

Lanier County News

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"Serving our community and protecting our freedoms according to His Word since 1913"

Thursday, February 1, 2024 Lakeland, GA

LCHS Lady Dogs Receive State Championship Rings

By Carol A. Gasser Moore

LANIER COUNTY, Georgia – The Lanier County Schools has announced that the Lady Dogs have taken delivery of their state title championship rings in honor of their achievement! The Lady Dogs Softball Team demonstrated enough hard earned athletic ability in the Fall 2023 that they triumphed in the Division II Georgia State Title for Lanier County High School. During the state playoffs, the Lady Dogs beat Glascock County 6-2 for the championship. It's been three (3) months since the Lady Dogs, became the Georgia Division II State Champions.

Jaden Benefield, a extraordinary player, who lead the Lady Dogs to four region titles, a state runner-up finish, and a state title has been specifically recognized. It is for this reason that this remarkable softball team player has been recognized. Benefield's jersey, Number 8, has been retired. It is the first time a Lady Dog Softball Jersey has been retired in honor of the player who wore it as she contributed to her team's state championship achievement!

LCHS Head Coach Ben Davis has revealed that Jaden was surprised when he requested that she give him her Number 8 jersey. His request didn't seem to make sense to her. So the retirement of her Number 8 Lady Dog jersey was a complete surprise to her when she was publicly honored. Many area students and county residents were not at all surprised at the honor.

Benefield has revealed that she had talked about retiring her Number 8 jersey and had even gone so far as discussing it with her parents, but she had not taken the idea any further than that. Jaden Benefield has stated that she's excited to actually have her Number 8 LCCHS Lady Dogs jersey retired!

"I've talked about it. I've talked to my parents about me retiring my jersey, but I never got a chance to ask coach Davis about it," added Benefield. "I'm glad it actually happened."

Coach told us the girls coming back next year are already in the weight room and getting ready to defend their title.

The Lanier County News (LCN) has heard that next year's potential Lady Dogs team members are said to be taking to the weight room! Rumor has it that they are very "hyped" to get ready for another softball season and intend to defend their state championship title!

Not All Birds Are Hunter's Fair Game

By Carol A. Gasser Moore

GEORGIA – On Thursday, January 18, Missouri officials reported that a Bald Eagle was found dead. Missouri State's Department of Conservation is now reported as searching for the Eagle's killer. The eagle was found to have a rifle gunshot wound. This is similar to a story that the Lanier County News (LCN) covered that occurred just outside of Ocilla, Georgia in Irwin County.

Just as with Georgia Department of Natural Resources officials, the Missouri Department of Conservation is offering a reward to the person who provides information that leads to an arrest.

For 29 years, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services placed Bald Eagles on the endangered species list. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services removed them from the endangered species list in 2007, but this does not mean they are now game animals and available for hunting. They are still a protected species.

Georgians are reminded that under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, it is a federal offense to shoot a bald eagle. This information is provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services agency. Violators of the act face up to a \$100,000 fine and one year in prison.

Any Georgian with information about the killing of a protected bird species is asked to call Georgia



Department of Natural Resources (DNR) at 478-994-1438, where callers can remain anonymous and possibly earn a reward for information leading to an arrest. Bald eagles are protected under the federal Bald and Gold Eagle Protection Act, which was enacted in 1940.

Tifton Police Department Says Suspect in Deadly Tifton Shooting in Custody

By Carol A. Gasser Moore

TIFT COUNTY, Georgia - The Tifton Police Department (TPD) partnered with the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) in the investigation of a homicide on Monday, January 29th. According to the GBI, a man was shot and killed at a Tifton car wash. The latest information in their homicide investigation is that a suspect has now been charged for the homicide.

According to the TPD, their agency was contacted late Monday afternoon and went to the 100 block of West 17th Street, Tifton. The caller reported a person as having been shot while sitting in a chair. TPD arrived on scene in response to the call. The officers found Brendan Burns (33) with a gunshot wound. Tift County Coroner Melissa Carroll has stated that about 6:00 p.m., Burns was pronounced dead at the scene.

According to information from the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI), they had a suspect in the homicide. The GBI states that suspect is said to be Xavier Sean

Ross (34). Ross was found by law enforcement at Tift Regional Hospital with a gunshot wound. Following his medical treatment, Ross was transferred to another hospital for his injuries and will be taken to the Tift County Jail after his release.

Xavier Ross is facing charges of felony murder, aggravated assault, possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, and possession of a firearm during the commission of a crime.

According to a press release, the GBI and Tifton police are collaborating on the investigation. Burns' body was taken for an autopsy on Wednesday, January 31.

WALB spoke with a witness who said they heard some gunshots and saw people running from the car wash. The victim was sitting in a chair at the time of the shooting.

Officials are actively investigating the incident.

