

# nw Observer

July 30-Aug. 5, 2020

bringing the local news home to northwest Guilford County since 1996



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Photo by Patti Stokes/NWO



At the entrance to MCM Resourcing's office is a wooden door salvaged from a Polo Ralph Lauren store that the company demolished in Lenox Square, a shopping mall in the affluent Buckhead section of Atlanta.

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## Pandemic takeaways

*The following are some of the perspectives we gained from talking with students and coaches about the impact of the pandemic on delaying the in-person return to school and the fall sports season*

.....

**Caden Miller, 16, junior, of Stokesdale:**

"I'm really big into Boy Scouts (Troop 600 in Oak Ridge) and over the summer I planned to serve on the staff of Camp Cherokee in Yanceyville. I had made plans way before the COVID-19 pandemic and was really excited.

"Then they told us, 'unfortunately, we can't have summer camp.' At that point, my whole summer was obviously completely changed. I was going from spending seven weeks staffing a camp to having nothing to do.

"Although the possibility was in the back of my mind, it was unexpected and a big shock. So, I had to find a way to spend my time. I helped organize a food drive with other Scouts. We've collected a lot of food.

"I've tried to keep myself busy

*...continued on p. 8*



## WELCOME, WATSON ...

Photo by Chris Burritt/NWO

Born less than a week ago, Watson bucks and frolics around his mother, Buggs, recently on High Silver Texas Paint Farm. "He is all legs," said Jody Esque, owner of the farm at Pleasant Ridge and Stanley Huff roads in Summerfield. Watson will eventually replace his 22-year-old father, Texas, as the farm's stallion to sire more foals, she said.



# DRIVE-IN CONCERT

*A socially distanced,  
Music in the Park event*



Featuring  
**Barefoot Modern**

**Saturday, Aug. 1, 6:30 - 9 p.m.**

**Redmon Field at Oak Ridge Town Park**  
(on Linville Road, across from Scoggins Road)

**FREE ADMISSION** – Donations will be collected for the band

**No concessions will be sold by the Town; Kona Ice will be on site**

**Sponsored by the Town of Oak Ridge**

## NEWS in brief

### Town seeks citizen input on master plan



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The town of Summerfield is requesting citizens complete an online survey to provide feedback on a 12-year master plan on parks, trails and open space.

**SUMMERFIELD** – The town of Summerfield is seeking citizen input on a 12-year master plan for parks, trails and open space via an online survey.

“Current and honest feedback to the survey is critical for the twelve-year Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan as the town considers future amenities and services,” Town Manager Scott Whitaker wrote on the town’s website. “Do you want more or less trails, events, programs, facilities, or open space? Are we meeting your family’s recreational needs? Few like sur-

veys, but it’s your chance to influence how your community develops and share your opinions with leadership.”

To complete the survey, visit [www.summerfieldnc.gov](http://www.summerfieldnc.gov) and select the “News & Notices” tab at the top of the homepage, then “Parks, Trails and Open Space Survey.”

Those with questions or a request for a printed copy of the survey can contact Summerfield Town Hall at (336) 643-8655 or [clerk@summerfieldnc.gov](mailto:clerk@summerfieldnc.gov).



# COVID-19 diagnosed cases, deaths

by PATTI STOKES

NW/NORTHERN GUILFORD – According to North Carolina’s Health and Human Services Department, areas of northwest and northern Guilford County have reported the following number of lab-confirmed COVID-19 cases and related deaths as of Wednesday, July 29. (See chart at right.)

As of July 29, the state of North Carolina has reported 117,850 lab-confirmed COVID-19 cases and 1,865 deaths since March 1. Those numbers compare to 89,484 lab-confirmed COVID-19 cases and 1,552 deaths reported as of July 15.

For more info and an up-to-date report

## LAB-CONFIRMED COVID-19 CASES and RELATED DEATHS

	Number of cases	Deaths
Oak Ridge (27310)	34	1
Summerfield (27358)	120	1
Stokesdale (27357)	56	1
Northern G’Boro (27455)	193	7
NW G’Boro (27409)	151	2
NW G’Boro (27410)	296	5
<b>Guilford County</b>	<b>4,932</b>	<b>128</b>

on the number of diagnosed COVID-19 cases locally, countywide and across the state, visit: [www.covid19.ncdhhs.gov/dashboard](http://www.covid19.ncdhhs.gov/dashboard).

“I believe we are all coming at this from a good place and trying to make the best decision... We’re going to have to manage the risks and mitigate the risks, but we can’t *remove* the risks... I just believe the risks are much greater for our kids not to be back on the fields and on the tracks, and in the classrooms – in a safe way. I’m not talking about people at risk with underlying health issues. That’s a separate debate.”

Pat Tillman, District 3 Board of Education representative

Tillman made his remarks after the school board’s 6-3 vote on July 28 to begin the new school year Aug. 17 with the students learning by remote for the first nine weeks (Tillman’s motion to limit the remote learning period to five weeks failed 3-6).

As part of the district’s reopening plan, the earliest GCS students will return to schools for in-person instruction would be Oct. 20, pending a review of local public health data and trends. The board will discuss and choose the re-entry scenario that will follow remote learning at an upcoming meeting.



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## your QUESTIONS

**Q** Recently I've been hearing more overhead airplane noise than usual between 6 and 6:30 a.m. Did the air traffic pattern at Piedmont Triad International (PTI) Airport change over the last two months to cause more noise?

**A** We checked with Kevin Baker, the airport authority's executive director. "There has been no change in flight paths in the past few months," he told us earlier this week. "There are no factors we are aware of that would lead to increased noise between



Adobe Stock photo

According to Kevin Baker, Piedmont Triad International Airport Authority's executive director, the number of flights at the airport in June dropped to 91, compared to 269 in June 2019.

6 a.m. and 6:30 a.m."

The number of flights at PTI has decreased since mid-March when the outbreak of COVID-19 prompted airlines and other operators to curtail operations, Baker said. He noted that last month, between 6 a.m. and

7 a.m., the number of flights dropped to 91 from 269 in June 2019.

The total number of takeoffs and landings fell 63 percent this past April from April 2019, followed by year-over-year declines of 56% in May and 27%

...continued on p. 31

## Beautification Day

**Mark your Calendars!**

**October 10th 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

**October 11th 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

**Time to freshen up the campus!**

**Northwest Middle & High Schools**

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An important message from  
Piedmont Natural Gas

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- **Call 911**

- **DO NOT** attempt to locate the source of a leak
- **DO NOT** attempt to stop a leak
- **Call 811** before you dig anywhere on your property — no matter how small



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## SUMMERFIELD town council

### July 14 / MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

as reported by CHRIS BURRITT

Mayor BJ Barnes called the monthly meeting to order, with Mayor Pro Tem Tim Sessoms and council members John O'Day, Lynne Williams DeVaney, Teresa Pegram and Reece Walker present. Sessoms gave the invocation, which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

The council limited attendance to the meeting in Summerfield Community Center and abbreviated its meeting agenda due to gathering restrictions related to the COVID-19 outbreak. As a result, Walker read out loud reports from the Summerfield Fire District and the sheriff's District 1 office.

#### CONSENT AGENDA

✓ 4 ✗ 1 (Pegram opposed) to approve the meeting agenda and June 9 open meeting minutes.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Town business.** Town Manager Scott Whitaker urged residents to conduct business with town staff using email and the phone whenever possible to limit in-person visits to Town Hall.

**Parks survey.** Whitaker encouraged residents to complete an online survey for the master plan for developing the town's parks, trails and open space

over the next 12 years. The survey is posted on the town's Facebook page and at [www.summerfieldnc.gov](http://www.summerfieldnc.gov) under the News & Notices tab.

**Committee vacancies.** The town is seeking volunteers to serve on the Historical and Trails and Open Space committees and the Board of Adjustment. To learn more or apply, visit the town's website or contact Town Clerk Lance Heater at (336) 643-8655 or [clerk@summerfieldnc.gov](mailto:clerk@summerfieldnc.gov).

**2020 Census.** Whitaker urged residents to complete the 2020 Census online or by mail, email or phone. Starting around Aug. 11, census workers plan to make door-to-door visits to people who haven't responded, he said.

#### EMERGENCY SERVICES

**Fire District.** Walker read a report from the Summerfield Fire District stating that it ran 35 fire-related calls, 73 EMS-related calls and 22 other calls in June. Firefighters also installed 13 child safety seats.

**Sheriff's Office.** The District 1 office responded to 145 calls for service in Summerfield last month, Walker said; the incidents included 27 burglar alarms, five related to the discharge of

## WHAT they voted on, and HOW they voted:

(Mayor Pro Tem Tim Sessoms and council members John O'Day, Lynne Williams DeVaney, Teresa Pegram and Reece Walker voted on the following issues during the July 14 meeting, which was accessible to the public via Facebook Live. Mayor BJ Barnes presided over the meeting, but in Summerfield the mayor votes only to break a tie.

✓ 4 ✗ 1: **Approve** (Pegram opposed) the consent agenda consisting of the meeting agenda and open session minutes for the June 9 meeting

✓ 5 ✗ 0: **Postpone** until Aug. 11 a public hearing a request to rezone property adjacent to Birkhaven for residential development

✓ 5 ✗ 0: **Reappoint** members to the Finance, Historical and Trails and Open Space committees

✓ 4 ✗ 1: **Authorize** (Pegram opposed) the chairs of the Finance, Historical and Trails and Open Space committees and the Zoning Board to decide whether they want to meet, or postpone the meetings due to health concerns related to the coronavirus.

firearms and four related to animals, according to the report.

#### PUBLIC HEARING RESCHEDULED

✓ 5 ✗ 0 to reschedule a public hearing seeking comments on developer Rob Jessup's request to rezone nearly 46 acres abutting Birkhaven (off N.C. 150 West) from agricultural to RS-40 (residential). The council continued the hearing until its Aug. 11 meeting at Jessup's request, due to his proposal suffering a setback last month.

