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The GRIFFIN DAILY NEWS

FRIDAY, JULY 8, 2022

PUBLISHED FOR FRANCIS BISHOP AND ALL OF OUR READERS SINCE 1872

VOL. 149, NO. 133 | \$2 DAILY / \$3 WEEKEND

GBI probing theft of funds

BY KAREN GUNNELS
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UPSON COUNTY — The Georgia Bureau of Investigation is assisting the Upson County Sheriff's Department in investigating the reported financial transaction theft of \$99,000 in county funds,

Upson County authorities said Wednesday. The county's Finance Department reported a theft of \$99,624 through the email submission of a computer-generated invoice supposedly from Ameripro, the county's ambulance service provider, Upson County Sher-

iff Dan Kilgore said. "The forged invoice is identical to the normally submitted monthly invoice of the ambulance service except for one character in the email address and the account number for submission of payment. After the payment was submitted electronically,

an employee of the finance department contacted Ameripro to confirm receipt and learned of the fraudulent activity," Kilgore said. Once the UCSO was made aware of the transaction, Kilgore said his office

SEE FUNDS/PAGE A2



COURTESY OF UGA — ATHENS
Food technology entrepreneur James Gratzek will serve as the next director of the Food Product Innovation and Commercialization Center on the University of Georgia Griffin campus.

Gratzek to serve as UGA FoodPIC director

COURTESY OF JORDAN POWERS
UGA — ATHENS

Food technology entrepreneur James Gratzek will serve as the next director of the Food Product Innovation and Commercialization Center on the University of Georgia Griffin campus, according to the Department of Food Science and Technology at the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences.

Gratzek will begin his new role July 1. Gratzek comes to FoodPIC from Food Physics USA, a food technology start-up focused on sales and applications for pulsed electric field technology, a way to preserve food using short pulses of electricity, where he served as technical and business development director.

Gratzek also founded Gratzek Food Technology, a Minneapolis-based food technology consulting company. Manpreet Singh said Gratzek has been a leader in the food industry for more than 25 years. During his career, he has served as director of aseptic technology,

SEE UGA/PAGE A2



Kroger representatives present Youth Advisory Council members and advisors with the Kroger Zero Grant. The group is a part of Spalding Collaborative

Youth group continues to share the love

BY KAREN GUNNELS
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GRIFFIN — The Spalding Youth Advisory Council recently received funds to help the group in its work to improve the lives of others. YAC recently received a

Kroger Zero grant from the Kroger store in Griffin. The Kroger grant will be combined with a recent community service grant from State Farm to purchase items for the group's Share the Love program. Lisa Fambro, YAC's adult

advisor, said Fambro said YAC members work with other volunteers to pack reusable bags with non-perishable snacks, socks and activity books. A part of the Spalding Collaborative, YAC is made up of middle and high school

students who not only volunteer in the community but also serve as peer leaders on youth-related issues in Griffin-Spalding. YAC has been recognized by the Georgia Teen Institute for its number of volunteer projects and service hours.

SEE ROAD/PAGE A2

Commissioners OK Smoak Road subdivision

BY KAREN GUNNELS
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GRIFFIN — Spalding County commissioners have given conditional approval to the construction of a 247-sin-

gle family lot subdivision on Smoak Road. According to county information, Big Pines subdivision is being developed by LGI Homes of Georgia. During a June 23 public hear-

ing on the subdivision, LGI Homes attorney Paul Mitchell said the proposed 280-acre subdivision is an extension of a 2006 court order. The plan includes a 100-foot buffer around the entire

property, which will provide more area for stormwater runoff, LGI Homes representative Bryan McCranle said during the hearing.

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Deaths

Milton Eugene Russell Sr.



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Today's weather:
Storms
92 73
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OBITUARIES

Milton Eugene Russell Sr.

Milton Eugene Russell, Sr., 98, of Griffin, passed away on July 5, at Fike Manor with his family by his side.

Mr. Russell was born in Macon on March 1, 1924. His parents, Rufus Jehone Russell, Ola Mae Phillips Russell, his wife, Hilda Smith Russell all preceded him in death. Mr. Russell was a veteran of the United States Naval Air Force, having served in World War II. He was retired from the United States Postal Service, a member of Orchard Hill Baptist Church where he had served as a deacon, drove the church bus for a number of years. Mr. Russell was a Mason with Lodge #5 in Macon, a Shriner, and an airplane pilot. He loved God, family and country.

