most initial unemployment claims in Georgia last week by far was accommodation and food services with 9,184 claims. The manufacturing job sector was next with 3,366 claims, followed by administrative and support services with 3,058.

More than 230,000 job openings are listed on the website EmployGeorgia.com. The labor department offers online resources for finding a job, building a resume and assisting with other reemployment needs.

Georgia DOT asks drivers to observe Work Zone Safety Awareness Week

To bring needed attention to work zone risks, Georgia Department of Transportation (Georgia DOT) is observing National Work Zone Safety Awareness Week April 26 - 30. This year's theme—Drive Safe. Work Safe. Save Lives.

Building and maintaining the state's critical transportation infrastructure is essential for mobility, sustainability and - most importantly - safety for travelers moving within and throughout the state.

This type of essential work generates active work zones where construction and maintenance workers regularly face life-threatening dangers and frightening near misses in their roadway offices.

Each spring Georgia DOT and departments of transportation across the country observe National Work Zone Safety Awareness Week to educate motorists about the dangers of work zones and to remind drivers to slow down, move over a lane, pay close attention and take extra precautions when driving through work zones. This annual observance sheds light on the real dangers faced by workers as well as drivers and passengers.

"We still have a lot of work to do to reduce work zones injuries and fatalities or better yet, eliminate them entirely," said Georgia DOT Commissioner Russell R. McMurry, P.E. "This year's theme, Drive Safe. Work Safe. Save Lives., helps educate everyone about the perils we all face in work zones - whether we drive through them or work in them. That near miss this time, could be loss of life and many lives changed forever next time."

Last year Georgia DOT introduced motorists to real Georgians who work in work zones through the Agency-produced video, Don't

Cut Their Stories Short. In this year's sequel, Don't Cut Their Stories Short: Near Misses, motorists will learn more about those same workers as they share additional stories from their roadway offices and their harrowing experiences of near misses in work zones.

Since 1973, when record-keeping began, more than 60 Georgia DOT employees and contractors have died in work zone related incidents.

In 2020, there were:

- 17,297 work zone related crashes in Georgia

- Resulting in 5,123 injuries, and 24 fatalities

- 53 percent of those work zone crashes were roadway departure and rear end crashes

- 7 fatalities involved commercial motor vehicles

- two were pedestrian fatalities

"Everyone deserves to make it home safely to their loved ones," said Commissioner McMurry. "I urge everyone to take work zones seriously and understand that many of these incidents are preventable by taking simple precautions, like driving the speed limit, paying strict attention to the road and following Georgia laws - especially in work zones."

Georgia DOT offers these tips for approaching and driving in work zones:

- **Don't Cut Their Stories Short.** Obey the rules of work zones: (1) Pay attention (2) Slow down (even in lighter than normal traffic) (3) Watch for workers.

- **Expect the Unexpected.** Things may change quickly. Normal speed limits may be reduced, traffic lanes may be closed, narrowed, or shifted, and people may work on or near the road.

- **Slow Down. Don't Tailgate.**

Speed is a factor in many crashes. Keep a safe distance between you and the car ahead of you, and move over a lane to provide additional space for the construction workers and their equipment.

- **Obey Road Crew Flaggers and Pay Attention to Signs.** Failure to obey speed limit signs or a flagger's traffic control directions can result in hefty fines and/or imprisonment imposed by law enforcement.

- **Stay Alert and Minimize Distractions.** Pay full attention to the roadway and avoid changing radio stations or using cell phones and other electronic devices while driving. Remember, Georgia is a hands-free state for mobile devices while driving.

- **Keep Up with Traffic Flow.** Do not slow down to gawk at road work.

- **Know Before You Go.** Expect delays, leave early and schedule enough time to drive safely. For 24/7 real-time traffic information, call 511 or visit www.511ga.org before you get into the car. And follow Georgia DOT on Twitter for additional updates.

- **Be Patient, Stay Calm.** Crews are working to improve the road and to make your future drive better.

- **Wear Your Seatbelt.** It is your best defense in a crash. And make sure your passengers are buckled up, even in the back seat of the vehicle.

Work zone safety is everyone's responsibility. Please - help us in the effort to Drive Safe. Work Safe. Save Lives - not only during Work Zone Safety Awareness Week, but every week where workers are working in their offices in and along the roadsides across the state.

Kemp signs teacher tax credit into law, possible year-round daylight saving time

By BEAU EVANS
Capital News Beat Service

Gov. Brian Kemp has signed into law several bills on taxes, time change and teacher retention that the General Assembly passed in the 2021 legislative session.

Among the more high-profile measures Kemp signed at a ceremony in Savannah on Wednesday, April 21, is an income-tax credit to recruit and retain teachers for high-need subjects in underserved Georgia public schools.

Sponsored by Rep. Dave Belton, R-Buckhead, the measure allows teachers in 100 rural or low-performing schools picked annually by the state to apply for a \$3,000 credit on their income taxes for up to five years if they teach certain subjects that students struggle to learn.

The teacher credit figured as a priority for Kemp in this year's session. He has also pushed for state budgets to include teacher pay raises and legislation to cut down the number of year-end standardized tests that students must take.

Kemp also signed a bill aimed at putting Georgia on daylight saving time permanently if Congress takes action permitting states to make that change. The measure was passed over separate legislation that proposed establishing standard time year-round.

Also signed into law were bills to levy a \$5 per-night excise tax on short-term stays in vacation rentals

and hotels booked by online vendors and allow district attorneys to access previously confidential records on offenders seeking parole after serving prison time for a violent felony or sexual abuse of a minor.

The 2021 session wrapped up a few minutes after midnight April 1 amid heated debate over Republican-led legislation on voting procedures and criminal justice issues.

Kemp signed a controversial bill changing Georgia mail-in and early voting laws shortly after state

lawmakers passed it on a party-line vote late last month.

The election changes have since become a national lightning rod with Republicans calling them needed for voting integrity and Democrats condemning them as voter suppression.

The governor has not yet signed a bipartisan bill to overhaul Georgia's citizen's arrest law.

The law, which dates back to the 19th century, drew criticism last year after the fatal shooting of Ahmaud Arbery outside Brunswick.



Blessing bags delivered for distribution

Transportation Director Fred Scott delivered "blessing bags" from Superintendent Dr. Samuel Light and Camp Lakeside for families with children.



Fox, Wheatley take their turns at bat

The Lincoln County Little League season is in full swing with Connor Fox (left) and Hank Wheatley taking their turns at bat. Both boys play for the four-year-old Blue T-ball team sponsored by LC Paws, and the Milky Way. The team is coached by Melissa Fox, Tom Goldman, Matt Goldman, and Michaela Goldman.



Guardsmen, volunteers give thanks

Members of the Georgia National Guard Task Force Guardian and food pantry volunteers bow their heads in prayer before distributing meals to families in the community.