

Local Schools Facing Cutbacks

Superintendent of Georgia Schools, Kathy Cox, is pushing to increase lottery ticket prices to raise revenue for public school education for grades K-12. Schools across the state are facing difficult decisions for the upcoming school year of 2010-2011. Ms. Cox believes adding fifty cents per lottery ticket would help make up for the \$350 million dollar shortfall over the last two years.

Locally, Haralson County schools recently released plans for the upcoming school year to include longer days and shorter weeks. Specifically, for the school calendar for the 2010-2011, schools will be open Tuesday through Friday but each school day will be longer. This change comes following a decrease in funding from the state and will save the Haralson County school system about \$360,793.00. There are still budget cuts to follow including some loss of jobs for those employed with Haralson County school district.

Haralson County is not alone when it comes to facing budget shortfalls and making decisions financially for the 2010-2011 school year. DeKalb County Fulton County and Cobb County schools are considering different options as well including cutting programs and laying off teachers.

DeKalb County school officials are looking into closing schools and cutting some of the top fifteen administration positions.



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Federal Ban on Texting for Commercial Truck Drivers



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A recent news release from the U.S. Department of Transportation announces a federal ban prohibiting commercial vehicle drivers from texting. This action from the U.S. Department of Transportation is part of a larger effort in the fight against distracted driving.

Commercial truck drivers and bus drivers who are caught texting while driving may be subject to criminal penalties of up to \$2,750.00 and civil penalties. According to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, those who are texting while driving have their eyes off the road 4.6 seconds out of every 6 seconds. In other words this is equivalent to a driver going 55 miles an hour for the distance of a football field without looking at the road.

In September 2009, during the Distracted Driving Summit, President Obama signed an Executive Order directing all federal employees to not engage in texting while operating government owned vehicles or equipment. All federal employees were required to comply by December 2009.

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Drunk Drivers Targeted in Douglas County

On March 11, 2010 Operation Rolling Thunder entered Douglas County, Georgia. Several law enforcement agencies including county, city and state have been organized by the Governor's Office of Highway Safety in an effort to decrease the number of deaths on Georgia Highways due to impaired driving. During the March 11 road checks in Douglas County a total of 57 arrests were made with 12 of those resulting in DUI charges. The Rolling Thunder Operation will remain in this area for a three month period and will set up random sobriety check points in an effort to make our roads safer. According to Bob Dallas, Director of the Governor's Office of Highway Safety, Douglas County's roadway fatality rate for 2009 will pass the projected fatality rate by almost 122 percent. This statistic shows the urgent need for this type of program in the area.

Operation Rolling Thunder has helped multiple counties throughout the state in combating traffic deaths as a direct result of impaired driving. Operation Rolling Thunder is expected to help save lives in Douglas County and change the projected fatality rate drastically for the coming years.



Wrong-Way Drivers Are Often Impaired

Many of you may have heard about marine, Lance Cpl. Gregory M. Suedmeyer, who had just returned home from Iraq and was killed on March 13, 2010 on Interstate 20 by a wrong way driver. Updated information from the Georgia State Patrol recently has shown that the driver that struck and killed him was charged with DUI.

Recently the Georgia DOT performed a study and determined that a majority of wrong-way drivers were impaired by either alcohol, prescription drugs or illegal drugs. In order to help prevent and deter wrong way drivers, the DOT has posted warnings on signs along the roadway and reflectors on the center line of the pavement in order to help prevent one from driving the wrong way. However, driver error is seldom the reason for wrong-way driving.

Our recommendation, if you are on a major highway or roadway and you see a wrong way driver coming, is to immediately take evasive action. As indicated by the Georgia State Patrol it is likely that the driver that is coming toward you is an impaired driver. Wrong-way collisions can result in serious injury and even fatalities.

Recipe of the Month:

Easter Bunny Cupcakes



You're just a hop away from making deliciously Easter bunny cupcakes.

Ingredients:

- A cupcake, (from your favorite recipe)
- White icing,
- Shredded coconut,
- Pink decorators' sugar,
- Jelly bean nose,
- Chewable Sweet Tart eyes,
- Large marshmallow,
- Mini marshmallows,

Directions:

1. Frost a cupcake with white icing and sprinkle on shredded coconut fur.
2. Cut a large marshmallow in half widthwise.
3. Squeeze each half slightly to give it an oval shape, then decorate the sticky side of each one with pink decorators' sugar and set them in place for ears.
4. Add a jelly bean nose and either jelly bean or snipped Sweet Tart eyes, and mini marshmallows for cheeks.
5. For a finishing touch, draw on decorators' gel pupils or whiskers if you like.



Spring Happenings

Callanwolde Giant Egg Hunt - April 3rd - 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Meet the Easter Bunny, play games, pet live bunnies and more. Tickets: \$10.00 for kids and adults are free. Free parking and shuttle buses will be provided at the Emory University Briarcliff campus.

Kennesaw Easter Egg Scramble & Picnic - April 3rd - 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. - FREE Admission

Easter Bunny photos, crafts, petting zoo and pony rides. Three age groups: 0-3 years, 4-5 years and 6+ years.

The 74th Annual Atlanta Dogwood Festival - April 16th - 18th

Enjoy fine art, live entertainment, a variety of food offerings and the fantastic spring weather at Piedmont Park in Atlanta, GA. Visit www.dogwood.org for more details.

34rd Kennesaw Big Shanty Festival - April 17th -18th - FREE Parking and Admission

The festival combines the best of the rich heritage of Kennesaw and the Civil War era with today. Hours of Operation: April 17, 2010 - 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., April 18, 2010 - 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Location: Downtown Kennesaw

near the Southern Museum of Civil War and Locomotive History, Kennesaw, GA 30144.

West Georgia Home & Garden Expo - April 30th - May 2nd

Douglasville Pavilion which is located at 2840 Chapel Hill Road.



VA Clinic to Open in Carroll County

The U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs has announced plans to build a medical clinic for veterans in Carroll County Georgia. Several sites have been surveyed. The specific size and design of the clinic will not be known until the location is determined.

The new clinic is being funded by a donation from the Trink Davis Foundation in the amount of \$17 million. The public affairs office at the Atlanta VA Medical Center hopes this new facility will allow veterans from Douglas, Carroll, Paulding and Haralson counties to receive timely treatment without the long distance travel to either Atlanta or Birmingham. Those who are working closely on this project are hopeful that the site to build this facility is decided upon within the next three months.



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