

Public records, including arrest reports, are in today's edition.

A12

WEDNESDAY

Spalding Lady Jags open state here today. SPORTS, A8



The GRIFFIN DAILY NEWS

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Up to \$120 million in bonds for Dollar General

BY RAY LIGHTNER STAFF WRITER RAY@GRIFFINDAILYNEWS.COM

The Joint Development Authority of Butts County and Spalding County approved a resolution Tuesday morning authorizing the chairman and secretary to sign the documents for up to \$120 million in bonds for the Dollar General

distribution center on Jackson Road.

Attorney Kevin Brown explained the resolution incorporated the previously approved memorandum of understanding between Dollar General and the Joint Authority. The bond issuance will have to be approved by a judge in Butts County at a bond hearing,

which Brown said would be scheduled soon and the date and time of the hearing will be advertised in the legal organs in both Butts and Spalding counties.

Brown said since a judge signs off, the terms of the bond contract are binding to both the company the governments, even if there are different people on the board.

“The company has the confidence that the terms will not change,” he said.

The “claw back” terms also do not change, if for some reason, the project is delayed or stops.

“The parent company will stand by the claw back — the company expects that,” Brown

said, “If it stops, we (the local authority) expect you pay us back what we spent. It’s unusual not to have it.”

Brown said the maximum amount of \$120 million is more than the cost of the projected cost of the project to give them some room since there are tax

SEE BONDS/PAGE A2



THOMAS HOEFER/DAILY NEWS

During its Annual Spring Awards Luncheon Tuesday at the Griffin Welcome Center, the Griffin-Spalding Chamber of Commerce, represented by Board Chairman Kelly Smith, left, presented the Jean Gatlin Employee of the Year Award to Candace Banks, center, of Economy Rent-A-Car and the Boss of the Year Award to Ben Johnson of Liberty Technology.

Chamber dishes out awards at spring luncheon

BY THOMAS HOEFER STAFF WRITER THOMAS@GRIFFINDAILYNEWS.COM

The Griffin-Spalding Chamber of Commerce hosted its Annual Spring Luncheon Tuesday at the Griffin Welcome Center, handing out the Jean Gatlin Employee of the Year Award to Candace Banks of Economy Rent-A-Car and the Boss of the Year Award to Ben Johnson of Liberty Technology.

Chamber of Commerce Board Chair Kelly Smith introduced Johnson as “a local business owner of several successful businesses in our community,” adding that the nominations received stated that Johnson is “a phenomenally supportive and caring boss, he has created a work environment that is not

matched anywhere else, that breeds loyalty and enthusiasm for staff.”

Right before revealing Johnson’s name to the audience, Smith pointed out that “the 2016 Boss of the Year provides perks and incentives to drive employees to perform at their best, with weekly catered lunches and a stocked company kitchen, but the working culture he has created is the real reason he deserves recognition.”

Banks, who was nominated by her manager, Linda Blevins, has worked the local rental car business on West Taylor Street for almost 10 years. As someone whom Blevins can count on to manage the office in her absence, Banks has both the expertise and ease of handling

the local business that allows for Blevins to serve on the Chamber of Commerce and be involved in the community.

Prior to the announcement of this year’s award winners, Griffin Police Chief Tommy Jones gave a presentation to the audience titled, “Setting Your Job on Fire.”

After showing a number of books on success that Jones has read and considers important — among them Stephen Covey’s classic “Seven Habits of Highly Effective People” — he introduced a concept he came up with himself, the Kudzu Principle.

Named after the invasive plant that has been spreading all over the South and is known for its deep, intertwined root system

SEE CHAMBER/PAGE A2

Junior Tab Run this Saturday at City Park

BY RAY LIGHTNER STAFF WRITER RAY@GRIFFINDAILYNEWS.COM

Bring your bikes and your tabs to City Park Saturday morning for the Southside Riders Association’s Junior Tab Run.

This year, the Griffin McDonald’s franchises and the Griffin Home Depot will be part of the Junior Tab Run and Public Safety Expo. Ronald McDonald will be there on his own tricycle to ride with the kids, said Lisa Wallace from Southside Riders. McDonald’s will also be providing lunch for all the kids, Wallace said.

