

VPD Traffic Study Prompts Speed Cameras to Improve Student's Cross Walk Safety

By Carol A. Gasser Moore

VALDOSTA, Georgia – Two Valdosta area schools – WG Nunn Elementary and Pinevale Elementary, are about to get new speed cameras installed. A recent Valdosta Police Department (VPD) study has disclosed the need for the cameras. During the study, the VPD confirmed numerous cases of people driving way too fast during times when children were present and near the roads or trying to cross the roads.

The intersection of Park Avenue and Barack Obama Boulevard, near WG Nunn Elementary, is one of the busiest intersections in Valdosta. The School actually sits on Lakeland Avenue, parallel to Park Avenue. To catch speeders, it is one of the areas in which speed cameras are now being installed.

Across several meetings in which traffic problems affecting school pedestrian traffic has been discussed, individuals have identified that pedestrians can be easily seen walking across a street, car drivers can also be easily seen cutting in front of the pedestrians in very unsafe ways. It is an area that is well known to law enforcement as an area in which there can be a significant number of speeders.

According to information from the VPD, their study's videotaping of traffic in the area confirmed what many people have reported as being their observation and experience with traffic in that area.

During the same study which was conducted in October 2022, traffic near the South Fry Street and LakePark Road, serving Pinevale Elementary School, was also another area with similar traffic problems.

Speeding and poor driving in that area was said to make it dangerous for the elementary school students to walk near the school safely.

The study for Pinevale Elementary School recorded over 200 school children crossing the streets near the school. At the same time, there were almost 130 noticeable speeding violations in the area. Similar records for the area near W.G. Nunn Elementary indicated that easily 150 school students crossed the streets around the school daily. At the same time, VPD noted that well over 100 speeding violations were observed.

The scariest measurement in the study was the fact that speeders often exceeded the speed limits in the area by 20 miles per hour (MPH)!

This is not just a Valdosta problem. There have been "near miss" incidents here in Lanier County as well as other area counties this year! Driver's make poor decisions right in front of law enforcement officers, who often area helping school students cross thoroughfares safely.

The VPD is reminding the public that they intend to curb traffic violations. VPD speeding equipment will notify law enforcement when the speed limit is exceeded by 11 miles per hour above posted speed limits or more, especially when the speeding is done during school hours.

The fines are structured in this way: 1st OFFENSE - \$75. 2nd (or more) OFFENSES - \$125. Both fines will carry a \$5 processing fee.

April 25th is the date officially set for the new speeding citations to begin.



The Valdosta Police Department indicates its dedication for Valdosta students to arrive at school and return home safely. They support safe driving and ask all area drivers to follow the posted speed limits.

The Georgia Children's Safety Team (GCST) which actively works with driving offenders through its area Victim Impact Panel (VIP) drivers education programs is also supporting the Valdosta Police Department's efforts to get unsafe drivers to think and improve their driving.

GSP Arrested Mayor Dante Griffin for DUI in Atkinson County

By Carol A. Gasser Moore

ATKINSON COUNTY, Georgia – Georgia State Patrol (GSP) has documented records from its GSP troopers regarding Dante Griffin of Willacoochee. The troopers were said to be patrolling GA Highway 135 near GA Highway 520. The GSP troopers noticed a red Ford F-150 with a faulty tag light. In response to the faulty tail light, the GSP troopers conducted a traffic stop. During their traffic stop, the troopers found the Ford F-150 driver to be DUI (under the influence).

GSP records also indicate that during the stop, the driver stated several times that he was Dante Griffin, the mayor of Willacoochee.

Dante Griffin (63) of Willacoochee was arrested without incident by the GSP troopers.

Checking further about Griffin's arrest, the Atkinson County Sheriff's Office (ACSO) said Griffin bonded out of the Atkinson County Jail on Saturday, according to ACSO documents.

No further information about Griffin's arrest was offered before going to press. The story will be updated by the Lanier County News as new information is available.

If readers have a news tip, the Lanier County News (LCN) encourages you to email the LCN at publisher@laniercountynews.com/.