

Lanier County News

Covering Lanier & Northern Lowndes Counties

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

Thursday, April 11, 2024 Lakeland, GA

Downtown Lakeland Displaying a Pinwheel Garden: It's Child Abuse Prevention Month

By Carol A. Gasser Moore

LAKELAND, Georgia –In Georgia, it's not too early to plant a garden as most of us know. The CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) for the Alapaha Judicial Circuit uses this month to plant a different type of garden. Instead of flowers or vegetables, the Lakeland Downtown area known as Darsey Park shows off a blue pinwheel garden to help bring awareness to Child Abuse Prevention Month. Nationally, the month of April is assigned to recognize the magnitude of communities, who work together to prevent child abuse and neglect.

By its very nature, the pinwheel suggests imagination and childish impressions. The pinwheel is meant to represent strong, spirited youths and is the official symbol of child abuse prevention.

CASA of the Alapaha Judicial Circuit planted our pinwheel garden this year. A pinwheel was planted for each child abuse and maltreatment victim in Atkinson, Berrien, Clinch, Cook and Lanier Counties for which it serves.

The blue pinwheels serve as a visual reminder of the child abuse that continues to occur in our own community. If you are a community person who has been helped or your children experience a childhood without abuse and neglect, each of you are encouraged to create



a blue pinwheel garden in your front yard.

For those persons who would like to learn more or learn about volunteer opportunities which help children within the Alapaha Judicial Circuit, you are invited to contact Victoria Merritt, Program Director at 229-686-

6576 or email her at vmerritt@fccisberrien.org/ or go on-line to <http://fccisberrien.org/>.

When a community comes together to bring awareness and education to the issues surrounding child abuse, child abuse prevention happens!

Zykenzie Calhoun of Lakeland Arrested for Murder by VPD Assisted by Lakeland PD and LCSO

By Carol A. Gasser Moore

VALDOSTA, Georgia – Zykenzie Jerimiah Calhoun (22) of Lakeland was arrested by the Valdosta Police Department (VPD) without incident on Tuesday, April 2nd about 11:00 a.m. At the time of his arrest, detectives found a firearm on Calhoun's person which had an illegal automatic switch on it. Calhoun was located in the 1400 block of East Park Avenue, Valdosta at the time of his arrest.

Calhoun's arrest is related to a murder in Valdosta, which occurred on Sunday, February 11th. At approximately 11:20 a.m. On that day, Valdosta Police Officers responded to the 500 block of Moody Drive after several citizens called E911 to report that someone was shot. When officers arrived on the scene, they found Octavius Marshun McDougal (33), with obvious signs of trauma to his torso. VPD Officers attempted life-saving measures on McDougal, until Emergency Medical Services (EMS) responded and transported him

to the hospital where he later died.

As the February 11th events unfolded, VPD Detectives developed a person of interest early during their murder investigation, based on evidence they gathered at the scene. After countless hours of looking at corroborating clues from the crime scene and interviewing subjects, VPD Detectives were able to make the arrest.

VPD Detectives obtained arrest warrants for Zykenzie Jerimiah Calhoun (22) male from Lakeland, for:

- Murder during the commission of a felony-felony;
- Aggravated assault with a deadly weapon-felony;
- Possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony on Monday, April 1st.

After Calhoun was served the warrant and arrested, he was transported to Lowndes County Jail. Calhoun is being held on the charges listed above. VPD have also revealed that further charges are pending against

Calhoun.

VPD Chief Leslie Manahan has stated, "I am extremely proud of the work of our detectives. They worked countless hours, and their hard work has resulted in Mr. McDougal's family getting answers for this tragic event."

In addition, Manahan added, "We would like to thank the Lakeland Police Department, as well as the Lanier County Sheriff's Office, for their continuous assistance throughout this investigation."

Though there has been an arrest, the public is still asked by the VPD to provide additional information on this case, or any other cases.

