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Photos by Chris Sokolowski/Coastal Observer

Cheers erupt around Bethany Giles, center, after she is named the new school superintendent.

EDUCATION | The superintendent search

Product of county schools now leads them

BY CHRIS SOKOLOSKI
COASTAL OBSERVER

Bethany Giles took over as interim superintendent of Georgetown County Schools on July 1, but she stayed in her assistant superintendent office while the school board went through the process of looking for a permanent replacement for Keith Price, who left for a job in the Midlands.

Last week, the board approved a contract for Giles through until June 30, 2028, at a starting salary of \$190,000.

"I'm excited, I'm humbled and I am extremely passionate about the Georgetown County School District," Giles said.

Giles will remain in her old office a little longer while the color of the walls in her new office is changed from blue to red, which is the color of her alma mater, South Carolina State University.

GILES GREW UP in Andrews and attended Andrews Primary and Rosemary Middle schools.

"Every time I go to Rosemary Middle I go down the one hallway where my classroom was. I cannot not remember what it was like to walk in there," Giles said. "It seems like 'was I really in here?'"

When Giles was young, she would hang around her sister's Andrews High School basketball team dreaming of



Giles gets a hug from Board Member Patti Hammel after the announcement.

when she would play on the varsity. She wants today's students to have the same dreams and see the "true heart and passion of Georgetown County."

Giles realized her dreams and played basketball and softball at Andrews High School.

"I thought I'd play basketball forever until a knee injury changed that trajectory," she said.

After graduating in 1997, Giles

earned a softball scholarship to South Carolina State, where she planned to start down the path of being a lawyer.

Her teachers and coaches in Andrews, including one of her mentors, Carolyn Stalvey, convinced her to return home and "give back" by becoming a teacher and coach. Stalvey coached the Yellow Jackets to back-to-back softball state titles and also coached basketball.

Giles' love of basketball has not abated. She's been hosting "free throw Fridays" around the county to give students a chance to talk to her in a relaxed setting.

"It's a way to get data points from these students," Giles said. "Nothing is more valuable than hearing your students give you their feedback, their perspective on how they see their school."

General topics included the district's cell phone policy, bullying, what's good and what's not so good about the school, the learning environment and what needs improvement. Students were also encouraged to talk about themselves and their lives.

Giles has worked for the school district for 23 years. She taught at Rosemary Middle for five years and then was the school's assistant principal for two years before moving to Brown's Ferry Elementary School, where she was principal for nine years.

SEE "GILES," PAGE 3

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Commission wants to review changes to natural resources

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

An update to Georgetown County's plan for natural resources drafted nearly two years ago won't be adopted until early next year at the earliest after a mistake on the County Council agenda delayed action this week.

Natural resources is the last of the 10 required elements of the state mandated comprehensive plan the local governments are required to



Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

Natural resources ranked high in a 2021 survey.

SEE "PLAN," PAGE 2

LAND USE

Foes of rezoning see 'chilling effect' in counterclaims

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

Neighbors who oppose the rezoning of property on Pawleys Creek for a residential development have asked the Circuit Court to dismiss claims by the developer that they conspired with a citizens group to block the project.

The claims by Magic Oaks LLC and RCB Land Holdings LLC "are clearly intended to intimidate and have a chilling effect on the exercise of constitutional rights,"

SEE "SUIT," PAGE 2

SOLAR FARM

Focus is on delays as council defers request to expand

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER



"What it came down to is the dirt," Raymond Newton said. "They didn't know how to deal with the dirt."

The Georgetown County Council member from District 5 grilled the project manager for a 2,000-acre solar farm under construction in the rural Lambertown community about delays and turnover in contractors before the

SEE "SOLAR," PAGE 4

PAWLEYS ISLAND | The suit over renourishment

Sandbags placed at Prince George as inlet migration erodes dune



Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

The creek flows by an old groin that was once on the beach.

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

Sandbags now line the beach at Prince George where Pawleys Inlet has continued its southern migration as property owners and the town of Pawleys Island continue negotiations to relocate the inlet.

"Emergency conditions have occurred along the oceanfront of the Prince George community," state regulators found in issuing an emergency order allowing placement of sandbags in front of seven oceanfront houses.

The state Department of Environmental Services issued the order Aug. 30. The work was completed last week.

The order notes that the Prince George Community Association has applied for a permit to relocate Pawleys Inlet. That is at the heart of talks to settle a series of lawsuits filed against the town, two state agencies and the town's contractors, claiming the shift in the inlet is the result of the beach renourishment project the town completed in 2020.

Because of the "aggressive nature of the erosion" the sand-

bags were allowed to be placed to create a revetment, the order states.

The order allows the sandbags, each holding a cubic yard of upland sand, to remain in place until Dec. 28 unless there is a plan for renourishment. If there is, the bags can remain up to a year during permitting and construction.

The plan to move the inlet to the north would use excavated and offsite sand to renourish the beach at Prince George. Talks have focused on who will pay for the work and the location of the new inlet.

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Health care: Walking in another person's shoes gives a peek into life's struggles.

Second Front



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