SGMC Foundation Receives \$20K Georgia HEART Donation from Lakeland Dentistry

LAKELAND, Georgia –Lakeland's own Lakeland Family Dentistry (LFD) recently contributed financial support to SGMC Health-Lanier (South Georgia Medical Center). LFD gave a \$20,000 to support the overall wellbeing of Lanier County residents. The charitable giving by Lakeland Family Dentistry, a practice founded by Dr. Eric Castor in 2006, discloses a dedication beyond LFD's dental chairs.

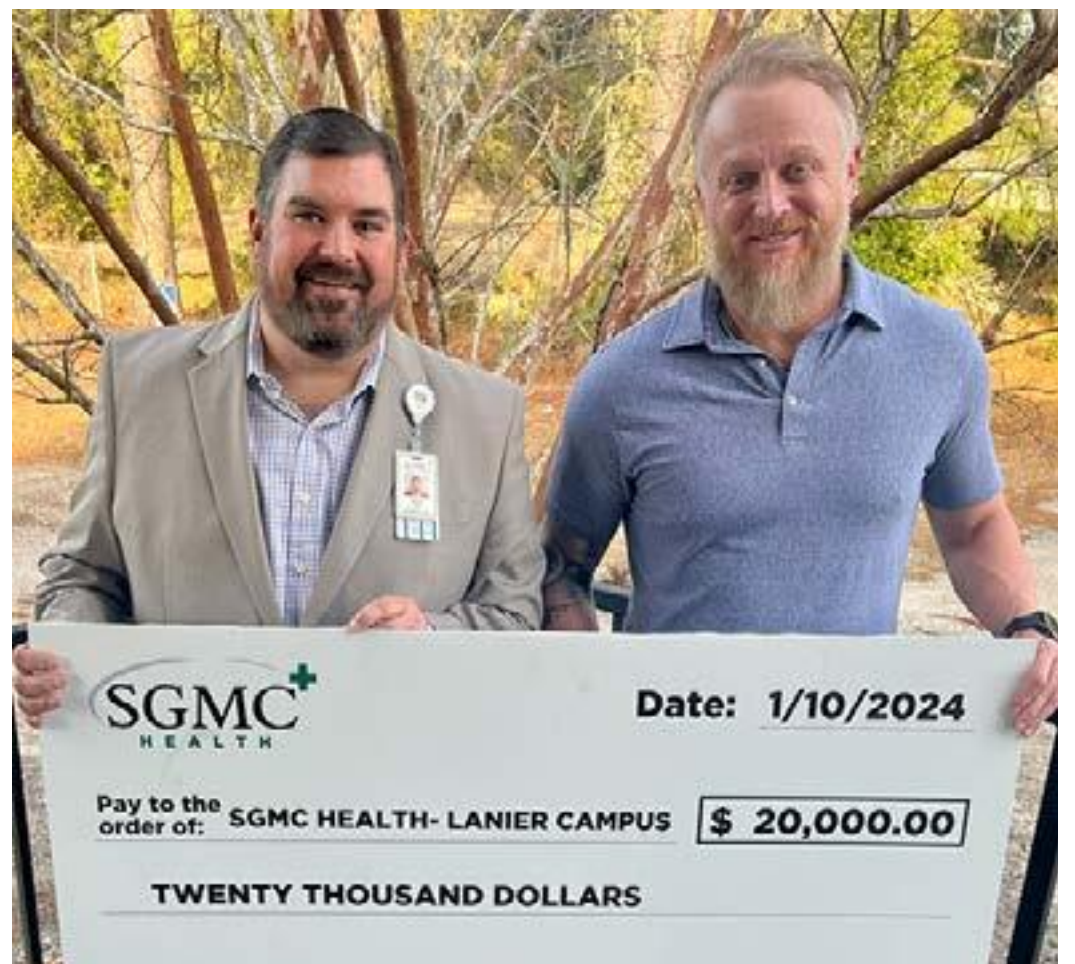
According to SGMC Health-Lanier, past Georgia HEART gifts have allowed SGMC Health-Lanier to make necessary improvements to facilities. Those gifts have helped to fund special projects, and sponsor community events.

"We are so thankful for community partners like Lakeland Family Dentistry," said Hilary Gibbs, SGMC Health Vice President and Chief Development Officer. "Lakeland Family Dentistry's generosity enables SGMC Health to provide critical access to healthcare in rural Georgia."

Dr. Eric Castor came to the Valdosta area to attend Valdosta State University (VSU) after a career in the United States Air Force, as a Pararescueman. Castor was originally from the state of New Hampshire. After attending VSU, Castor went on to study and graduate from the Medical College of Georgia, graduating with his Doctor of Dental Medicine in 2006.

The SGMC Health Georgia HEART Hospital allows organizations and individual taxpayers to donate directly to SGMC Health's rural campuses. Those donations have a 100% state tax credit. SGMC Health Georgia describes this type of contribution as "essential support which has a profound impact on rural hospitals".

Other persons or organizations who would like to support the SGMC Health Georgia HEART Hospital can do so now. Georgia HEART is currently accepting applications for 2024 tax credits. To learn more about this unique tax credit opportunity, visit www.georgiaheart.org/.



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