The Zoning Board held a public hearing for the request in June and

subsequently recommended the council deny the developer's request to rezone the property at 3016 Rear Oak Ridge Road for construction of 27 houses. Board members said they were concerned that additional traffic on Birkhaven Drive, the only entrance/exit road for the Birkhaven subdivision, may impede fire trucks and other emergency vehicles responding to calls.

At its meeting next month, the council will hear from Jessup and residents before making a final decision on the rezoning request. Meanwhile, the developer plans to explore his options under existing zoning regulations and



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continue discussions with the Birkhaven homeowners association, according to a memo that Jessup's lawyer, Amanda Hoderne, sent to the council.

## COMMITTEE REAPPOINTMENTS

By unanimous vote, the council reappointed the following people to the Finance, Historical and Trails and Open Space committees:

**Finance.** Alan Abrams, Vicky Bridges and Millie Hoffer-Foushee.

**Historical.** Gary Brown, Andy Schlosser, Sam Schlosser, Bruce Petersen, Anna Heroy, Bill Heroy, Linda Southard, Elizabeth Ingram and Mary Jane Gordon.

**Trails and Open Space.** Jane Doggett and Trudy Whitacre.

## COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Due to the lingering coronavirus outbreak, Whitaker recommended that three committees and one board consider meeting at the picnic shelter adjacent to the Veterans' Memorial in Summerfield Community Park.

After evaluating the option, the council voted 4-1 to authorize the chairs of the Finance, Historical and Trails and Open Space committees and the Zoning Board to decide whether they want to meet, or post-

pone their meetings due to health concerns related to the coronavirus. Pegram voted nay.

"I want it to be very clear that Town Council is in no way pressuring any committee or board to meet," said Walker, who made the motion giving committees leeway to decide whether to meet. "It is 110% up to them."

## BUSINESS FROM MANAGER

**Town Hall update.** The town is seeking a firm to provide architectural and engineering services for a proposed new town hall building.

The town posted on its website and Facebook page a request for qualifications from firms, giving applicants until Aug. 6 to submit their proposals, Whitaker said. He added that town staff plans to recommend its first choice and an alternative for the council to consider hiring.

**Water appropriation.** Whitaker told the council that Gov. Roy Cooper signed legislation dividing among Summerfield, Oak Ridge and Stokesdale \$3.4 million left over from the 2018 feasibility study of a possible regional water system for northwestern Guilford County.

Whitaker said he didn't know when Summerfield would get its roughly \$1.1 million share of the funds.

**Henson Farms speed limit.** The council voted unanimously to reduce the speed limit inside Henson Farms (on both sides of Brookbank Road) from 35 to 25 mph.

Earlier, the Henson Farms' HOA petitioned the North Carolina Department of Transportation to reduce the speed limit, Whitaker said. The speed limit on the stretch of Brookbank bisecting the neighborhood will remain 35 mph.

## OTHER BUSINESS

Pegram complained that her requests to place items on the agenda of the council's monthly meetings are routinely dismissed by other council members.

"Where is my voice?" she asked, explaining she had requested that an update on the Unified Development Ordinance be placed on the July meeting's agenda.

Mayor Barnes told Pegram she needs to gain the consensus of other council members to place her items on the agenda. He added that a portion

of the meetings are set aside for council members to offer comments on topics of their choosing.

Pegram cited parliamentary procedures adopted by the council earlier this year, saying that items requested by council members should be placed on the draft agenda.

Once meetings are convened, council members can remove – or add – items as part of the adoption of the agenda, Town Attorney Bob Hornik said.

"Tell us what you want to discuss," Barnes told Pegram.

"I don't want to bring it up now," she said. "It's not on the agenda. I'm not going to talk about it now."

O'Day said he resented Pegram's position.

"It's a very simple process to ask to add something at the beginning of the meeting," he said. "Why you don't do that, I don't know. You are just sitting here complaining."

With no further discussion, the council adjourned the meeting at 7:52 p.m.

### NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, Aug. 11 • 6:30pm

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## PANDEMIC TAKEAWAYS

...continued from p. 1

around the house, doing projects. We worked on our driveway and our deck. We've done a lot of gardening and landscaping. As of about a month ago, I've gotten a job at Chick-fil-A in Kernersville and really enjoy it as a way to spend my time.

"I wasn't officially quarantined, but I didn't leave my house from the end of school in mid-March to the end of May. It was strictly voluntary because there are several people in my family who are asthmatic. We had everything delivered and went out in public as little as possible. We didn't want to take any risks."

• • • • •

**Sydney Wentz**, 16, junior,  
of Summerfield

"I was part of a group of students from Northwest who were supposed to leave June 23 for Germany for two and a half weeks to do a GAPP (German American Partnership Program) exchange this summer.

"On the Fourth of July, I was supposed to be in the Swiss Alps. Every day I would look at the itinerary and say 'this is what I'm supposed to be doing today.'

"After schools were closed (in mid-March), I did my school work. I tried to keep myself busy doing things around the house. I played my guitar every once in a while. I talked to my friends as much as I could, and we were all talking about the things we could do when we could hang out. But it was hard to deal with. All of the things that we planned to do in the spring we couldn't do anymore.

"My friends and I have started going to the park. I hang out with the same three people. We keep our friend group tiny and we practice social distancing.

"I got a job in late May in a small Mediterranean restaurant in High Point. It is not open for dining. All I do is answer the phone and take orders and clean and do little errands. I have to wear a mask at all times. I wash my hands any time I touch a credit card, which I try not to do.

"I wanted to get a job for the money, but my parents were still super concerned about me possibly catching something. My mom is watching closely the (coronavirus) cases in the zip codes I work in and here in Summerfield. If the cases spike, she's pulling me from my job. That's our compromise."

• • • • •

**NHS junior and student body president**  
**Annie Badger**, 16, of Summerfield:



**Annie Badger and  
her father, Dr. Chan Badger**

"We had hoped to be back in school in August, but that's not going to be the case. Truthfully, we're all



bummed, but there's nothing we can do about it. We have no control over this. It is new for everyone.

"While we would love to be with our friends at things like football games, the reality is that much of it won't happen this year. We've had since March until now to come to terms with this. I remember at the beginning saying 'it will be gone by July 4. We will be fine and back to school in August.'

"But the COVID numbers have grown and we've had to adapt and learn from it. As a student council, we're going to do whatever we can to keep the Northern Guilford student body united during this not-so-great time.

"Homecoming in mid-October is such a big deal with so many festivities during the week. We're looking at doing a virtual spirit week to keep the student body united, possibly using our Instagram page. Keeping everyone engaged is important to me."

• • • • •

**NWHS senior Jared Petrosky, 17,**  
of Oak Ridge:

"It's going to be a lot different. I'd typically be enrolled in all of my classes at Northwest, but I enrolled in two classes at GTCC. One is American government and politics and the other is macroeconomics. I just want to have the chance to attend classes face-to-face.

"The consensus is we're not going to be able to go back to regular classes. There's a chance, but it sounds like it's a slim chance at best. I'm a little bit bummed out. Your senior year is supposed to be like this going-out party, but I'm not going to have a lot of opportunities to see my friends.

"I've played soccer since I was 3 years old. My soccer career will probably end in high school. So, my last soccer season is up in the air,

whether it's going to be delayed again or whether it's going to happen at all. I'm disappointed. Your senior season is one of the things you look forward to ever since you're a freshman."

• • • • •

**Kevin Wallace, NWHS football coach:**

"We all want to get back to some normalcy moving forward. For five months, a lot of our kids haven't done anything. We've sent out workout apps for kids to do on their own but we've not been allowed to do anything physically with them.



**Kevin Wallace**

"The county said we can start running the kids and doing some basic fundamental work this Monday (Aug. 3). After two weeks, we're going to be able to throw the football and run routes. Games would start the fourth week after the start of practices.

"Originally, the first game of our 11-game schedule was going to be against Smith. But right now, if we start in week four, we'd play against Northern.

We return a lot of starters from last year. I like what our younger kids have done. I do want to play this year. We can have a very good team.

"This Monday, we have a group reporting at 8:30 a.m. and a group reporting at 6:30 p.m. Each group is limited to 25 players, coaches and trainers. No one is allowed to be here except for players and coaches.

"When the virus started, I didn't think it would be like this, with so much uncertainty. We've not posted our schedule on the Northwest website until things are set in stone a little more."

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# Pandemic perusals, and staying away from 'Queen Corona'

by HELEN LEDFORD

This past spring was certainly one to remember, and to say the least, it was a blur for most of my family and others. I think we all felt blindsided by the sudden, fast-moving, strange-looking virus that was introduced to us via our television, cell phones and computer screens. By now the image is ingrained into our minds – a white ball-like creature with what appears to be vivid red “flowers” protruding from its surface. Deadly, but beautiful...

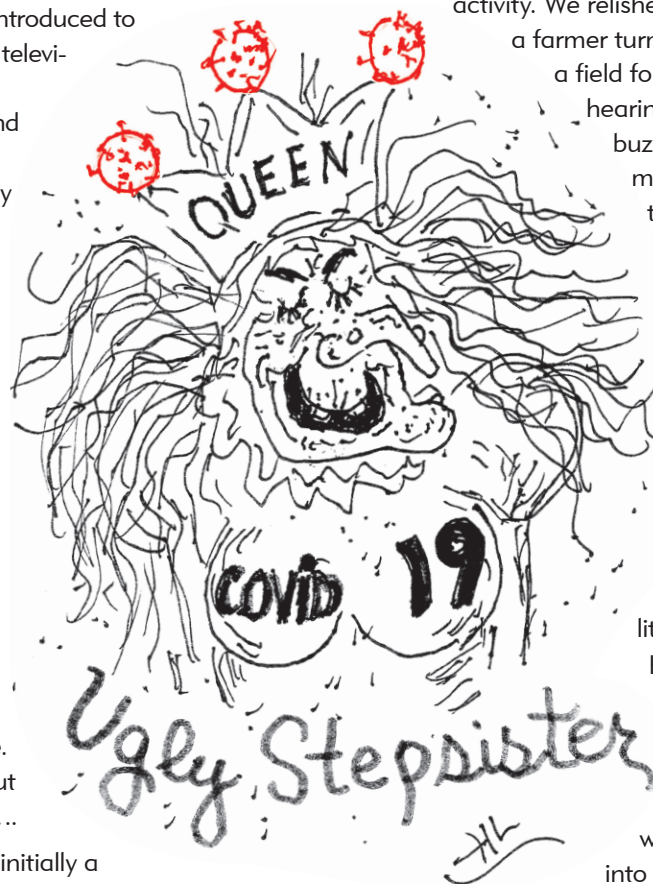
It was initially a shock when experts told us to stay home, stay away from others not in our immediate family, etc. We watched as schools closed, wearing masks became mandatory if we dared venture out, and we were told staying 6 feet away from others was the proper and safe distance to ensure our well-being.