For persons with information, they are asked to please contact the Valdosta Police Department Bureau of Investigative Services at 229-293-3145, the crime tip line at 229-293-3091, or file a tip online at www.valdostacity.com/police-department.

CAPTURED: Yellow-legged Hornet Can be Threat to Managed and Wild Bees

By Carol A. Gasser Moore

GEORGIA – A Yellow-tailed Hornet Queen, native to tropical and subtropical areas of Southeast Asia, has been caught! It was found in a trap on the Georgia and South Carolina border on Thursday, March 14th. The Department of Plant Industry at Clemson University found this specific hornet in the trap set just outside Georgia in Jasper County, South Carolina.

While not any more harmful to humans than other types of hornets, the Yellow-tailed Hornet can devastate both managed and wild bees.

This type of invasive hornet has been tracked across the Southeast Region of the United States for several years. Known as a social wasp species, the Yellow-tailed wasp is known to average about 6,000 worker hornets in one egg-shaped paper nest.

The nests can be located in all kinds of places, including in trees.

Steven Long, Assistant Director of Clemson's Department of Plant Industry reveals that the hornet queen's capture is momentous. It is one less Yellow-tailed Hornet nest that won't be established. While the State of Georgia has fought the hornets, especially in the Savannah area, they have almost not been found in South Carolina, until now.

The university shares that the Yellow-tailed Hornet is a "predatory" insect. It is known to attack western honeybee colonies. For beekeepers and their bees, it presents serious problems to honeybees.

For more information about Yellow-tailed Hornets, the Georgia Department of Agriculture offers information at yellow.legged.hornet@agr.georgia.gov/.

SGMC Health Begins Main Campus Redesign

SGMC Health is pleased to announce the implementation of Phase I of its long-range master facilities plan. An estimated \$150 million investment, this initiative will bring about significant enhancements to the main campus in Valdosta, Georgia and improve access to services.

Among the notable improvements, the project includes construction of a uniquely designed women and infants' tower with a dedicated entrance, a new emergency department and trauma center, and the relocation of the main entrance from Pendleton Drive to Woodrow Wilson Drive.

SGMC Health President and Chief Executive Officer Ronald E. Dean shared, "I couldn't be more proud of our SGMC Health team of employees, physicians and volunteers who laid the ground work for this transformative project through their commitment and dedication to the region of people we serve in South Georgia and surrounding communities."

SGMC Health has experienced significant growth over the past four years, enhancing and expanding service lines across the system. "We are extremely grateful to the patients and their families who trust us with their care each year. Our community's support is a critical component of our team's success. It enables and fuels our team to serve even better as we invest more resources in the applications of advanced technologies, programs, and facilities," said Dean.

According to SGMC Health Vice President of Regional Hospital Operations Johnny Ball, the project will begin in April and includes several stages.

Initial changes will focus on optimizing underutilized



sections of the main campus. This will include removing the former South Georgia Regional Library and Mathis City Auditorium buildings to make room for parking.

The second stage of Phase I will begin in the summer months with the construction of the foundation and preparation of the building site.

The third stage of the project will involve the construction of the building over an estimated two-year timeframe. This will begin the Fall of 2024. Throughout Phase I, all hospital services will continue to operate seamlessly without interruption. Information about traffic flow and campus circulation will be communicated throughout the project.

Patients and community members are encouraged to explore the dedicated Womens and Infants' Tower website

at sgmc.org/growth where they can preview renderings, stay updated on news, observe real time progress of the project, and access maps ahead of their visit whenever possible.

SGMC Health is a regional health care delivery system located in South Georgia. Supported by a workforce of more than 3,100 who care for 400,000 patients annually across 15 counties, SGMC Health operates 4 hospitals (Main, Smith Northview, Berrien, and Lanier), and a vast array of primary and specialty care services. Service lines with regional prominence include heart and vascular, stroke, trauma, cancer, orthopedics, surgery, and women and infants that help generate over \$1 billion in economic benefit to the region.

For more information visit sgmc.org/growth.