He is survived by son and daughter-in-law, Gene and Diana Russell; daughter and son-in-law, Sandy and Mel Hardy;

grandchildren, Mindy and Heath Mason, Sherry and Fumi Kishitani, Angie and Henry Hurt, Rusty Russell; great-grandchildren, Andrew Mason, Kaitlyn Mason, Erika Kishitani, Alisa and Alex Corbit; several nieces and nephews. The family would like to say a special thank you to the owner's and staff of Fike Manor and Brightmoor Hospice for all the loving care and support he received from them during his illness.

A visitation will be held from 1-2 p.m. Friday, July 8, at Conner-Westbury Funeral Home. Followed by a graveside service with military honors at Westwood Gardens.

Conner-Westbury Funeral Home in Griffin has charge of the arrangements.

Please join the family and friends in honoring the life of Milton Russell by visiting conner-westburyfuneralhome.com and posting your tributes and memories.



OBITUARY POLICY

Obituaries are published daily in The Griffin Daily News. To have your loved one's obituary placed in the newspaper, contact your funeral home. Information must come from and be verified by the funeral home. The newspaper reserves the right to edit obituaries and death notices to conform with style. For prices, call the Griffin Daily News office at 770.227.3276. Photos may accompany any obituary. Death notices are published free of charge.

UGA

FROM PAGE A1

a food processing technique, and project applications with TetraPak; director of innovation, technology and quality with General Mills; and senior vice president for research, quality and innovation with Sumopla Inc.

"During his career, Dr. Gratzek has led many teams in the food industry and has a vast experience and success in product development, process development and food safety," Singh said. "Throughout his career, he has had increasing responsibilities, developed a holistic understanding of food business and learned important methodologies to create and launch successful and sustainable food products. Dr. James Gratzek is recognized as a leader in the food industry, and I look forward to his leadership and vision for the FoodPIC."

TAKING FOOD PRODUCTS FROM CONCEPT TO LAUNCH

FoodPIC was initiated by Department of Food Science and Technology faculty and is internationally recognized for its development of innovative food products and discovery and for the implementation of cutting-edge science and technology.

The center has a fully established international network of contacts and databases with which it serves new and established food companies.

These strategic alliances with external marketing, technology and engineering groups help food companies take new products from conception through consumer research, formulation, prototyping, shelf-life analysis and market launch. The center is guided by reliable consumer preference analysis and driven by client food company profit goals.

FoodPIC is located at UGA-Griffin, about 30 miles south of the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, convenient to companies from all over. The center and the food science and technology department provide unique facilities enabling dozens of researchers to carry out studies that affect food systems worldwide.

"I am excited to join FoodPic. This is a fantastic facility, with an important mission and wonderful staff," Gratzek said. "Georgia is an emerging food and agricultural powerhouse, and developing products and technology that add value to southeastern crops will be a focus of the center. Our work will extend the strategic focus area of integrated precision agriculture at CAES."

Gratzek is relocating to UGA-Griffin for the position, but he's no stranger to CAES. He received his doctoral degree in food science from CAES in 1994.

"Returning to Georgia after spending nearly three decades out of state is our next adventure," he said. "I look forward to utilizing my industrial experience combined with the awesome capabilities of UGA to assist Georgia's food and ag sector to become more profitable and ultimately better positioned for our bright future."

Chauvin gets 21 years for violating Floyd's civil rights

BY STEVE KARNOWSKI ASSOCIATED PRESS

ST. PAUL, Minn. — A federal judge on Thursday sentenced Derek Chauvin to 21 years in prison for violating George Floyd's civil rights, telling the former Minneapolis police officer that what he did was "simply wrong" and "offensive."

U.S. District Judge Paul Magnuson sharply criticized Chauvin for his actions on May 25, 2020, even as he opted for the low end of a sentencing range called for in a plea agreement. Chauvin, who is white, pinned Floyd to the pavement outside a Minneapolis corner store for more than nine minutes as the Black man pleaded, "I can't breathe," and became unresponsive.

Floyd's killing sparked protests worldwide in a reckoning over police brutality and racism.

"I really don't know why you did what you did," Magnuson said. "To put your knee on a person's neck until they expired is simply wrong. ... Your conduct is wrong and it is offensive."

Magnuson, who earlier this year presided over the federal trial and convictions of three other officers at the scene, blamed Chauvin alone for what happened. Chauvin was by far the senior officer present as police tried to arrest Floyd

while responding to a 911 call accusing him of using a counterfeit \$20 bill to buy cigarettes. And Chauvin rebuffed questions from one of the other officers about whether Floyd should be turned on his side.