My family and I masked up cautiously the first weekend and rode out to see how the rest of the world, from which we had been abruptly separated, appeared. We saw some cars on the streets in Greensboro and parked at a few businesses and strip malls, but

only an occasional human was visible anywhere. This new vista of ours was strange and eerily quiet. Even on rural back roads and normally well-traveled streets of nearby, familiar little towns, there was a different feel and little activity. We relished the sight of a farmer turning the soil in a field for planting, and hearing the normal buzz of a lawn mower, or even the neighbor's (usually irritating) barking dog brought back a tad of reality to our usual existence that had been snatched from us with little warning. How could we have guessed then that the uninvited lockdown would extend into four months... and more?

I was reminded somewhat of the 1959 movie “On the Beach,” starring Gregory Peck and Ava Gardner; in it, a nuclear war had occurred, decimating the Northern Hemisphere. Peck played the love interest of Miss Gardner and the captain of the submarine *Sawfish*, as Australia waited for a deadly cloud of nuclear fallout to reach their country. Scenes of eerily deserted city thoroughfares were unsettling, with deadly silence broken only by the wind blowing bits of newspapers down the streets.

I was a child during World War II and





remember hard times, when many necessities were not available and fear gripped our nation at war. Now, as we watched the arrival of "Queen Corona" incredulously take over our routines, there seemed something sinister afoot that we had never dealt with. Our unwelcome royal visitor even took over our shopping lists and unbelievably, left us scrambling for toilet paper!

Though we did not hoard, some people did, and we found it interesting that even remote convenience stores blatantly advertised the fact that they had somehow managed to acquire the coveted bathroom necessity. Seeing a tiny business in an out-of-the-way place, it was not unusual to spot the message, "Buy TP Here!" And the price suddenly went sky-high – often \$1 a roll. I still wonder where all those rolls of Angel Soft and other brands went during those early months of the pandemic!

Paper towels also suddenly became a valuable commodity – if they could be found.

Our terra firma had been tipped over on its side in a matter of days, and the dreaded polio epidemic of the '40s and '50s quickly came to my mind. It was a frightening era, when congregating in large numbers was forbidden and community swimming pools were closed amid the fear of spreading the deadly, crippling malady.

Yes, the last several months have been an adventure for our family that most of our friends have also

experienced. Even the simple chore of shopping is a luxury "gone with the wind" – that is, unless you want to take your chances among the many who bebop up and down store aisles as if COVID-19 has taken a vacation, wearing no masks and oblivious to safe distancing.

Maybe my family and I are too cautious, and even paranoid, but we just don't like taking chances. In many ways, the new "normal" way of life feels as if we are sliding down a slippery slope. Questions such as "do the so-called experts really know all there is to know about this virus?" are always lurking in the back of our minds. And, "is the media hype driving our nation to hysteria? Are the numbers of sick/dying/dead padded? And what is truth?"

So, my family and I attend church with sermons piped into our cars, thanks to our relentless and nasty viral visitor. Not wanting to completely isolate ourselves, we do welcome friends and extended family to our home, but not inside, for safety's sake. It's a challenge to find creative ways to beat the blahs on days when the whole massive and unreal seriousness of the ominous, ever-present threat hanging over our heads becomes a dark abyss into which one can easily slip. When all else fails, going to our favorite frozen yogurt joint and just observing people is a treat.

I am somehow reminded of my brother, Wilbur, who

on Saturday afternoons after a week's hard work would shine up his car, bathe and put on a white shirt and tie (to attract girls), then park in front of F.W. Woolworth's in Danville, Virginia, to "people watch." Usually, his flasher car easily caught the eye of female shoppers entering and exiting the store and he found the practice a worthy distraction, as it netted him many dates!

At this time most of us are following the rest of the world like sheep, not really knowing what the future holds. Rituals such as sanitizing, wiping down, and even disinfecting our mail have become commonplace and many of us order groceries online to be picked up curbside.

Meanwhile, part of the population goes about its business as usual. To add to the virus crisis, dark unrest, demonstrations, rioting and chaos abound while mask-less groups of young folks flood the beaches and bars.

Folks, we are living in extremely uneasy, uncertain times, and it is uncomfortable from where I sit. All we can do is hang on to what is left of our family and our life as we knew it, try to stay well, and above all – pray! For the turning of the tide. For sensibility to return to our skewed surroundings, and hope for some normalcy.

I am not a negative-thinking person, but I often look around me and wonder, "where did my warm, predictable nest in this world go?"



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Tackle Advocacy also offers special education advocacy and Annie B. works with parents and school personnel collaboratively to ensure the individualized instruction a child is receiving meets their specific needs. From attending school meetings and parent/teacher conferences to researching which options are best for each child, she understands every child is unique and offers services designed around their specific circumstances.

Annie B. is also available for one-on-one tutoring designed for your child's unique learning needs. Her passion is to help your child thrive.



See ad on p. 8

## New grants highlight Oak Ridge's historic heritage

Oak Ridge's Historic Preservation Commission recently approved its fifth round of historic heritage grants, designed to strengthen and preserve Oak Ridge's rich historic heritage by providing small-scale, high-impact grants.

"This program is a way to leverage thousands of dollars in partnership with private citizens to invest in the town's cultural treasures," said Benjamin Briggs of Preservation Greensboro.

The grants awarded this fiscal year total \$5,750. Combined with required matching funds of \$9,805 contributed by property owners, the grants will support \$15,555 in exterior improvements to key historic structures in Oak Ridge. This year's grants bring total grant funding to \$24,100, supporting \$93,300 in exterior

...continued on p. 26



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# NWO Business & REAL ESTATE



Photo courtesy of MCM Resourcing

(Above) An exterior view of the former Southern Hardware store, which occupied a historic building in downtown Stokesdale for decades. MCM Resources purchased the building from Ted Southern in mid-2018 and has been restoring it for the general contracting company's office space. (Right) Contractor Matt Moorefield, owner of MCM Resources, talks with Northwest Observer writer Chris Burritt earlier this month while standing outside his company's newly renovated office space in downtown Stokesdale. MCM Resources will soon be removing the plywood barricade blocking the view of the former Southern Hardware store.

## 14 New life for downtown Stokesdale, one storefront at a time

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due to COVID-19

22 In Brief  
Rio Grande moves  
to new building



Photo by Patti Stokes/NWO



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# New life for downtown Stokesdale, one storefront at a time

After buying four buildings in 'the historic heart of downtown' Stokesdale, Matt Moorefield has renovated one for his company's offices and plans are already in place for one of the remaining buildings

by **CHRIS BURRITT**

**STOKESDALE** – Matt Moorefield didn't set out to pump life back into what Stokesdale booster Kathy Bunthoff called "the historic heart of downtown."

Even so, storefront by storefront, Moorefield is poised to remake the once-thriving strip of historic buildings across U.S. 158 from the Stokesdale Fire Department. He's preparing to remove the wooden barricade in front of his first project: the transformation of the old Southern Hardware store into the office for his general contracting company, MCM Resourcing LLC.

"What he's doing is going to help folks in the community see the potential in the downtown buildings," said Bunthoff, a member of Friends of Stokesdale, a group promoting the revitalization of the downtown Stokesdale area and the preservation of historic properties. "It should make us feel very good about the future of our downtown."

Dating back more than 100 years, the stretch of storefronts is mostly vacant and rundown, a collection of mismatched awnings reflecting the demise of Stokesdale a half century ago as a railroad hub that generated commerce



Photo by Patti Stokes/NWO

Matt Moorefield, owner of MCM Resourcing, stands inside the former Southern Hardware store building that was recently renovated for his company's office. Moorefield already has plans for two of the three other historic buildings he has purchased in downtown Stokesdale.

for downtown businesses. Prosperity faded as rail traffic declined. Starting in the 1970s, local shoppers traveled to shopping centers and malls, leading to a succession of businesses that occupied and eventually vacated most of the historic buildings in downtown.

During that time, Joe Thacker, president of Friends of Stokesdale, patronized downtown businesses for insurance, hardware supplies, shoe repair and recapped tires. He remembers stopping to talk to merchants leaning in their doorways.

Now Thacker is hoping the return of businesses to the historic buildings will gradually entice people downtown again and create pedestrian traffic that's largely absent now. "That is what gives a small town that small-town feeling," he said.





Photos by Patti Stokes/NWO

The restoration work on MCM Resources' office space started from scratch, with workers ripping out what remained of the hardware store and tearing out flooring down to the dirt (left) to remove the floor joists from the former Southern Hardware store; the joists were repurposed for the walls of the company's new office space (right). Industrial-style lighting and other modern touches were used to complement the original brick walls and wooden joists.



In recent decades as the historic area languished, a wide range of businesses – two banks, used car lots, gas stations, hair salons and the Forbis & Dick funeral home – have sprouted. They line the nearly mile-long stretch of U.S. 158 that runs from the two Citgo stations at N.C. 68 to the Bi-Rite grocery at N.C. 65.

By contrast, the stretch of historic structures looks more like a ghost town, with plastic flowers gathering dust in front of one storefront and an abandoned

bird's nest cradled in the broken roof soffit of another building. Bringing the structures up to modern electrical, plumbing and other regulations has deterred their renovation, Stokesdale Mayor John Flynt said.