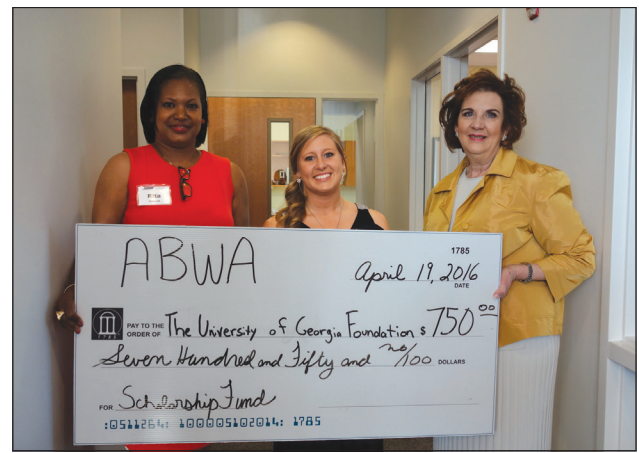
Homer from Home Depot will be there too with a workshop for the kids. There will be lots of characters there — including Woody and Jessie from “Toy Story” and Mickey and Minnie Mouse, Wallace said.

There’s also a canned food drive to benefit Five Loaves Two Fish Food Panty, “enhancing the theme of helping others this year,” Wallace said.

Girl Scout Troop 14881 will be handling the canned food drive, which includes the opportunity to win a limo cruise around Griffin. One can equals one ticket

SEE RUN/PAGE A2

Nicholson awarded ABWA scholarship



SUBMITTED PHOTO

As part of its recent Ladies Night Out event, the American Business Women’s Association (ABWA) presented a scholarship to UGA-Griffin student Cortney Nicholson, center, of Yatesville. Nicholson is enrolled in the Terry College of Business with a major in general business and a minor in consumer economics and will graduate this summer. Pictured with her are Rita Johnson, left, and Wanda Cronin Howell, with ABWA.

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- Puzzles A5, A10, Stocks A6, Sports A8, Scores A9, Viewpoints A4

Deaths

- Ralph L. Gatlin, Deacon James, Edward Williams, Ms. Violet Marie Woods

- Mrs. Barbara Shivers, Mr. Johnny Taylor, Mrs. Marie Edwards Vaughn, Mr. Bobby Lamar Windom, Ms. Delores D. Lyons



Today's weather: Mostly sunny

82 High 63 Low



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OBITUARIES



Ralph L. Gatlin

May 21, 1932 —
April 25, 2016
Griffin resident

Mr. Ralph L. Gatlin, 83, of Griffin, passed away on Monday, April 25, 2016 at Arbor Terrace of Peachtree City. He was born May 21, 1932 to Ruby and Horace Gatlin in Thomaston, Georgia. Mr. Ralph L. Gatlin was part of a large, hard-working family. This family came to include he and 9 other brothers and sisters. After a move from Thomaston to Griffin, Georgia, the Gatlin's resided on North 12th Street. Many stories of mischief could be told from each brother and sister about one another, but love was the center of this mill village home. Growing up, Ralph played football for Griffin High School.

After high school, he felt the call to duty and joined the Air Force in 1950. He was stationed in San Antonio, Colorado, and South Dakota until 1954. He was a cook while in the Air Force, and could make the best breakfast in the military. He was honored to be a part of our nation's freedom and never bragged about the sense of pride he felt, but regarded it with the utmost reverence. After his service, he moved back to Griffin. There he pursued what would become another passion of his... Sarah Jane Lofton. He used his quick-witted sense of humor and good looks to court her. While they dated, he worked at McLean Trucking Company and attained a business degree. He supported Jane in her goal of becoming a registered nurse at Crawford Long Hospital. Their courtship was swift. Ralph was persuasive though and he "won" over her affections. After driving all night to propose, she agreed. They decided to get married before she graduated from nursing school. This, you see, was forbidden back in 1956 while Jane was earning her nursing degree. On May 18, 1956, they married

during a secret, intimate ceremony in First Baptist Church's parlor.

