

The Clinch County News

We give the skinny so you can chew the fat

\$1
with tax at the
newsstand

131st YEAR, ISSUE 24

© 2026 The Clinch County News

Wednesday, May 6, 2026

HOMERVILLE, GEORGIA

8 PAGES, ONE SECTION

Bargains, Coupons & Deals
INSIDE with these sales papers:

DOLLAR GENERAL

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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.

AARP smart driver class offered on May 21

AARP will be hosting a smart driver class on Thursday, May 21, from 9 am to 3:15 pm at the Clinch County Senior Center. To register call 912-487-2893 or 912-599-0227. The class will cost \$20 for AARP members and \$25 for non AARP members. check or cash only. Light lunch will be provided. This course can lead to a multi-year auto insurance discount, depending on eligibility with your insurance.

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.

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

Follow us on:



Rain helps, but Pineland Road Fire still rages

By Len Robbins
Publisher

South Georgia saw substantial rain over the weekend, giving the Pineland Road Fire a needed dousing.

But the fire – which has charred 32,575 acres in Clinch and Echols counties since its inception on April 18 – continues to burn and threaten the region, as conditions remain dry.

As of Sunday evening, the fire was contained 44 percent. Saturday brought rain of 1 to 1 1/2 inches in the area. Crews are working to hold the fire within its strategic containment boundaries: north of Hwy 94, west of US 441, south of Thelma Headlight Rd, and east of Will Rewis Rd.

A total of 267 personnel and 91 resources are assigned to the incident, including engines, dozers, tractor-plovers, aircraft, and overhead from BLM, Georgia Forestry Commission, USFS, and cooperating agencies.

On Friday, evacuations in Echols County were lifted,

but roads in the area still remain closed. Those roads in Clinch County include: Colon Rd., Mud Camp Rd., Mattox Ford Rd., Headlight Rd. In Echols County, those roads include: Pineland Rd, Gopher Lope Rd, Register, Worth Ln, Joes Ln, Will Rewis Rd, New Barnes Rd, Gaddis Rd, King Rd, Jesse Ln, May Ln, Chauncey Rd, Hendley Rd

A total of 140 civilians have been affected, with no civilian fatalities, injuries, or missing persons reported, according to the GFC. One responder injury/illness has been reported; no responder fatalities or missing persons.

According to information from the Georgia Forestry Commission, 78 single residences and 51 other minor structures threatened within 72 hours (35 other minor structures destroyed); residences, out-buildings, hunting camps, commercial timber, and commercial bee operations threatened, particularly around Fruitland and Bamberg.



Pictured above, a Georgia Forestry Commission truck at the scene of the Pineland Road Fire – Photo courtesy of GFC.

Another major fire in Brantley County, the Highway 82 Fire, is now at 22,471 acres and 75% contained. GFC is estimating the Pineland Road Fire will be fully contained by July 1. A burn ban for all of South Georgia remains in place.

Assistance for firefighters and emergency officials is being coordinated through EMA offices in Echols County and Clinch County.

Clinch County EMA Director Andrew Nelson can be reached at 912-487-3700 and Echols County EMA Director Allen Levesque can be reached at 229-559-6538. Updates on the fire's progress can be found online at the Clinch County EMA Facebook page, at the Georgia Forestry Commission website (gatrees.org), and on the Clinch County News Facebook page. Please see those sites for updated information.



Panther tennis team falls in the 'Elite 8'

The Clinch County High boys tennis team advanced to the "Elite 8" before being edged by Seminole County. The Panthers blanked Claxton 3-0 on Wednesday to advance to the quarterfinals. They were topped by Seminole 3-2. Members of the Panther tennis team include, from left, Colby Daniels, J.D. Smith, Garnet Holtzclaw, Gavin Day, Malik McNair, Jake Bruce, Grayson Daniel, and Coach Chad Jones. - Photo by Joy Sumner Photography.

Early voting for primary is ongoing

By Len Robbins
Publisher

Early voting for the May 19 general primary election is ongoing at the elections office in the Clinch County Courthouse.

The early voting period will run through Friday, May 15, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. during the weekdays. There will be a Saturday voting periods on May 9. This election is a primary election, meaning you will have to choose between a Democratic or Republican party ballot. Non-partisan races will be on both the Democratic and Republican ballots.

On the Democratic ballot, contested races include:

- Governor - Keisha Lance Bottoms, Olu Brown, Amanda Duffey, Geoff Duncan, Jason Esteves, Derrick Jackson, Michael 'Mike' Thurmond.
- Lt. Governor - Josh McLaurin, Nabi-

lah Parkes, Richard Wright.

- Secretary of State - Cam Ashling, Dana Barrett, Penny Brown Reynolds, Adrian Consonery Jr.

- Attorney General - Tanya Miller, Robert 'Bob' Trammell.

- Agriculture Commissioner - Clarence Blalock, Thomas Dean, Ambuj 'A.J.' Jain, DeAndre Mathis, Keisha Sean Waites.

- State School Superintendent - Brett A. Hulme, Jason Moon, Nikki Porcher, Michelle Michi Sanchez, Christian Wise Smith.

- Public Service Commission, District 5 - Craig Cupid, Shelia Edwards, Angelia Pressley.

- U.S. Congress, 8th District - Kelly Esti, Justin M. Lucas.

On the Republican ballot, contested races include:

- U.S. Senate - Earl L. 'Buddy' Carter, Mike Collins, John F. Coyne III, Derek

(Continued on Page 3)

City OKs water/sewer rate increase

By Ben Murray
Staff Writer

The Homerville City Council held a called meeting on Monday, April 27, and approved increasing the water/sewer rates in four installments every six months, bringing the rate up ultimately by 52 percent.

The increase was approved in an effort to secure a grant from the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority, who would not even consider approving a grant without an increase in the water sewer rates. The city's rates were lower than those in the surrounding cities, according to Will Martin a representative from Turnipseed Engineers, a civil engineering firm involved with the city in the grant process.

The grant would be used for the city's water treatment plant project, which includes updating the plant to meet standards set by Environmental Product Declarations requiring the city to start testing for mercury in the water, and general updating of technology for the plant.

The city has already received \$1.9 million in grant money for the project, with the city required to match. The total cost of the project is \$5.8 million, according to city officials.

Several citizens were at Monday's called meeting, asking questions about the proposed increase. It was the only matter on the agenda.