After almost 40 years as the owner of Southern Hardware, Ted Southern closed his business Dec. 30, 2017. Six months later, he sold the three-story building to Moorefield, who recently bought three more buildings from South Rich LLC, a partnership owned by

Southern, Mark Richardson and Garfield Apple.

**"Ted and his partners trusted me to carry on what they had started years ago," Moorefield said. He described their dealings as "a handing off of the torch."**

*...continued on p. 24*

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## Pineapple Porch: Furniture. Décor. Boutique



New gift store opens  
May 8 in middle of  
pandemic and hasn't  
looked back since

by **PATTI STOKES**

**OAK RIDGE** – “I wouldn’t have thought that opening up during the pandemic could have turned out like this,” said Pineapple Porch owner Tammy Cobb. It was odd timing, to be sure, but it couldn’t have worked out any better.

Cobb moved to the area in February 2019 with her fiancé and her daughter. Prior to moving from Georgia, she operated Pineapple Porch Café, which was housed in an old 1800s furniture building with numerous vendors. Besides running her café, she was also a vendor in the building.

“I love home décor and furniture,” Cobb said. “I keep changing out my house, but that costs money, so I decided to do something to make money.”

After settling into her new home

in Summerfield, Cobb soon stumbled upon Triad Marketplace in northwest Greensboro, and loved what she saw. Before long she and owner Dee Privette had become friends, and soon after that she became a vendor at the Marketplace.

“When Dee decided to sell Triad Marketplace and it moved to Jamestown, I moved with it and I did well,” Cobb said. But before long, she had the yearning to open up her own shop.

“I texted Dee one night and asked, ‘is it absolutely crazy that I want to open up my own shop?’ She said, ‘absolutely not, and I will help you. Give me about a week.’ I didn’t know she had already talked with Joyce Biggs (owner of the former Josie’s Boutique, and building where Pineapple Porch is now located on N.C. 150, beside Sherwin Williams).

Although the building had been for sale, Biggs decided to lease it to Privette and Cobb. But then came the pandemic.

“I kept saying, ‘do I take the

...continued on p. 32

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# NW Guilford housing inventory tightens due to COVID-19

Homebuyers are paying more, competing for houses in 'very tight' market

by CHRIS BURRITT

**NW GUILFORD** – The already-limited housing supply in northwest Guilford tightened in the second quarter due to the COVID-19 outbreak, leading to higher prices for a shrinking number of listings.

The inventory of houses for sale in Summerfield and Oak Ridge sank 9.9% in the second quarter from a year earlier, while tumbling 31.6% in Stokesdale, the Greensboro Regional Realtors Association (GRRA) reported last week. As demand tightened, average prices for houses rose.

The onset of the coronavirus in March prompted the Guilford County Board of Commissioners to impose a stay-at-home order that prevented Realtors from showing houses to potential buyers except online. After the easing of restrictions in mid-April, housing activity rebounded, but not enough to prevent an overall decline in new listings in the three months ended June 30.

The number of new listings totaled 194 in Summerfield and Oak Ridge in the second quarter, down

from 159, or 18%, a year earlier, according to GRRA. Over the same period, new listings in Stokesdale fell 20.5% to 62 from 78.

"Inventories are still very tight," Betty Smith, president of Summerfield-based Smith Marketing Inc., confirmed in an interview earlier this week.

**As a result, buyers are paying more. The average sales price for houses in Summerfield and Oak Ridge climbed 6% to \$433,043 last quarter from \$408,548 a year earlier, GRRA said. In Stokesdale, the average price rose 1.1% to \$312,723 from \$309,352.**

The lingering COVID-19 outbreak is contributing to the lack of houses for sale, Smith said. Even though Realtors and their clients are following precautions such as wearing masks, some homeowners are reluctant to put their houses on the market out of concern it would attract potential buyers who may be infected with the virus, she said.

Some homebuilders are reporting strong demand,

particularly among moderately priced houses. As an example, Bridleton Ridge, a new subdivision on Lewiston Road in northwestern Greensboro, is a hub of activity.

Buyers are starting to move into their new homes while nearby other houses are in various stages of construction. All but one of 24 lots in the first phase of the subdivision are either occupied by houses, sold, under contract or reserved by buyers, according to developer Brad Deaton. Prices for the houses start in the high \$200,000s, he said.

Historically low interest rates are motivating buyers who are snapping up the limited supply of houses, sometimes competing against multiple offers for the same property, according to Nancy Hess, a Realtor for Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Yost & Little Realty.

In Summerfield and Oak Ridge, houses stayed on the market for 69 days before selling in the second quarter, a drop of 12.7% from 79 days a year earlier, according to GRRA. Houses in Stokesdale stayed on the market for 65 days, down 30.1% from 93 in the second quarter of 2019.

"You're seeing a lot of multiple offers," Hess said in an interview earlier this week. "Houses with a good floor plan and in good condition are selling in a week-end if they're priced fairly."

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(L-R, seated) Daughter Kristen with owners Rich & Kathy Dumas

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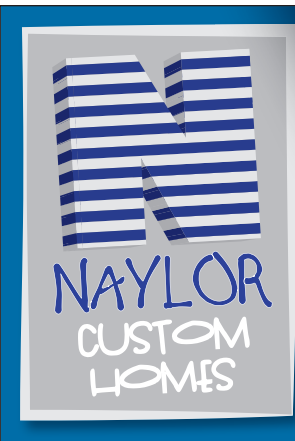
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## Johnson & Lee, LLC, a family

"They treated our project as if it were their own," said homeowner Paula Payne of Oak Ridge

When father-and-son teams Commie and Casey Johnson and Rick and Mike Lee joined forces in 2005 to create Johnson & Lee, LLC, they combined two powerhouses in commercial and residential building. More importantly, the partnership they formed was built on a foundation of knowledge, respect and a passion for client satisfaction.

All four men are local residents – the Johnsons live in Stokesdale and the Lees in Oak Ridge – and each of them are a licensed contractor. Their company is structured so that one of them oversees



each project, but none of them are above grabbing a hammer and joining the construction crew.

During their time together, the foursome has built numerous homes and commercial structures in a variety of price ranges while developing a reputation for high-quality craftsmanship, attention to detail and a commitment

to doing what's necessary to give their clients exactly what they want.

Those are some of the characteristics that attracted Brandon and Paula Payne when they were looking to build their dream home on Haw River Road in Oak Ridge. High recommendations from family and friends sealed the deal.



Photos by Annette Joyce/NWO

Before beginning construction on the Paynes' home, Johnson & Lee built this detached garage, which has two regular bays and an oversized bay suitable for parking an RV. The home also has a four-car attached garage.



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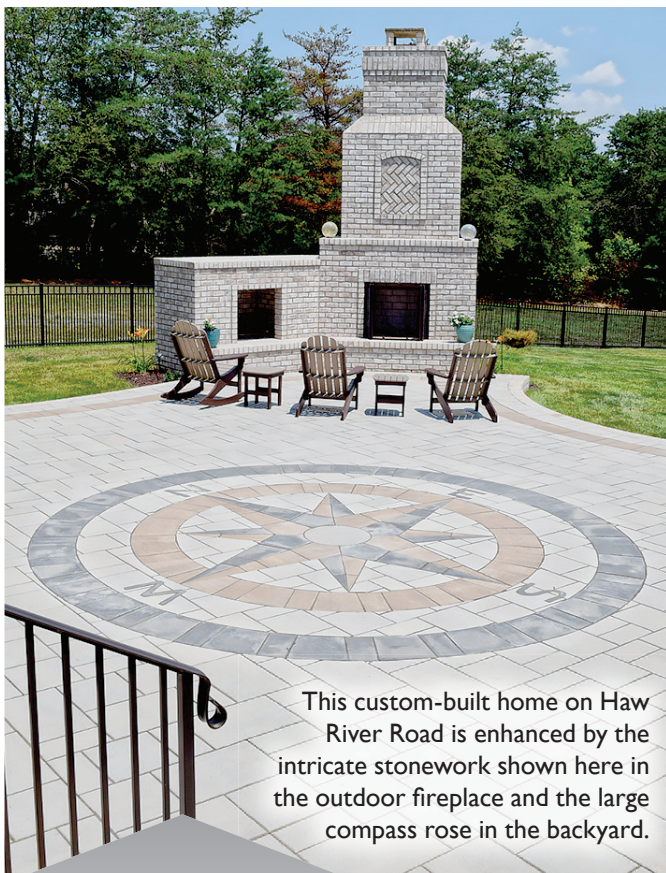


Situated on just over 10 acres on Haw River Road, this spectacular custom-built home was completed by Johnson & Lee at the end of 2019. Homeowners Brandon and Paula Payne appreciated the local building company being attuned to their desires and attentiveness to details.

"We started with a detached garage and knew based on that experience they were the right builder for our home," Brandon said. "Having the project completed to our satisfaction was of great importance to their team of contractors."

"We cannot say enough about their pride in workmanship and attention to detail," Paula added.

"They were very involved in every aspect of our build and we always felt they treated our project as if it were their own. We commend Johnson & Lee for their work ethic and quality of service. We would definitely work with them again."



This custom-built home on Haw River Road is enhanced by the intricate stonework shown here in the outdoor fireplace and the large compass rose in the backyard.

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## Rio Grande opens at new location

Not knowing when Phase 3 of COVID-19 restrictions will be enacted, owner Pepe Silva decided to relocate his restaurant last week from its longtime location in Oak Ridge Commons to a newly renovated and much larger location

by PATTI STOKES

**OAK RIDGE** – Rio Grande Mexican Kitchen quietly opened its doors to customers at its new location in Oak Ridge Commons last week. Renovation of the outbuilding formerly occupied by

JP Looneys was completed weeks ago, but owner Pepe Silva said he had held off opening in the hopes the governor would soon announce the state was transitioning to Phase 3 of lifting COVID-19 restrictions.

"We still don't know when it's coming and I was tired of waiting," Silva told the Northwest Observer this week. "I finally pulled the trigger and said 'we'll just do it the way it is' ... and people have come through."

