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# The Clinch County News

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131st YEAR, ISSUE 23 © 2026 The Clinch County News

Wednesday, April 29, 2026

HOMERVILLE, GEORGIA

10 PAGES, ONE SECTION

**Bargains, Coupons & Deals**  
INSIDE with these sales papers:

**DOLLAR GENERAL**

## NEWS BRIEFS

What's going on in your community

### Lions Club holding golf tournament

The Clinch County Lions Club will hold its annual John E. Hughes Memorial Golf Tournament on Friday, May 8, at 11:30 a.m. at Okefenokee Country Club. Contact Len Robbins (912-218-2255) or Brent James (912-520-0753) to sign up a team. Format is 4-man scramble. Cost is \$400 per team.

### St. Paul celebrating 105th anniversary

St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church will be celebrating their 105th church anniversary on Sunday, May 3, at 10 am. The speaker will be Rev. Marvin H. Smith II of Valdosta. He is the pastor of St. Mark Baptist Church in DuPont. Everyone is invited to come and fellowship with us.

### Clinch BOE to hold budget public hearings

The Clinch County Board of Education will hold two public budget hearings to discuss the FY27 budget. The first hearing will be during a called board meeting on Tuesday, May 5, at 5 p.m. and the second hearing will be during a called board meeting on Thursday, May 28, at 5:30 p.m. prior to the regular board meeting at 6 p.m. All meetings will be held at the Clinch County Board Office, and are open to the public.

### Regional Library Board to meet on May 4

The Regional Library Board of the Okefenokee Regional Library System will meet at 4 pm on Monday, May 4, at the Waycross-Ware County Public Library in Waycross. For further information please contact (912) 287-4982.

### FMB sponsoring trips to NY, Amish Country

Farmers and Merchants Bank is sponsoring trips to Niagara Falls USA & Buffalo, June 6-14, 2026 and to Shipshewana, Indiana, Amish Country, October 11-16, 2026. Come join the fun and travel with the Farmers and Merchants Bank group to Niagara Falls USA & Buffalo for 9 days and 8 nights, 14 meals and tours of Niagara Falls, USA (No Passport), Cruise on the "Maid of the Mist" and Erie Canal, drive through wine country & tour Buffalo. Amish Country trip is for 6 days and 5 nights, 8 meals and tour Amish Homestead, see the show "Love Comes Softly", visit MENNO-HOF, the Amish & Mennonite Story, a wagon tour and visit DAS Dutchman & Downtown Shipshewana. If you are interested, contact Jo Ann Tomlinson at tomlinson.joann@gmail.com or 912-487-8664.

**LOCAL MATTERS**



Judged a newspaper of General Excellence 2025

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# Under Fire

Pictured above is the Pineland Road Fire, along the Clinch County/Echols County line – Photo courtesy of Georgia Forestry Commission.

## Pineland Road Fire spreads through Clinch, Echols

By Len Robbins  
Publisher

A fire that started on April 18 in Clinch County has moved into Echols County, prompting evacuations and a massive firefighting effort.

As of Monday afternoon, April 27, the Pineland Road Fire has consumed an estimated 32,331 acres, according to the Georgia Forestry Commission, with very little end in sight. Currently, the fire is contained 10 percent, with the GFC estimating full containment by July 1.

Crews are working around the clock building, reinforcing

and securing existing containment lines along Highway 94 to the north, U.S. Highway 441 to the west, Thelma Headlight Road to the south, and Will Rewis Road to the east in Echols County. Approximately 140 residents of eastern Echols County have been evacuated as of Sunday evening, with Pineland Road, Gopher Lope Road, Register, Worth Lane, Joes Lane, Will Rewis Road, New Barnes Road, Gaddis Road, Kind Road, Jesse Lane, May Lane, Chauncey Road, and Hendley Road being closed in Echols County, and Colon Road, Mud Camp Road, Mattox Ford Road, Headlight Road in Clinch County also being closed.

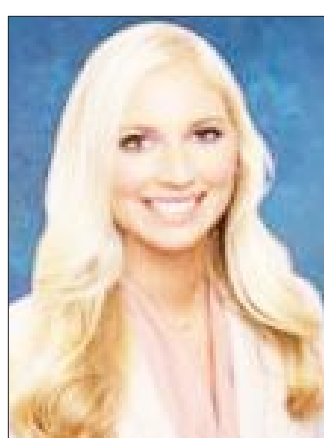
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Angela Handley



Kellie Oliver



Lily Blitch

## CMH announces personnel moves

Clinch County Hospital Authority announced recently that Angela Handley has signed a five-year contract extension to continue serving as the organization's Chief Executive Officer. The board's unanimous decision reflects its deep confidence in Handley's visionary leadership and recognizes her extraordinary accomplishments since assuming the role in 2018.

"I'm honored by the board's continued trust and the opportunity to keep building on the work we've started," said CEO, Angela Handley. "Rural healthcare matters deeply to me, because it matters to our community. The

progress we've made at Clinch Memorial is a direct reflection of a team that shows up every day committed to doing hard things well, and I'm excited about what we'll accomplish together in the years ahead."

Clinch Memorial Hospital also announced two key leadership appointments. Kellie Register has accepted the role of Chief Clinical Officer in addition to her current role as Chief Nursing Officer, and Lily Blitch will serve as the hospital's new Chief Operating Officer.

Register brings nearly 20 years of nursing leadership experience and has

(Continued on Page 3)

## BOE approves \$1 million in renovations

By Ben Murray  
Staff Writer

The Clinch County Board of Education approved renovations to the campus to be done over the summer when school is out at their regular monthly meeting Thursday. The project will cost a little over \$1 million.

The renovations will include:

- Taking up the paving on the track and replacing it with new paving.
- Adding student parking between the green house and the baseball field.
- Adding additional fences and security access controls to help keep the school more secure.
- Expanding the current football field house building with a 50 x 50 building.
- Adding furniture, washing machines, electrical and plumbing fixtures and equipment to the field house.
- Updating the football stadium

(Continued on Page 2)

## Let's Talk Local

### Lutz, Brown, Peagler & Manley Insurance Agency: A Downtown Tradition of Trust since 1936

(Editor's Note: This feature is the latest in a series by Homerville Main Street about Downtown Homerville's small businesses.)

For nearly 90 years, Lutz, Brown, Peagler and Manley Insurance Agency has been a fixture in Downtown Homerville, providing dependable insurance services rooted in personal relationships and community commitment. Located at 28 East Dame Avenue, the agency traces its history back to 1936, making it one of the longest-standing businesses in the downtown district.

The agency's current chapter began with Eric Lutz, whose path into the insurance industry started with earning a risk management and insurance degree from the University of Georgia. He began his career at the Clinch County Farm Bureau before approaching Phillip Manley about purchasing the agency upon his retirement — a decision that ensured the business would remain locally owned and deeply connected to the community it



From left, Eric Lutz, Teresa Thrift, Logan Fitzgerald, Breanna Hill, Garland Daniels at the downtown LBPM office.

serves. Today, the agency offers a full range of services, including property and casualty insurance for both personal and commercial needs, life insurance, bonds, and more. Home and auto insurance remain the most popular services, but what truly sets the agency apart is its unwavering

commitment to providing exceptional customer service.

One of Lutz's proudest moments as a business owner has been welcoming his daughter, Garland, into the agency, continuing the tradition of family involvement and long-term investment in the business's future.

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