



OFF AND RUNNING

Wayne County High School and Wayne Academy kick off 2010 football seasons with wins. See stories on Page 1B.

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The Wayne County News

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WPD investigates unusual store break-in

By Sean Dunlap

The Waynesboro Police Department is investigating an early Monday morning break-in at a Waynesboro convenience store.

Police Chief Jimmy Bunch said the incident occurred at the Clark Exxon No. 4 service station on Azalea Drive just west of the Wayne County Courthouse.

“In this incident, a suspect chopped a hole in the block wall to gain access to the store,” Bunch said. “Once inside, the individual took

Police crackdown on DUIs

Waynesboro Police will take part in the national “Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest.” intoxicated driving enforcement effort now through Labor Day. For more on this story, turn to Page 3A in The Wayne County News.

an undetermined amount of change as well as cigarettes.”

See Police, Page 5A

Schools plan crisis management drills Sept. 8

By Sean Dunlap

The Wayne County School District has announced plans to hold crisis management tests on Wednesday, Sept. 8 at campuses around the area.

Deputy Superintendent of Education Keith Clay said the tests are used to put each public school’s disaster plan into effect, and practice their individual readiness to deal with a variety of potential situations — ranging from tornadoes and bomb threats, to terrorism

scenarios and fires.

“Each campus has developed a unique plan to deal with any situation that might arise,” Clay said. “During the school year, we set aside a pair of test days to implement these plans and familiarize everyone with how they work.”

School officials want to notify parents in advance of the Sept. 8 drills to prevent rumors or panic that might result.

See Drills, Page 5A

City leaders discuss need for up-to-date comprehensive plan

By Paul Keane

Waynesboro’s Board of Aldermen on Tuesday night heard a presentation about putting together a comprehensive plan that would include the annexed areas of the municipality that were not part of a 1998 comprehensive plan.

Chris Watson with Bridge & Watson Inc., Planning Consultants, told the board updating the plan is crucial if any zoning ordinances are to be put into place for the portions of the city that were annexed in 2001.

“The city has not completely followed through with the zoning and other promises made to those areas when it was annexed,” Watson said.

“And the city’s current comprehensive plan is dated, which is why we recommend updating it.”

“Why is a comprehensive plan important to you? Under state law, you have to have zoning regulations in the plan. With the annexed areas, you don’t currently have the statutory standing to apply zoning regulations to those areas because they were not included in the 1998 comprehensive plan.”

Watson told the panel that having a comprehensive plan helps a city provide good and adequate services for the entire municipality, and “this should be the community’s plan, not the consultants.”

To start from scratch and develop a brand new comprehensive plan would take roughly 12 months, Watson said.

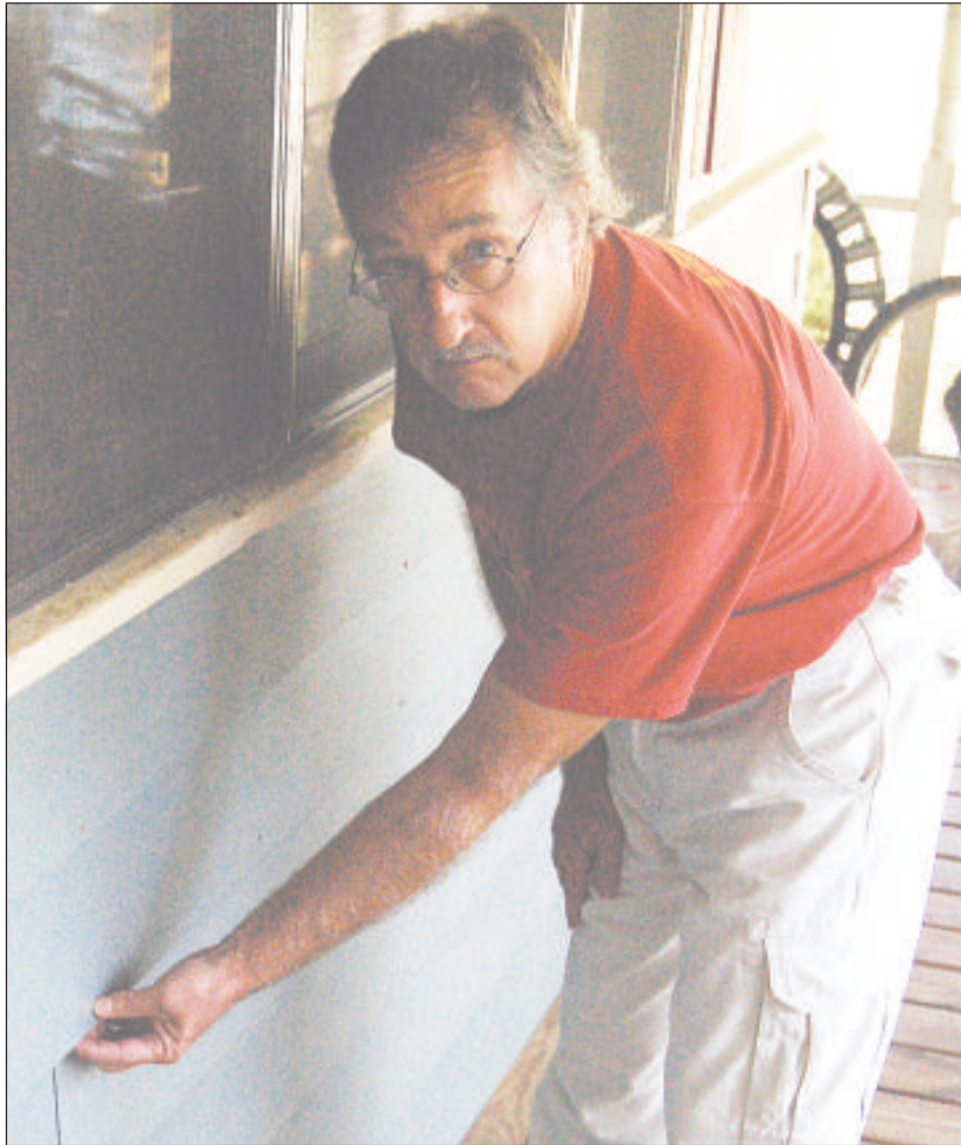
It would involve Census data, land-use studies, facilities studies and input from all agencies involved with the city and even private citizens.