In fact, as word of the restaurant opening at the new location has quickly spread throughout the community, Silva said customer response "has been awesome."

"We are so stoked and happy by the outpouring of support! It has a lot



Photo by Chris Burritt/NWO

Rio Grande Mexican Kitchen opened its new location in Oak Ridge Commons July 22. Response from customers has been "awesome," owner Pepe Silva said.

to do with our great customer base," he said. "It's Oak Ridge and the surrounding northwest communities – the whole area – they are so supportive. We saw that in Phase 1, when for a

while we had to go to takeout only."

Rio Grande's new location has an indoor seating capacity of 225 and a large outdoor patio area with

...continued on p. 33



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  - 2005 Bob Jessup Drive, Farm at Cedar Hollow, Low \$600s
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## NEW LIFE

...continued from p. 15

Moorefield is "willing to spend the money to make this work," Southern said in an interview last week. "He is going to be a total asset to the town of Stokesdale."

The South Rich partnership owns other properties in the historic downtown section on U.S 158, including a building where it maintains an office for the company. Another of the historic buildings is occupied by a contractor and paint company.

Otherwise, the strip of 10 storefronts has been vacant, until now.

A slender copper roof is visible above the barricade blocking the view of Moorefield's new office. It hints at the transformation behind the wooden wall.

MCM Resourcing is a general contractor that works across the U.S. in two areas of construction: it builds stores for high-end retailers such as Gucci and Louis Vuitton; and second, it constructs waiting rooms, operating rooms and other space for hospitals and other healthcare providers.

MCM's projects slowed with the COVID-19 outbreak as shopping centers and malls closed temporarily and hospitals restricted visitations. As a result, Moorefield reassigned some of his workers to finish renovating his

company's new office.

"I'm cursed with a ridiculously critical eye," Moorefield said recently during a tour of his company's downtown office space. He pointed to the preservation of original brick walls and wood with the addition of industrial-style lighting in the new space.

"We wanted to build something nice that was representative of what we do (as a company) and what was here," said Moorefield, who discussed with his wife, Michelle, preserving the sloping wooden floors in a nod to historic preservation.

In the end, the couple decided to replace the flooring with polished concrete. Workers dug all the way to the dirt to remove the floor joists, which were repurposed for the walls of the office. The lumber is also being used in tables, Moorefield said.

**"We wanted to mix some of the old with the new," he said.**

As the historic buildings have deteriorated over the years, the Stokesdale Town Council has taken a hands-off approach to the redevelopment of the area, leaving financial investments up to the property owners. Town leaders have recently supported efforts by Friends of Stokesdale, however, such as assisting

with the placement of a clock in front of the fire department and funding the commissioned painting of a "Greetings from Stokesdale" mural on the side of a historic building.

Moorefield is trying to strike a balance. As a Stokesdale resident, he would like to see a resurgence of the historic district where he's investing. But, he said, he's unwilling to step outside of his role as the operator of a business and owner of real estate in the area.

"I'm not a partnership guy," he said, explaining he wants to deal with Town Hall as little as possible. After recently giving a tour of his new offices to members of Friends of Stokesdale, he said he appreciated the group's interest and encouragement, but declined any offering of help.

"He is doing it right," Mayor Flynt said, referring to Moorefield's remaking of the old hardware store into his company's office.

The front of the office consists of two facades, featuring two shades of gray and a wooden door salvaged from a Ralph Lauren Polo store that MCM demolished in Lenox Square, a shopping mall in the affluent Buckhead section of Atlanta.

Just inside is a lobby that Moorefield plans to decorate with historic items from Stokesdale, along with a Southern Hardware sign that rested on the

outside of the building for decades. The space contains seven offices and a common area, with joists from the second floor exposed.

All three of the Moorefield daughters work for MCM. Stephany Lawson is the office controller and project manager, while Jessica Holder is the purchasing agent and assistant project manager. Whitney Whitehurst assists her husband, Chris, on the medical side of the business.

Jessica's husband, Ben, is a superintendent on the retail and medical sides of the company. Stephany's husband, Brandon, was responsible for most of the initial renovation of the hardware store.

Moorefield said he's renting another of his buildings to Tammy Cobb and Deanna Privette, who own Pineapple Porch, a home décor, clothing and jewelry store that opened this spring in Oak Ridge; they plan to add their second location in Stokesdale.

In an interview last week, Cobb said she and Privette want Moorefield to renovate their space in Stokesdale with the same blend of old and new as MCM's office. They hope to open the store this fall despite uncertainty caused by the lingering COVID-19 outbreak, she said.

"What Matt has done in the old hardware store is magnificent," Cobb said. "We want to help revitalize the downtown area."

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## Kids' Korner

FIND  
6  
DIFFERENCES



## BUYING A HOME WORD SEARCH

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L	E	M	L	N	M	O	O	S	I	G	E
P	S	P	L	A	G	E	T	T	I	K	G
R	T	T	R	G	N	I	L	L	E	S	A
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home builder  
construction  
design

Realtor  
buying  
empty lots

mortgage  
selling  
bedroom

custom-built  
floor plan  
kitchen

### Building or buying a house? You'll want to know these words!

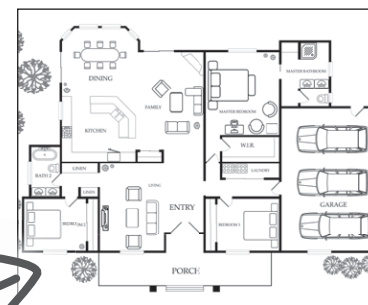
**realtor:** a person whose job is to help others buy or sell buildings, homes and land

**home builder:** a person whose job is to build, repair or improve houses

**mortgage:** money borrowed from the bank to help someone buy a home

**custom-built house:** the people buying the house get to design it and have it built exactly the way they want it

**floor plan:** a drawing, from above, that shows where rooms are in a building



Thank you to *Nicole Gillespie* for making this week's Kids' Korner possible



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improvements over five years:

- \$2,000 awarded to owners of the Donnell House for structural and roof repair. Built in 1923, the D.L. Donnell (stone) House on N.C. 150 was originally a log house (circa 1900s). After it burned, D.L. Donnell re-built it using locally gathered stone. It is the only stone façade house in the town's historic district.
- \$2,000 awarded to owners of the Stafford Farm to make much-needed architectural repairs to the farm's outkitchen. The farmhouse shows promise of being the oldest structure in Oak Ridge. According to local historian Shawn Rogers, "the outkitchen was likely constructed circa 1830s to 1860s."
- \$1,750 awarded to owners of the Old Mill of Guilford to restore the stone steps leading to the creek. An integral part of the mill's history, the stone steps have been photographed count-

less times. The Old Mill of Guilford is among the oldest operating gristmills in the country and is included on the National Register of Historic Places.

One notable project receiving a 2019 grant was recently completed:

- \$2,000 awarded to the Charles Benbow House for brick re-pointing and installation of chimney caps. The grant was revised to include restoration and replacement of historically correct windows, resulting in an addition of \$22,766 in exterior improvements to a key historic structure in Oak Ridge.

*Historic heritage grants are awarded by the Oak Ridge Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) and funded by the Town of Oak Ridge. For more information, including grantee contact information and photographs, contact Oak Ridge Town Clerk Sandra Smith at (336) 644-7009 or HPC Chair Debbie Shoenfeld at (336) 643-2504.*

## Zoning Commission recommends approving rezoning/annexation request



Photo by Chris Burritt/NWO

A road sign indicates where Cude Road transitions into Leabourne Road. BSC Holdings hopes to annex 43.6 acres at the juncture of the two roads into the city of Greensboro and subsequently rezone them for a residential development with up to 150 homes.

If approved by the Greensboro City Council Aug. 18, property at Cude and Leabourne roads in northwest Greensboro will be developed for up to 150 single-family homes

by **PATTI STOKES**

**NORTHWEST GREENSBORO** – BSC Holdings cleared a hurdle July 20 when the Greensboro Zoning Commission unanimously voted to recommend approving its request to annex 43.6 acres at 1898 Cude Road and 8005 Leabourne Road into the Greens-

...continued on p. 32

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# mark your calendar

## EVERY TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY

● **Farmers Markets** | Stokesdale United Methodist Church, 8305 Loyola Drive, continues to host a "Fruits of the Spirit" farmers market every Tuesday, 4 to 7 p.m. on the church's front lawn (social distancing guidelines followed). Vendors are selling local produce and homemade goods. More info: Charles Southard, (336) 509-7314.

The Town of Stokesdale also hosts a weekly farmers market every Wednesday, 4 to 7 p.m. at Stokesdale Town Park, 8325 Angel-Pardue Road (social distancing guidelines followed). To obtain a vendor application, call Stokesdale Town Hall at (336) 643-4011 or email [deputyclerk@stokesdale.org](mailto:deputyclerk@stokesdale.org).

## MONDAY-THURSDAY, AUG. 3-6

● **Horse Riding Camp** | HorseFriends of North Carolina, a non-profit therapeutic riding program, will host a four-day horse riding camp Aug. 3-6, 8 a.m. to 12 noon each day at Still Water Farm, 7169 Strawberry Road in Summerfield. Campers will learn balance seat riding instructions and horsemanship (handling and grooming) along with completing a daily craft and a daily Christian devotional. As a fundraiser for Horse-

Friends, the camp is open to able-bodied 6- to 12-year-olds, and the cost is \$240 (note: unlike HorseFriends' other offerings, this camp is not designed for children with special needs). COVID-19 safety guidelines will be followed. Space is limited. To learn more or purchase tickets, visit [HorseFriendsNC.org/summercamp](http://HorseFriendsNC.org/summercamp).

## SATURDAY, AUG. 1

● **Drive-In Concert** | The Town of Oak Ridge will sponsor a drive-in version of "Music in the Park" Aug. 1, 6:30 to 9 p.m. on the Redmon Field at Oak Ridge Town Park, 6231 Lisa Drive (off Linville Road). The concert will feature local alternative/indie band Barefoot Modern; Kona Ice will be sold onsite. Admission is free, but donations for the band will be appreciated. More info: see ad on p. 2, visit [www.oakridgenc.com](http://www.oakridgenc.com) or call Oak Ridge Town Hall at (336) 644-7009.