Ralph left McLean Trucking in Atlanta and went into business with his father-in-law, Hulon Lofton. Ralph helped Hulon run the grocery store until Hulon passed away in 1962. Ralph later purchased the store from his mother-in-law and renamed the business Gatlin's Grocery. He later sold the business in 1966 when another sales opportunity was presented with State Farm Insurance. He became everyone's "Good Neighbor" and enjoyed using his business platform to show humility, understanding, and grace. Ralph and Jane had three children and, eventually, eight grandchildren.

Throughout his life, Ralph was a frequent sight at the Griffin City Park and Cabin Creek Golf Course. He would grab his candy bar, coke, and golf cart and, after 18 holes, Ralph was a new man. When his goal of a "hole in one" was achieved, he took Jane out to dinner to celebrate. He believed in truth, hard work, love of family and friends, and his faith in the Lord. He lived life to the fullest, whether he was at work, on the golf course, at church, or at his home. He showed that courage, will power, and faith can overcome any disparity. He raised his children with a firm belief in discipline along with unconditional love. His spirit was filled with a can do attitude because there was no room for anything else. He never spoke a bad word about anyone. His legacy will continue to shine through anyone that knew him. He was a mill worker, Air Force veteran, a truck driver, grocery store owner, State Farm Agent, church deacon, golfer, artist, and most recently, author of three published western novels. However, his most important role was Christian servant.

Those that will continue to honor his memory and spirit include his beloved wife Jane, his children and their spouses: Melissa and Mark Gatlin, Linda and Wade Gatlin, Amy and Mike Jones; his grandchildren: Anna Ruth Gatlin, Alyson Gatlin, Heather and Andrew Gatlin, Taylor and Wesley Gatlin, Peter Gatlin, Madison Jones, Joshua Gatlin, and Janie Jones. He is also survived by Madeliene and his brother Harold "Butch" Gatlin, sister-in-law

Jean Gatlin, in-laws Judy Coleman, Joyce and Van Gardner and many nieces and nephews. Ralph was loved by many and respected by all. He will be missed dearly. In lieu of flowers, the family would like any donations to go to the First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 908, Griffin Georgia 30224 - Benevolence Fund in memory of Mr. Gatlin.

Visitation for Mr. Ralph L. Gatlin will be on Wednesday, April 27, 2016 from 6:00 pm until 8:00 pm at Conner-Westbury Funeral Home. A funeral service will

be conducted on Thursday, April 28, 2016 at 4:00 pm at Griffin First Baptist Church. Reverend Max Hamilton, Jr., Mr. Wayne Brown, and Dr. Bruce Morgan will officiate.

Interment will follow in Oak Hill Cemetery.

Please join the family in honoring the life of Ralph Gatlin by visiting www.conner-westburyfuneralhome.com and posting your tributes and memories.

Conner-Westbury Funeral Home, 1891 W. McIntosh Road, Griffin, is in charge of the arrangements.

Deacon James Edward Williams

Griffin resident

Funeral services for Deacon James Edward Williams, of 558 Chappell Mill Road, Griffin, will be conducted at 11 a.m. Thursday, April 28, 2016, at Shiloh Baptist Church, Georgia Highway 36, Milner. Pastor D.L. Driver will officiate. Interment will follow in the churchyard cemetery. Public viewing will be Wednesday from 5 to 8 p.m. at the funeral home. His remains will lie in state at the church one hour prior to the service. The cortege will assemble at 10

a.m. at the residence. Sympathetic service rendered by McDowell's Funeral Home Inc., 305 N. Hill St. www.mcdowellfuneralhome.org.

DEATH NOTICES

Ms. Violet Marie Woods, 83, of Griffin, died on Friday, April 22, 2016, at Brightmoor Nursing Center. A memorial service will be announced. Heritage Funeral Home, 1512 Williamson Road, Griffin, is in charge of the arrangements.

