

# COASTAL OBSERVER

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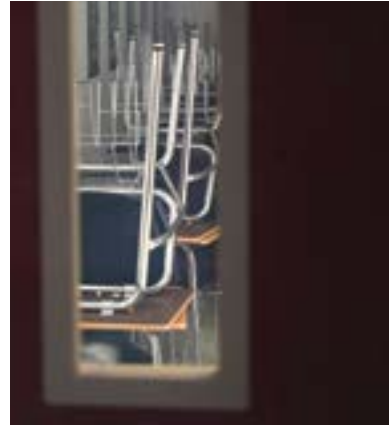
## Classes will resume after Labor Day in format yet to be decided

BY CHRIS SOKOLOSKI  
COASTAL OBSERVER

Georgetown County students will begin classes the day after Labor Day, whether in-person or online.

"Unfortunately it's going to be impossible to come up with one plan that's going to make everyone happy," Superintendent Keith Price said. "It's a difficult time for those in the education world, and well as those that surround it. Everyone is trying to be as flexible as possible with whatever plans are released."

The Georgetown County School Board got its first look at



Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

The governor ordered public schools to close in March.

a revised calendar this week and will meet Tuesday to vote on it and get a report from Price on how the district plans to proceed.

Gov. Henry McMaster said Wednesday that the state will not approve any district's reopening plan unless it includes an option for in-person learning five days a week.

"We must do it safely, we must do it carefully, but we must do it," McMaster said of the reopening. His concern for children is "if they fall behind in this one period, they may never catch up."

Parents need to have an option of sending their children to school because they need to go

back to work so the state can reopen the economy, he added.

But McMaster, in saying he would not order students back to school, said the choice must be left to the parents.

"Right now, we are taking all things into consideration, including the governor's comments, before we take our finalized recommendation to the board," Price said on Wednesday.

School Board Chairman Jim Dumm said based on survey results he's seen, Georgetown County parents want to be able to choose whether to send their children back to in-person classes. He would have liked to have

seen more guidance from the state department of education.

He said he wants the state to "guide us, but not dictate to us."

Price has stressed since he took over as superintendent last month that distance learning in the new school year will be different than the e-learning that took place after schools closed in mid-March. Distance learning is likely to include classes either live or pre-recorded and broadcast on the internet.

"It probably won't be ideal, no matter what we come up with, but as long as we can be flexible and understand that whatever it

SEE "SCHOOLS," PAGE 3

ENVIRONMENT | Sea turtles

## Volunteer digs deep to help loggerhead nest

BY CHRIS SOKOLOSKI  
COASTAL OBSERVER

The hole in the sand was past Kathi Aderholt's elbow. She thought it was deep enough.

The sea turtle wasn't satisfied. The loggerhead, known as Gimpy to volunteers who monitor nests, is missing its left rear flipper. Aderholt was there to help.

"It's a night that I will never forget," she said.

Aderholt has been a volunteer with the DeBordieu chapter of the S.C. United Turtle Enthusiasts for a decade. A former English teacher, she said she discovered a love for nature after retiring to the area.

SCUTE volunteers have been tracking Gimpy for more than 20 years, according to Betsy Brabson, who heads the DeBordieu chapter.

"She's only got 50 percent capacity. She can't get her chamber deep enough," Brabson said. "She'll crawl three or four times a night."

This year, Gimpy has come ashore without nesting more than a dozen times.



Photos by SCUTE (above), Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer (right)

The loggerhead known to volunteers as Gimpy, above, was seen trying to nest earlier this month. Kathi Aderholt, right, helped when Gimpy came to DeBordieu. They dug the nest together in the sand marked by three sticks. It was later moved by volunteers to the edge of the nearby dune.

"A lot of times, we'd come out in the morning and see her track. Our hearts were just broken for her," Aderholt said. "We were just afraid that she had to be getting exhausted."

An official with the state Department of Natural Resources told Brabson a volunteer could help a disabled turtle dig a nest

by lying on the sand behind the turtle and digging with it. Brabson passed the information on to her volunteers.

"I read that once and laughed," Aderholt said.