## THURSDAY, AUG. 6

● **Town Council Meeting** | Oak Ridge Town Council will hold its monthly meeting Aug. 6, beginning 7 p.m., via Zoom. For a meeting agenda and link to the virtual meeting, visit [www.oakridgenc.com](http://www.oakridgenc.com).

## WE'LL BE BACK IN PRINT NEXT THURSDAY, AUG. 6

(the Northwest Observer is now offered in print the first, third and fifth Thursday of each month)

## CRIME/INCIDENT report

### District 1 Sheriff's Office

has recently responded to the following incidents in northwest/northern Guilford County ...

#### ALCOHOL

**July 14** | A 47-year-old male passenger was cited in the 4200 block of Battleground Avenue (U.S. 220)/Hamburg Mill Road in northwest Greensboro for riding in a vehicle while having an open container of alcohol; the 31-year-old female driver was cited for speeding.

**July 26** | A 26-year-old male was arrested in the 7600 block of N.C. 68 N/Haw River Road in Stokesdale for driving while impaired after operating an ATV on the roadway while intoxicated.

#### ASSAULT

**July 15** | A 33-year-old male in the 8600 block of Rosedale Drive/Autumn Gate Drive in Oak Ridge (off Oak Ridge Road) reported being struck by a vehicle driven by a known offender.

**July 19** | A 28-year-old female in the 3400 block of Windswept Drive in Summerfield (off Strawberry Road) reported a known suspect assaulted her during a party.

**July 20** | A 32-year-old female in the 6700 block of Brookbank Road in Summerfield reported a known suspect assaulted her.

**July 21** | A local resident reported a 22-year-old male was assaulted at Endura Products on U.S. 158 in Stokesdale by a known suspect.

#### DRUGS

**July 14** | Two 22-year-old males were cited in the 4500 block of U.S. 220 N/Auburn Road in Summerfield for possession of a Schedule VI controlled substance (marijuana).

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**July 18** | A 22-year-old male was arrested in the 8000 block of Haw River Road/N.C. 68 N in Stokesdale for possession of a Schedule II controlled substance (methamphetamine) and also cited for possession of drug paraphernalia.

**July 18** | A 22-year-old male was arrested in the 4500 block of U.S. 220 N in Summerfield for felony possession of a Schedule VI controlled substance (marijuana), maintaining a dwelling/vehicle for controlled substances and possession with intent to manufacture/sell; he was also cited for possession of drug paraphernalia.

**July 19** | A 25-year-old male was arrested in the 8400 block of U.S. 158 in Stokesdale for possession of a Schedule I controlled substance (unknown).

**July 19** | A 20-year-old male was cited in the 4800 block of U.S. 220 N/Joseph Hoskins Road in Summerfield for possession of a Schedule VI controlled substance (marijuana), possession of drug paraphernalia and speeding.

**July 26** | A 19-year-old female was cited in the 5400 block of Briardenn Court in Summerfield (near Oak Ridge Road) for possession of a Schedule VI controlled substance (marijuana).

## FRAUD

**July 21** | A resident of the 4000 block of Brynwood Drive in Colfax (near N.C. 68 N) reported unknown suspects convinced him to send them a check for \$2,000 via FedEx.

**July 24** | A resident of the 2000 block of Cedar View Drive in northern Greensboro (near Lake Brandt Road) reported an unknown suspect used his personal information to open bank accounts at Citizens Bank and Huntington Bank; no money was exchanged or lost.

**July 21** | A resident of the 7500 block of Dubach Road in Summerfield (off Oak Ridge Road) reported an unknown suspect used his credit card information July 18 to buy a plane ticket costing \$1,690.47.

**July 21** | A Burlington resident reported

an unknown suspect used her SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) card to purchase \$130 worth of merchandise from Bi-Rite in Stokesdale.

## THEFT

**July 16** | A resident of the 8300 block of Chartwell Drive in Oak Ridge (near Beeson Road) reported a known suspect stole a red/black auger and a red/black weed eater from his shed between July 11 and July 15; together, the two items were valued at \$325.

**July 16** | A resident of the 8100 block of N.C. 68 N in Oak Ridge reported an unknown suspect entered her enclosed porch and stole a television and a weed eater between 12 noon and 12:30 p.m.; together, the two items were valued at \$120.

**July 16** | The family member of a resident in the 8000 block of Belews Creek Road in Stokesdale reported a known suspect entered the resident's home between July 15 and July 16 and stole three prescription medications.

**July 22** | An employee of Food Lion in Summerfield reported unknown suspects stole a package of corned beef valued at \$15; the suspects' vehicle information was recorded.

**July 27** | An employee of Tractor Supply in Oak Ridge reported an unknown suspect stole a Hobart Handler 210MVP worth \$992.67 at 9:28 a.m.

## TRESPASSING

**July 21** | A 44-year-old male in the 4200 block of Hamburg Mill Road in Summerfield reported his ex-girlfriend entered his residence without permission to retrieve property.

## VANDALISM

**July 14** | An employee of Goodwill in Oak Ridge reported at 7:19 a.m. an unknown suspect did \$1,200 worth of damage to a donation bin while trying to access the items inside it.

## WEAPONS

**July 22** | A 33-year-old male was arrested in the 4400 block of U.S. 220 N in Summerfield for possession of a stolen firearm.





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## GRINS and GRIPEs

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Grins & Gripes are published based on available space and editor's discretion.

### GRINS to...

■ Our neighbors in Riverside who constructed a swimming pool. You are likely more anxious for its completion than anyone. Hope your family enjoys



it for many summers here, as well the increase in your property value!

■ Republic Waste Services for your due diligence and timely service, and to all the hardworking employees who "Keep America Clean!" Keep up the good work. We appreciate y'all!

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■ NWO and Patti Stokes. Reading your paper in print every Thursday has been one of the joys of living in Oak Ridge. Best wishes as you transition to online and print offerings!

■ Everyone involved in starting the Tuesday Farmers Market at the Stokesdale Methodist Church. Our family has enjoyed being able to get fresh, locally grown produce and treats!

■ Pamela Fulk, general manager of Advance Auto Parts in Stokesdale, for helping me with a battery replacement and testing my starter and alternator. Great service, and much appreciated.

■ Oak Ridge United Methodist Church for showing us they have a sense of humor. Keep the funny signs coming – they brighten my day!

### GRIPEs to...



■ The insane driver of the black BMW who endangered our lives on Alcorn Road July 9 by crossing a double yellow line, on a curve, at a bridge over I-73, and speeding with an oncoming car.

■ The griper complaining about a previous comment regarding scientists' COVID-19 death estimates being wrong. They are, in fact, not. The death estimate of 2.2 million was *without* a lockdown. *With* the lockdown,

estimates were 100,000-200,000 and are proving correct.

■ Those who judge a person by the color of their skin. What happened to content of character? I will not apologize for the skin I was born with.

■ A neighbor in Riverside for exaggerating the temporary inconvenience of our new neighbor's pool construction. How does that bring our neighborhood down more than your petty gripe? Sad for your grumpy disposition and unwelcoming attitude.

■ Those who speak against bigotry and hatred to promote their agenda, only to use the same action when someone disagrees with them. This is America – everyone has a mind to think for themselves. Quit the brainwashing, especially toward young people.

■ The griper in Northwest Observer's July 16-29 issue. As a healthcare worker who wears her mask, I don't mind being called a "sheep" as long as the griper doesn't mind being called a lemming. Trump is running towards the cliff...

■ Oak Ridge McDonald's employees for taking all the parking spaces. We (customers) must wear a mask to go into the lobby and we also need a place to park. Maybe Tractor Supply would let us park on the lower end.

Talent may get you on the field, but it's effort and attitude that will keep you there. – Russell Wilson

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■ Cheer Extreme for continuing to have practices and classes. If schools are not allowing sports to practice, then you shouldn't either.

**Editor's note:** According to Cheer Extreme's website, in-person training is being offered with COVID-19 safety-related guidelines in place, as well as virtual cheer and tumbling conditioning classes.

■ Jim Kinneman for falsely

claiming people recovered from COVID-19 couldn't join the military. The fact is this was a staff draft memo, but never seriously considered. Elected representatives need to stop trying to scare people for their political purposes.

■ Teachers publicly arguing for schools not to reopen for *all* ages. This is for your bosses to decide. If teachers don't like job requirements, free to find a new one.

Impossible to take teachers seriously as a profession after this.

■ Restaurants that don't require employees to wear face coverings and allow customers to mill around without face coverings and social distancing. Do your part to end COVID-19.

■ The guy in the diesel truck who blows in and out of our neighborhood at least 12 times a day. Your vehicle is *loud* and *obnoxious*!

## YOUR QUESTIONS

**...continued from p. 4**

in June, Baker said.

People living in the vicinity of the airport may notice more or less traffic on any given day, he said, depending upon the direction the runways are being operated.

Federal Aviation Administration air traffic controllers determine the usage of runways based primarily on prevailing winds, Baker said. The specific path of a flight depends on numerous factors, such as aircraft type, air traffic volume, weather and where the plane is coming from or going to.

"Airlines are responsible for determining their flight schedules, and the airport is required to be open 24/7 as a public-use airport," Baker said.

PTI's website – flyfrompti.com – provides information about airport noise. Click on "Menu" in the top right corner of the homepage and then tap the "Noise Information" box for answers to frequently asked questions and forms for asking questions, making comments and submitting complaints about noise.

## Outside the LINES...

The following reader-submitted *GRIPE* expresses an opinion about state and/or national topics, and has been separated from the other grins and gripes as a courtesy to those who do not want to read opinions on state and/or national political and other non-local topics in a local newspaper.

■ Last issue's griper who wrote, "How about watching a real news channel and get back to us after doing your research?" How about telling us which channel that is so we can be as well-educated as you?