Mrs. Barbara Shivers, 84, of Griffin, died on Tuesday, April 26, 2016, at her residence. Survivors and arrangements will be announced. Heritage Funeral Home, 1512 Williamson Road, Griffin, is in charge of the arrangements.

Mr. Johnny Taylor, 72, of 1418 Lockwood Drive, Atlanta, died Friday, April 22, 2016, at his residence. Funeral arrangements will be announced. McDowell's Funeral Home Inc., 305 N. Hill St., is in charge of the arrangements.

Mrs. Marie Edwards Vaughn, 84, of Griffin, died on Sunday, April 24, 2016. A graveside funeral service will be conducted at 11 a.m. Wednesday, April 27, 2016, in section D of the new section of Oak Hill Cemetery. Conner-Westbury Funeral Home, 1891 W. McIntosh Road, Griffin, is in charge of the arrangements.

Mr. Bobby Lamar Windom, 56, of Griffin, died on Friday, April 22, 2016, at his residence. A graveside funeral service will be conducted at 2 p.m. Wednesday, April 27, 2016, at Westwood Gardens. Conner-Westbury Funeral Home, 1891 W. McIntosh Road, Griffin, is in charge of the arrangements.

A home-going service for **Ms. Delores D. Lyons** will be held at 11 a.m. Thursday, April 28, 2016, at Mount Zion Baptist Church. Miller's Family Mortuary Inc. is in charge of the arrangements.

BONDS

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

abatements included in the agreements.

"It makes it easier for the tax assessors," Brown said, "if what's on the ground is not more than the tax abatements."

The projected closing date for the project is May 26, according to David Luckie, executive director of the Griffin-Spalding County Development Authority and member of the Joint Authority. Luckie said the agreement is consistent with others he's seen with projects in Spalding County.

Luckie made the motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Chuck Copeland, vice chairman of the Joint Authority and chairman of the Griffin-Spalding County Development Authority. It was approved unanimously by all eight members of the

Joint Authority.

The bond resolution for the issuance of taxable industrial development revenue bonds for the DG Distribution Southeast LLC, project, is the same agreement previously approved by both county commissions earlier this year, said Laura Hale Sistrunk, member of the Joint Authority and executive director of the Butts County Development Authority. The counties — as the taxing authorities — had to agree to it as well, she confirmed.

The Joint Authority also unanimously approved an inducement resolution to apply for the EDGE (Economic Development, Growth and Expansion) grant from the state.

"We're combining the EDGE with the EIP (Employment Incentive Program) grant for the project," said Sistrunk. "That way we can use the same engineer and there's less of a communication nightmare."

CHAMBER

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

that makes it strong but also hard to kill, the Kudzu Principle features six essential traits to dominate one's career — personal branding, visual goals, networking, public speaking, getting published and becoming an organizational anchor.

As he elaborated on all of the components, Jones said that a vision board, for example, has photos of all the goals someone dreams of achieving. Those goals can relate to health, family, financial success, vacation, spirituality and many more.

"Vision boards are a way of achieving your way of life," said Jones. "It must be personal. It must make you smile every time you look at it."

RUN

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

for the drawing, Wallace said.

There will also be several bounce houses, face painting, the Balloon Man, and a public safety expo with vehicles and displays from local public safety departments.

There's also the ride. Kids are encouraged to bring their bikes, trikes, skateboards, scooters or powerwheels to participate in the Junior Tab Run ride. Park roads will be blocked on the inner loop at City Park for the event from 10 a.m. to noon, Saturday, April 30.

Children must be accompanied by an adult and be wearing appropriate safety gear. Parents

will have to sign releases for the bounce houses and the ride, Wallace said.

The annual event was created for kids helping kids to have a ride of their own. Kids are encouraged to bring in the pop tabs, which the Southside Riders Association collects to help pick up the tab for Ronald McDonald House Charities.

Local schools are competing in the School Tab Challenge to see who brings in the most pop tabs. There will be a trophies for those bringing in the most tabs both individually and by classroom, Wallace said.

The Junior Tab Run will be from 10 a.m. to noon at City Park. Wallace said there will be signs in the park with directions to the site.

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