

COASTAL OBSERVER

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50 cents

Town sees voter rolls grow in advance of council election

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

The number of registered voters jumped by 28 percent for next month's Pawleys Island Town Council election, where the question of residency remains a contentious issue.

Mayor Jimmy Braswell faces opposition from Brian Henry in his bid for a second term as mayor. Henry and his wife own the

Sea View Inn and were among the 37 people added to the town's voter rolls before the Oct. 4 deadline. There are now 168 people registered to vote in the town, according to the Georgetown County Board of Voter Registration and Elections.

"One of the most important things to me is there is an increased belief that my opponents are pushing for: 'if you are not a full-time resident, you should

not be able to vote and have a role in our elections,'" Henry said.

Braswell raised the issue of residency at a Town Council meeting in August, the same day Henry filed. He asked the town attorney for information. Council members got a memo from the attorney, David DuRant, explaining the state law, but the issue didn't appear on the council agenda.

That led Harold Wyatt to hire

Butch Bowers, a Columbia attorney who is the former chairman of the state Election Commission, to get advice. "As a property owner and voter that does not reside on Pawleys Island year-round, it got my attention," Wyatt wrote in an email to Town Council, "and I felt compelled to get educated on this subject as quickly as possible."

He offered to bring Bowers to the island to talk to council. Bras-

well refused.

"A lawyer hired by you would be clearly biased towards you and my opponent," Braswell told Wyatt in an email.

Council Members Rocky Holliday, Guerry Green and Ashley Carter agreed to call a special meeting last month to hear from Bowers. Braswell pointed out that Holliday and Green had Henry's campaign signs in their yards.

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Blake Marsh, left, and Jackson Stacy atop Mount Whitney, the highest point in the lower 48 states.

THE LONG WALK

WHS grads cover 2,653 miles in 128 days

BY CHRIS SOKOLOSKI
COASTAL OBSERVER

Two lifelong friends left Pawleys Island as Jackson and Blake, but after hiking the 2,653-mile-long Pacific Crest Trail, they earned the trail names "Whole Roll" and "Scar."

Jackson Stacy and Blake Marsh, both 22, have been best friends since preschool. They were on the soccer and cross country teams at Waccamaw High School before graduating in 2015.

Stacy's trail name was given because of his insistence on carrying an entire roll of toilet paper in his backpack, no matter the size or weight. Marsh is a huge fan of the movie "The Lion King" and Simba was already taken.

Trail names are given by others, not chosen by the individual hikers.

"By the end of the trail, we made a lot of really good friends, who I don't know what their real names are," Stacy said.

The Pacific Crest Trail is the western equivalent to the Appalachian Trail, although 400 miles longer. It stretches from the Mexican border through California, Oregon and Washington to the Canadian border.

Stacy and Marsh hiked part of the trail while working as camp counselors in California during the summer before their sophomore year in college. Stacy was a student at Vanderbilt University and Marsh was at Winthrop University.

SEE "TRAIL," PAGE 3

LITCHFIELD RACQUET CLUB

As staff backs new lot plan, residents push to keep it green

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

Increasing the lot size for a proposed development at the former Litchfield Racquet Club helped persuade Georgetown County planning staff to recommend approval of 19 residential lots in place of 17 empty tennis courts.

"The lots match the zoning for the Litchfield Country Club. That was a big factor," said Boyd Johnson, the county planning director.

The Planning Commission will hold a hearing today on the proposal from Ameri-Built Homes for the development on 8.5 acres. It is the fourth plan submitted for the property this year. Three previous plans were withdrawn before a hearing could be held.

The property is owned by Founders National Club, which closed the racquet club on Halloween in 2018. A change from tennis courts to another use requires zoning approval from Georgetown County.

The property is a portion of a "planned development" first approved in 1987 for 25 duplexes. The zoning has been amended over the years, most recently in 2005 for the addition of 14 duplexes that are now under construction by Ameri-Built.

At 10,000 square feet, the proposed lots are more than twice the size of 32 lots proposed for the 8.5 acres in June.

SEE "ZONING," PAGE 2



Tanya Ackerman/Coastal Observer

Coast RTA wants to expand service in Georgetown County.

TRANSPORTATION

Adding bus routes hinges on funds

BY CHRIS SOKOLOSKI
COASTAL OBSERVER

With ridership on the rise, both on fixed routes and in its paratransit program, Coast RTA is planning to expand its service in Georgetown County.

Waccamaw Regional Transportation Authority officials are hosting a series of meetings to get the public's input on where they want the buses to run.

"We don't have a ton of service in Georgetown," said Brian Piascik, the authority's general manager and CEO. "We need to provide more. There's no doubt about that."

The earliest any expanded routes would start would be October of 2020, Piascik told about a half dozen people at meeting at Horry-Georgetown Technical College last week.

"We've got a lot of people to talk to about potential funding

sources," Piascik said. "I truly want to help some of these areas that we don't serve, but I'm not going to put it out there unless I know I can fund it."

SEE "TRANSIT," PAGE 5

GEORGETOWN COUNTY

Administrator candidates seek engagement

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

The three finalists for Georgetown County administrator share a vision for public engagement. County Council is scheduled to decide next week whose vision they share.

Ray Funnye, the county's Public Services director; Brian Tucker, its Economic Development director; and David Garner, director of Abbeville County, were selected from 37 applicants to replace Sel Hemingway, who will retire at the end of the year after 12 years as county administrator.

Funnye started working for the county 27 years ago, after moving home from Atlanta, where he worked in construction



Ray Funnye, left, David Garner, Brian Tucker.

management. He became director of Public Works, then Public Services, which includes Public Works and Environmental Services.

"Things are happening in Georgetown County that need to continue," he said. "People are ready to do great things, and have done great things."

Funnye believes engagement needs to start with county em-

ployees. "Let's open the door for a candid discussion of what's going on in Georgetown County," he said. "Those employees are in the trenches every day. They know where all the landmines are hidden."

Tucker would like to bring the school district, municipalities and businesses together

to create a strategic plan for the county. "I have seven years invested in trying to push us forward," he said.

He came to the county in 2012 as CEO of the Chamber of Commerce after a career in real estate and banking. He was hired as Economic Development director in 2018.

"I've spent the last five years

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The Warrior Spirit: Waccamaw High celebrates homecoming with pep rally, parade and a crown.

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