

# COASTAL OBSERVER

Vol. XLIII No. 17

Pawleys Island, South Carolina ~ October 3, 2024

\$1.50



WACCAMAW HIGH SPORTS  
**Warriors riding a wave of tradition**

Photos by Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

Dylan Lake rides a breaking wave at the competition on Pawleys Island.

**BY CHRIS SOKOLOSKI**  
COASTAL OBSERVER

A group of Waccamaw High School athletes competed against Socastee, Myrtle Beach and North Myrtle Beach on Saturday.

But it wasn't on the football field, the baseball diamond or the basketball court. It was in the Atlantic Ocean.

The school's surf club competed for the second time since it started in May.

"I just love the community aspect of it all. Bringing everybody together and spreading this sport that really is historic in this town," said Brody Rainbolt, a Waccamaw senior and the club's founder. "That's why I started this. I love this sport."

**BRODY RAINBOLT**  
WHS senior and club founder

The high school competition was at the same time as an Eastern Surfing Association event sponsored by Surf the Earth.

Rainbolt gives surf lessons for Surf the Earth during the summer so he asked his boss, Scott Benston, if they could host a high school competition at the same time as the ESA event.

"To get such a great turnout is incredible," Benston said. "I expected three schools not four and the representation from each school was awesome."



Ty Evans anchored the team and got the best ride.

Dylan Lake, a sophomore at Waccamaw High, said when she's competing she has a mindset that she needs to win "You need to do your very

best," she added. "When you're just surfing you feel free."

Rainbolt started thinking about starting a surf club at

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## EDUCATION

### District cellphone rules evolve with state policy

**BY CHRIS SOKOLOSKI**  
COASTAL OBSERVER

The feedback Superintendent Bethany Giles has received from students about the Georgetown County School District's ban on cell phones has been positive.

"They've definitely shared that they're on board," she told the school board this week. "Some said - quite contrary to what popular opinion might be - they're in support of it because they



Bethany Giles

can see the interaction between their classmates and with themselves."

Giles meets with students in an informal setting during weekly "free throw Fridays" events.

The school board adopted a "procedure" before the beginning of the school year after a proviso was included in the state budget banning students from having "personal electronic communication devices" during the school day.

Districts that did not adopt and enforce a policy were at risk of losing state funding.

The board chose a procedure instead of a policy while waiting for the state

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## TOURISM

### Firm will use phone data to track county visitor numbers

**BY CHRIS SOKOLOSKI**  
COASTAL OBSERVER

A firm that works with top U.S. retailers will start providing data to the Chamber of Commerce to help figure out just how many people visit Georgetown County.

Every year the chamber gets the lion's share of the county's revenue from the 2 percent state tax on short-term rentals. By law, 30 percent must be used for marketing and the chamber is the county's designated marketing organization, working with the Tourism Management Commission.

The chamber gets additional marketing funds in an annual grant cycle. In the past few years members of the county's Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee, which recommends who gets the accommodation tax grants, and County Council, which approves the grants, have routinely questioned chamber officials about how many visitors are coming to the area.

"This is something that County Council members are



Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

Visitors at the National Hammock Day celebration.

really pushing with us. It will come up," Mark Stevens, the chamber's director of tourism, told the Tourism Management Commission last week. "We want to be able to answer these questions. I've gotten at least two calls from county employees wanting to know how many tourists are coming to the Hammock Coast. That is not anything we can answer specifically. We don't have that data."

In order to be able to answer the "how many visitors" question, the chamber will pay Placer.ai \$38,000 for visitors data.

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## CAPITAL PROJECT SALES TAX | What's on the list

### Pawleys Island got a seat at the table, then a place on the ballot

**BY CHARLES SWENSON**  
COASTAL OBSERVER

The town of Pawleys Island doesn't claim ownership of the jetty that defines its northern tip. But its stake in seeing that the 72-year-old structure remains in place is greater than that of the state highway department, which built it but doesn't claim it either.

Repairing the structure at a cost of \$286,000 ranks sixth among the 22 priority projects for Georgetown County's proposed capital project sales tax that is up for voter approval in November. It is one of two projects that the town has on the list. At No. 10 is \$2.08 million for drainage improvements that the town is now working to identify.

This is the third time Georgetown County has put a 1-cent capital projects tax before voters. One failed in 2012. One passed in 2014. Neither



Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

Repairing the jetty at Pawleys Island's north end is the lowest cost project on the sales tax referendum ballot.

had any projects for the town of Pawleys Island.

This time, the six-member commission that solicited proj-

ects, ranked them and drafted the referendum ballot was chaired by a Pawleys Island appointee, Mark Hawn. The ap-

pointment was made possible by shifting population that had previously assured Georgetown and Andrews of having the

three municipal seats on the commission. The county had the other three.

Although he lives on the island's north end, Hawn ranked the jetty project a lower priority than four other commission members. So did Gary Cooper, a county appointee who has a second home on the island.

Hawn said the commission agreed at the start that projects in their own areas would receive extra scrutiny from the individual members.

"I took a particularly challenging look at that, as did Gary," Hawn said of the jetty project.

The jetty was built by the highway department, now the Department of Transportation, between 1950 and 1952. It was extended after Hurricane Hazel in 1954. Since 1985, it has marked the south side of Midway Inlet, according to a survey conducted for the town by

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