Although Gimpy doesn't usually nest at DeBordieu, she had a false crawl near Aderholt's house on July 8. Aderholt suspected



Gimpy might come back so she was on the lookout the next night.

When Aderholt found Gimpy, she could tell that the turtle was struggling. Gimpy kept pushing sand back into the hole.

"She was getting nowhere," Aderholt said. "After she put the sand down, I was trying to move

SEE "TURTLE," PAGE 3

PAWLEYS ISLAND

## Appraisal puts value of new sand at \$90,000 for lot owners

BY CHARLES SWENSON  
COASTAL OBSERVER

Adding sand to the beach and creating a dune in front of houses on the south end of Pawleys Island added \$90,000 to the value of those properties, according to appraisals made for the town. So the town isn't offering any money to the owners of three lots in exchange for easements valued at between \$27,000 and \$47,000.

The three easements are the last step in a process that will allow the Army Corps of Engineers to participate in the \$14.3 million beach renourishment project the town completed this year, and pay to repair and maintain the beach on the south end of the island for the next 40 years. The town already has easements on 110 other lots that will allow future beach management projects.

Town Council agreed to condemn four easements in May. Tropical storms Arthur and

SEE "PAWLEYS," PAGE 3

HIGHWAY 17 | Widening the shoulders

## DOT puts brakes on tree clearing for safety project

BY CHARLES SWENSON  
COASTAL OBSERVER

A project to widen the shoulders of Highway 17 between Prince George and the Waccamaw River bridge is under review after property owners along the route raised objections to the state Department of Transportation's plan to cut down trees in the right of way.

The \$5 million project will add 2 feet to the shoulders along 7.4 miles of highway. DOT initially proposed to cut the trees back 38 feet from the east side of the highway and 24 feet from the west side. It also planned to cut down trees in the median, including oaks planted in 2004 with a state highway beautification grant.

"It's currently being debated how far that clearing is going," said Chris Borque, DOT's resident construction engineer in Georgetown County.

Matt Balding, an owner of Ar-



Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

DOT agreed to save this live oak at an entrance to Arcadia Plantation, but the fate of others has not been decided.

cadia Plantation, learned about the project when he saw heavy equipment moving down Highway 17 from Prince George. He maintains a fire line along both

sides of the highway.

He started making phone calls when the operators told him about the scope of the project.

"I understand you have to

keep things up, but not why, when we went to all the trouble to preserve this corridor, they have to cut so far," he said. "It makes no sense."

Planning for the project began in 2018, according to DOT records. The bids were let this spring. The project is due for completion by June 30, 2021.

Balding said he received no notice about the project. Neither did Blanche Brown, manager of the DeBordieu Colony Community Association. The project would take out a stand of live oaks at the DeBordieu entrance.

"I think it was a well-meaning project," Brown said, but she thinks the agency should have notified property owners.

The project originated at the DOT office in Columbia, Borque said.

"There have been several fatalities and accidents on that portion of the highway," he said. "This was strictly through the

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LAND USE PLAN

## Restrictions on gatherings will delay input on delayed update

BY CHARLES SWENSON  
COASTAL OBSERVER

Georgetown County planners are still looking for ways to reduce density in portions of Murrells Inlet, but it will be at least another eight months before any of those plans start to take effect.

The area between Bypass 17 and Business 17 is shown as high-density residential on future land-use maps. "That's just a lot of high density in that one area," said Boyd Johnson, the county planning director. "We were looking pretty hard at the future land use in Murrells Inlet."

The future land-use plan that the county is required by state law to maintain was due for a 10-year update in 2018. The Planning Commission this week approved a draft of the update that it will present to the public.

The commission will wait until August to decide when and how to get that input because of the coronavirus outbreak. "We didn't really feel comfortable at this stage starting to schedule those," said Holly Richardson, the county's senior planner.

The staff plans to post updated maps and goals on the county website along with a feature to solicit comments online.

The current timetable calls for the commission to complete its review by January and for County Council to approve the new plan by March.

Two studies of the Highway 17 corridor on Waccamaw Neck also require public comment. Hundreds of people attended sessions last year and will be asked to comment on the results.

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