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## REZONING

...continued from p. 26

boro city limits; as part of its decision, the commission also recommended approving the property be rezoned from AG (Agricultural) to CD-R-5 (Conditional District – Residential); the R-5 zoning allows for up to five homes on one acre, although the commercial real estate development firm placed a condition on its request that no more than 150 homes would be built on the property.

The property is near the GTCC campus at the corner of Leabourne Road and N.C. 68; across the highway from the campus there is a new retail center under development and commercial development and industrial development is underway in the same vicinity. Surrounding properties are zoned AG, RS-40 (single-family homes on lots close to 1 acre), and Rural Preservation District.

"As you go down Leabourne, the (Piedmont) Saddle Club is there," Amanda Williams of BSC Holdings told the commission during the July 20 public hearing. "So, we feel this is a logical transition for the neighborhood to go from commercial and industrial down to a single-family use."

Williams further noted that an apartment community, Plantation at Pleasant Ridge, is near the proposed new subdivision.

"The area is booming. The area has changed," she said. "The new I-73 interchange at N.C. 68 has created a new neighborhood and there is a lot of demand in this area. Schools are great and the area is convenient to I-73 and for those traveling into High Point and Kernersville."

Homes in the proposed subdivision would be built by Royal Homes of North Carolina and typically range between 2,300 and 3,000 square feet. Prices would start at around \$250,000 and go up to \$350,000-\$375,000.

When discussing the subdivision with neighboring property owners, Williams said questions from nearby residents centered around lot sizes, who the builder will be and if their property would also be annexed into the city of Greensboro. Also, they wanted to know if, when water lines are extended to the proposed subdivision, they would be required to tie into the city water system.

"Everything we discussed, they seemed pleased with the answers," Williams said.

Barry Siegal with BSC Holdings

said there will be two access points to the property, one directly across from Brynwood Drive and the other on Cude Road.

If the firm's request is approved, the property would need to be annexed into the city of Greensboro and lots would connect to city water and sewer. Siegel noted his firm will be required to make improvements along Cude Road, such as sidewalks, curb and guttering and road widening.

As for timeframe, Siegel said it would likely take around three years to build the development out, beginning with when the first lots are turned over to Royal Homes.

Three residents in the adjacent Sanford's Creek subdivision spoke in opposition to the rezoning request, centering their concerns on the density of the proposed subdivision.

"If approved, the R-5 zoning will set a precedent for other developers," said northwest Greensboro resident Trish Dell. "And other parcels in the area might not have the same condition, limiting the development to 150 houses.

"This R-5 zoning just doesn't mirror anything in the surrounding area," said Geoff Melton, also a resident of Sanford's Creek. "From my research,

it looks a lot like spot zoning. As for the schools, those in the Northwest district are great – but, you put 141 homes out here and that will overcrowd schools even more. Also, homes in our neighborhood are going for about \$450,000, so these could potentially lead to devaluation of our homes and annexation by Greensboro."

At that, Melton was told by a commission member that annexation into the city of Greensboro couldn't be forced, rather it would be by request of property owners.

Regarding traffic, BSC Holdings' required traffic study concluded that "Leabourne and Cude Road are more than capable of handling the traffic without causing any type of change in efficiency of the roads," Siegel said.

The Zoning Commission voted unanimously to recommend approving the rezoning and annexation request. The Greensboro City Council will hold a second public hearing at its Aug. 18 meeting, at which time the council is expected to make a final decision.

For more information about this annexation/rezoning request, visit [www.greensboro-nc.gov/departments/planning/boards-commissions-meetings/zoning-commission](http://www.greensboro-nc.gov/departments/planning/boards-commissions-meetings/zoning-commission).

## PINEAPPLE PORCH

...continued from p. 16

chance?' And I did – and Dee did too," Cobb said. "While we were renovating our space, we went online and started to promote our business."

Biggs was thrilled to see the small white house brought back to life, and has been very supportive of the new boutique, Cobb said, adding, "She has a sentimental feeling about this house."

When retail stores were allowed to open in Phase 2 of the COVID-19

restrictions, Cobb and Privette quickly set the wheels in motion to open their store on May 8.

**"It could not have been a better time to open, because it was Mother's Day weekend," Cobb said. "The response was overwhelming and we've had so many people tell us how much they appreciate us being here."**

"People are surprised at what we

offer. I love when people come in and tell us they used to shop at Josie's. Even though what we offer is very different, we also love being a part of the community. And we love when customers come in and we help them find the perfect gift for someone."

To check out the many gift items Pineapple Porch has to offer, visit [www.pineappleporchshop.com](http://www.pineappleporchshop.com) or Pineapple Porch Oak Ridge on Facebook – or better yet, visit the store in person at 2204 Oak Ridge Road in Oak Ridge. And stay tuned for news of Pineapple Porch's second location in Stokesdale, coming this October.

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## BRIEFS

...continued from p. 22

additional seating; about 160 customers could be seated at the location it occupied in the middle of the shopping center for 18 years.

Silva said for now, he's okay with the 50% occupancy restrictions mandated by Phase 2 of COVID-19 restrictions, at least while his staff is adjusting to their new space and staying busy fulfilling takeout/delivery orders.

"I don't want to be busier than we can handle," he said. "We opened last Wednesday with a soft opening and have already had lines at peak times. We still don't even have a phone number.

"We appreciate every single person who has helped us, from the Cooke family (shopping center developer/owners) to the landscapers who show up for lunch and everyone in between," Silva said. "There is no place like Oak Ridge, and we're very thankful to be here!"

## Summerfield-based McDonald's operator pays labor fine

**SUMMERFIELD** – Mt. Airy Partners Inc., the operator of 12 McDonald's restaurants in the Piedmont Triad region, has paid a civil penalty of \$17,586 for violating federal child labor laws.

An investigation by the U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division found that Mt. Airy Partners, based in Summerfield, allowed minors to work outside of the hours allowed for that age group, according to a news release last week from the federal agency. It determined the company employed 35 employees 14 and 15 years old.

The company said it doesn't operate the McDonald's on N.C. 68 in Oak Ridge.

The law limits the working hours of minors to no more than three hours on

a school day, according to the release. They're allowed to work between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. from Labor Day through June 1.

The company also violated federal requirements when it failed to maintain proof of age for most of its minor employees, the agency said.

In a statement earlier this week, Karen Gainey, the company's owner, said "we're reviewing our policies and procedures with our supervisors and hiring managers and are making any necessary adjustments to maintain compliance with all laws."

Noting that working for McDonald's represents the first jobs for many of the company's employees, Gainey said "it's important to us that their experiences are positive."



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## Welcome Jamie Mudrock!

Summerfield Family Dentistry is proud to welcome Jamie Mudrock to the team! She brings with her 14 years of dental hygienist experience.

Originally from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Jamie and her family relocated to the Summerfield area due to a change in her husband's job. She has two kids, Brielle, 8, and Lucas, 6.

Jamie and her family love to travel and have enjoyed going to North Carolina beaches and spending time more locally at Hanging Rock. Jamie also loves biking the Greenway.

"I have had the opportunity to serve many phenomenal patients over the years and I'm excited to get to know the people right here in my new home town of Summerfield!"



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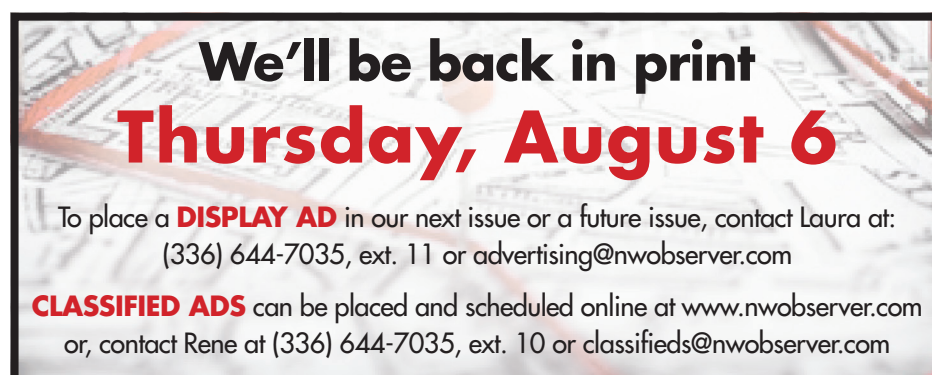
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## StokeRidge Tavern and Grill: in response...

In response to those who felt it necessary to critique our policies at StokeRidge Tavern and Grill during this COVID-19 pandemic in the Northwest Observer's Gripes section: we have stringent cleaning policies that exceed those required by restaurants under Guilford County's health code. I've met with and instituted all for which they've been required.

In addition, I've exceeded expectations such as monitoring the temperature of every one of our employees daily as well as a multitude of other daily procedures.

I've requested visits and met with Guilford County Health Department multiple times throughout this pandemic and conduct business according to their standards. The department gave me an A+ on my transition into Phase 2 as well as *increasing* my score during COVID-19.

Now – let's address the *one* thing the gripers chose to focus on – masks. If a staff member has a health condition yielding risk for them to wear a mask, I am not allowed to force them to wear the mask. I'm also not legally allowed to ask anything about such condition under

HIPAA – reference Gov. Roy Cooper's Executive Order 147/Section II/Part 3.5/C1 regarding *masks*.

I provide masks to my staff and those without any such aforementioned condition do wear them. My No. 1 priority is to ensure that my staff and customers are safe. That has garnered more focus than continuing to improve on our product which has taken 10 years to build.

I have always made myself available to anyone and everyone on how I run StokeRidge Tavern and Grill. I've spent 10 years doing anything and everything I can for this community. The *last* thing I will do is compromise my business, my staff or my customers. I've always been willing to answer any questions about my business and would encourage anyone who has a question to email me at kevin@stokeridgetavern.com versus voicing your complaint publicly on a forum that doesn't provide an effective and positive exchange.

I appreciate your patronage and support, and hope you have a blessed day!