"You absolutely destroyed the lives of three young officers by taking command of the scene," Magnuson said.

Chauvin's plea agreement called for a sentence of 20 to 25 years to be served concurrent with a 22 1/2-year sentence for his state conviction of murder and manslaughter charges.

Because of differences in parole eligibility in the state and federal systems, it means that Chauvin will serve slightly more time behind bars than he would have on the state sentence alone. He would be eligible for parole after 15 years on the state sentence, but must serve almost 18 years of his federal time before he could be released.

He will also do his time in the federal system, where he may be safer and may be held under fewer restrictions than in the state system.

Chauvin attorney Eric Nelson had asked for 20 years, arguing that Chauvin was remorseful and would make that clear to the court. But Chauvin, in brief

remarks, made no direct apology or expression of remorse to Floyd's family.

Instead, he told the family that he wishes Floyd's children "all the best in their life."

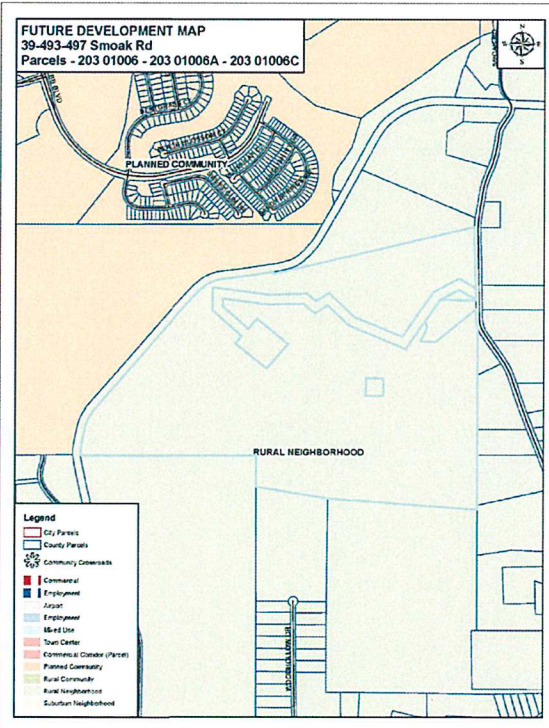
Chauvin wore an orange prison uniform and a protective mask, according to pool media reports from the courtroom. He waved at family and friends in the gallery as he entered. The media reports made no mention of visible reaction by Chauvin to any part of the hearing.

Prosecutor LeeAnn Bell asked Magnuson to give Chauvin the full 25 years possible in the plea deal, highlighting the "special responsibility" that he had as a police officer to care for the people in his custody.

"He wasn't a rookie," Bell said. "He knew what his training was. ... He admitted before this court that his conduct was wrong and he did it anyway."

Floyd's brother Philonise also asked for the maximum possible sentence, telling Magnuson the Floyd family had "been given a life sentence." He said afterward that he was upset that Chauvin didn't get more time behind bars.

Chauvin's mother, Carolyn Pawlenty, told Magnuson that her son didn't go to work intending to kill someone.



Big Pines is a planned 247-single family lot subdivision coming to Smoak Road.

ROAD

FROM PAGE A1

According to conditions approved by county staff and

commissioners, no vinyl siding is allowed on any of the subdivision's homes, and all homes must have a minimum heated area of at least 2,000 square feet.

Homes with a first floor must have a minimum of 1,250 heat-

COURTESY OF SPALDING COUNTY

square feet, and all homes must have fully sodded yards, according to the hearing's after agenda.

The subdivision is also to feature a clubhouse and playground among its amenities.

FUNDS

FROM PAGE A1

immediately contacted the GBI, who involved its cyber crimes unit from Augusta along with the U.S. Secret Service, he added.

"Using these resources, we were able to identify the account the money had been wired to and freeze the funds for recovery," Kilgore said. According to a statement released Wednesday by Upson County, processes have now been implemented to assist in prevent-

ing similar situations from happening in the future.

"On behalf of the Upson County Board of Commissioners, I would like to express our deep gratitude to everyone involved in the swift action taken against the perpetrator who carried out this scam," Upson County Board of Commissioners Chairman Norman Allen said. "Thanks to Sheriff Kilgore, his staff, the GBI and the U.S. Secret Service, the funds that were stolen were able to be recovered." Kilgore said the case is active and ongoing.

SUPER LOW HOME RATES



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