Kevin Champion, owner  
StokeRidge Tavern & Grill

## Let us go back to school in person

I am a rising eighth-grader at Northwest Guilford Middle School and I am very concerned about not being able to go back to school in person. For one reason, I cannot get immediate help from

a teacher when I am having difficulty completing a task. I fully understand that teachers are overwhelmed with having to respond to each student individually, because my mom is a teacher.

I also really miss talking to my friends and meeting new people. Starting the year out virtually will be challenging because students may not know anyone in their class that they can get help from if they need it.

Another reason that is personal for me is that I want to be able to play sports. Playing sports is a large part of my life because I work harder when I am busy and it keeps me physically active. Without sports, I tend to be less motivated to finish my work in a timely

manner. My best work occurs when I am required to meet deadlines.

Some may say you are more vulnerable to the coronavirus when at school, but I feel that if we wear masks, properly social distance, and wash our hands frequently then we can go back to school safely.

In closing, I just want to be a kid, see my friends and enjoy school.

Cole Rigsbee, rising eighth-grader  
Northwest Guilford Middle School

## Pay raises unwarranted, government shielded from economic reality

Why are some countries rich, while others are mired in chronic poverty? As our nation celebrates its independence and prosperity, it would be well to ask why we are so favored. How is wealth created, anyway?

It certainly can't be a result of natural riches, or Africa with its immense resources would be the wealthiest continent in the World.

As subsistence societies and mercantilism gave way to capitalism, the creation of wealth exploded. Whatever resources the entrepreneur combines to create a product, the result is greater than the sum of its parts. So, \$10,000 of steel, glass and plastic become a \$20,000 automobile, and people willingly buy it. This creation of wealth has a name: profit.

Profit is the wellspring of all wealth and by definition can only be generated by the private sector, or productive sector. The public sector or parasitic sector drains off some of this wealth in order to provide services – and fund itself.

When the parasitic sector inevitably grows too large, economic growth stalls. For as government realizes it commands a mechanism of universal extortion (taxation), so it becomes more

and more greedy – and arrogant.

So, it's galling to be lectured by those who "make their living off of other people's taxes" (as the song says) that we must hand over ever-increasing amounts to fund their lifestyle.

The mayor of Oak Ridge recently tried to justify an unwarranted pay raise for town staff by claiming that other local municipalities were doing the same. So as businesses in the productive sector struggle for their very existence, and many fail, we are forced to fund higher salaries for those who ride in the wagon – and who are perfectly insulated from economic reality. Because, you know, other governments are doing it...

What a nerve. What arrogance. What chutzpah.

Registered Republicans outnumber Democrats by five to two in Oak Ridge, but we get tricked into electing liberal council members at every election, as they prevaricate and obfuscate to win our vote.

So the lone conservative is outvoted every time.

At the next election – as another song says – don't get fooled again.

Christopher Rees, OAK RIDGE



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## ■ HOME SERVICES

### MISC. HOME SERVICES/PRODUCTS

**JUNK & DEBRIS REMOVAL**, construction, remodeling, and general cleanup, out buildings, garages, basements, yard waste, etc. Call (336) **706-8470**.

**COX POOL SERVICE**. Openings, closings, routine maintenance, weekly service. No contracts, free estimates! (336) **327-5122**.

**ON EAGLE'S WINGS** residential home design/drafting. Call Patti, (336) **605-0519**.

**WILSON SEPTIC PUMPING & REPAIR**. Family owned since 1972. Mention you saw this ad in the NWObserver for a discount. (336) **643-6427**.

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[www.nwobserver.com](http://www.nwobserver.com)

### PAINTING & DRYWALL

**LAWSON'S PAINTING**. Custom decks, pressure washing, boat docks, block fill, wood repair, stain work, textured ceilings, sheetrock repair. Call (336) **253-9089**.

**CARLOS & SON PAINTING**. Interior and exterior. 24 hours/7 days a week. Free estimates, licensed/insured. (336) **669-5210**.

**PAINTING INTERIOR & EXTERIOR**, 40 yrs. exp. Sheetrock repair. Average BDRM walls \$100. Insured. Call Brad Rogers, (336) **314-3186**.

**STILL PERFECTION PAINTING**. Reliable, skilled, affordable. Painting, pressure washing, handyman services. Scott Still, (336) **462-3683**, [stillperfectionpainting.com](http://stillperfectionpainting.com).

**BEK Paint Co.**  
Residential & Commercial  
David & Judy Long, owners  
**(336) 931-0600**  
[BEKPaintCompany.com](http://BEKPaintCompany.com)

- References Available
- Licensed & Insured
- All Work Guaranteed



## ■ HOME SERVICES

### PLUMBING

**WEBSTER & SONS PLUMBING, Inc.**  
(336) **992-2503**. Licensed, insured, bonded. 24/7 service. Plumbing, drain cleaning, well pumps. Give us a call, we do it all! Go to [www.webstersplumbing.com](http://www.webstersplumbing.com) for more info.

**FREEMAN PLUMBING** – new construction, remodel and repair. For ALL your plumbing needs! (336) **580-4525**.

**BRANSON PLUMBING & SOLAR**. No job too small! Experienced, guaranteed. Lic./Ins. Cleanliness in your home is our #1 priority. Call Mark, (336) **337-7924**.

### PRESSURE WASHING

**HARD-WORKING TEEN** for pressure washing and other odd jobs around the house. Please call or text (336) **501-1049**.

**HOUSE SOFT WASHING**, roof soft washing, pressure washing. Check out our 5-star reviews online! Please visit our website, [MartinsPressureWashing.com](http://MartinsPressureWashing.com).

**PRESSURE WASHING**, gutter & window cleaning. Fully insured. Crystal Clear, [www.windowcleaningnc.com](http://www.windowcleaningnc.com) or (336) **595-2873**.

**CUTTING EDGE PRESSURE WASHING**. Affordable, dependable. Please call anytime for free estimate. (336) **706-0103**.

### REMODELING / CONSTRUCTION

**JLB REMODELING, INC.**  
Remodeling and additions. Fully insured. NC GC license #69997. Free est. Call (336) **681-2902** or visit [www.jlbremodeling.com](http://www.jlbremodeling.com).

**ORTIZ REMODELING** – Total restoration & home improvement. Drywall, painting, kitchen cabinets, interior trim & more. Free estimates. (336) **280-8981**.

**PREMIER CONSTRUCTION** for all your remodeling/renovation needs. (336) **430-9507**.

**AMERICAN BUILDER CONSTRUCTION INC.** Repairs & remodeling, kitchens/baths, additions, decks, attics, basements. Licensed & insured. Short wait list. NC General Contractors. (336) **225-7478**.

## ■ HOME SERVICES

### BELEWS CREEK CONSTRUCTION.

Kitchens/baths, custom decks, garages, dock work, siding, windows, roofing, rotted wood. Sr. disc., 41 yrs. exp. (336) **362-6343**.

### RENOVATION WORKS, INC.

New construction, remodeling, additions, kitchen, bath and decks. We are a locally owned, full-service design and build company, A+ accredited with the BBB. Visit [www.myrenovationworks.com](http://www.myrenovationworks.com) or call (336) **427-7391** to start your next project.

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home service?**  
Place your ad:  
**nwObserver.com**

### KEITH SMITH CONSTRUCTION

30 years experience. Specializing in room additions, kitchens & baths, garages, vinyl siding and windows, painting, ceramic tile, laminate, hardwood and linoleum floors, and remodeling of all kinds. No job too small. Free est. Call (336) **362-7469**.

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## ■ HOME SERVICES

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### CLINARD & SON ROOFING, LLC.

Residential roofing, rubber flat roofs, roof coating, metal roofs. 30 years experience. Call (336) **643-8191** or (336) **268-1908**.

### KEITH SMITH CONSTRUCTION

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## ■ MISC. SERVICES

**Rymack Storage**  
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(affiliated with Stokesdale Storage)



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Parking area light bulbs replaced. Flags put up; very light tree work. (336) **382-8040**.

## ■ MISC. FOR SALE

**BULLFROG SPA**, model R7LSS with accessories. 7 years old, in perfect working cond. \$3,500. (518) **414-0953**.

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Need stuff?**  
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**nwObserver.com**

## ■ MISC. WANTED

**\$\$\$ – WILL PAY CASH** for your junk / wrecked vehicle. For quote, call (336) **552-0328**.



## ■ MISC. WANTED

**1/4-1/2 WIDE ELASTIC**, at least 7 inches long needed to make masks for school teachers. Please call Beth, who lives in the Oak Ridge area. (336) 644-8155.

**FREE PICK-UP** of unwanted riding & push mowers, tillers, ATVs, generators, power washers, go-carts, mini-bikes, golf carts, 4-wheelers, etc. (336) 689-4167.

### NWO Staycation photos!

Share your pics of the creative ways you're staying at home with your NWO during the COVID-19 pandemic with our readers! Email your photos to [photos@nwobserver.com](mailto:photos@nwobserver.com).

## ■ PETS & ANIMAL SVCS.

**WENDY COLLINS PET SITTING LLC.** Bonded & Insured. Follow us on Facebook. Call or text (336) 339-6845.

**PAWSITIVELY PAMPERED PET SERVICES.** Pet sitting and dog walking for your furry friends. Insured. Call Emily, (336) 497-7392.

## ■ REAL ESTATE

### HOME FOR SALE

**RIVER OAKS CLASSIC BRICK HOME.** 1799 Ridge Oaks Drive, Oak Ridge, NC. For sale by owner. Two-story brick home with attached garage. Over an acre wooded lot. Abundant square footage. Three bedrooms with playroom/4th bedroom, 2 1/2 baths, living room/office, family room, kitchen with eat-in area, dining room, floored attic. \$410,800. Call for an appointment/questions. (336) 337-0285.

## ■ REAL ESTATE

### LAND FOR SALE

**LARGE TRACTS** of land, Summerfield address, Rockingham County taxes. Call (336) 430-9507 anytime!

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### Business & Real Estate

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(336) 644-7035

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**Thursday, August 6**

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