The estimated cost to the city would be roughly \$30,000.

To use elements of the 1998 comprehensive plan and update it would cost roughly half that amount.

“A good comprehensive plan looks forward 20 to 30 years,” Watson said. “But that doesn’t mean it is finished. We recommend that you review and make adjustments to your plan roughly every five years in order to adjust for growth and other factors.”

See Plan, Page 5A



Paul Keane/The Wayne County News

Wayne County resident Roy Martin of the Sandersville-Eucutta Road, said a weatherization project — sponsored through the Multi-County Community Service Agency and funded by the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act — has resulted in damage to the siding and interior of his home. Both Martin and the regional agency are at odds over how to address the concerns raised by the homeowner.

Homeowner, agency at odds over ‘fix-up’

By Paul Keane

A disagreement between a local homeowner and a community agency might boil down to semantics and definitions.

Roy Martin, a Wayne County resident on the Sandersville-Eucutta Road, enlisted help from the Multi-County Community Service Agency, which is based out of Meridian, to tap into a weatherization program that provides free insulation and other related home-maintenance services to low-income and elderly clients.

Funding for the project is provided through the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Martin said workers representing the agency have come to his house and done some work, but they did damage in the process and he wants the agency to make repairs.

“They pulled boards off the exterior wall so they can insulate, and they pulled them in such a way that the head of the nails came out,” Martin said.

See Project, Page 8A

Autopsy finds county man was murdered

Five local, state law enforcement agencies join to trace victim’s steps, discover motive in death

By Sean Dunlap

The investigation into the death of a 35-year-old Wayne County man — by the Mississippi Bureau of Investigation and sheriff’s departments in Wayne, Clarke and Jasper counties and the Waynesboro Police Department — is continuing with leads being sought in the ongoing probe.

Joe Michael Ruffin was reportedly last seen around 11 p.m., Thursday, Aug. 12 in the area of Martin Luther King Drive in Waynesboro, and he was leaving the county on his way to the Mississippi Gulf Coast, according to Wayne County Sheriff John Stein Farris.

“Ruffin was reported missing by his wife, Catina, on Friday when he was not heard from, and we had already been in the process of looking for him when a body was found near in Clarke County near Vossburg,” Farris said. “The victim was positively identified as Ruffin, and the preliminary autopsy report indicates his death was a homicide.”

Clarke County Coroner Gregg Fairchild said Ruffin’s body was sent to state forensic experts, and noted the report showed the victim died of a single shotgun blast to the back.

“The report talks of pulling numerous buckshot pellets from his back,” Fairchild said. “But it doesn’t say anything about the caliber of shotgun.”

Farris said Ruffin’s body was found inside his 2003 Cadillac Deville around 8:30 p.m., Tuesday, Aug. 17 on Clarke County Road 242 — close to the Clarke-Jasper counties line.

“When the responding officers and investigators arrived, they found the body and decomposition had already set in, which means he had likely been there for several days,” Farris added. “We had a suspicion that something was wrong when we checked and found out that he had not picked up his paycheck from his job.”



Ruffin

See Ruffin, Page 5A

United Methodist churches, Boy Scouts package food for hungry, needy in Haiti

By Sean Dunlap

Thanks to the efforts of volunteers from Wayne County’s area United Methodist Church, there will be families that won’t face the prospect of going to bed or waking up hungry.

On Wednesday, Aug. 18, church members from United Methodist congregations at Waynesboro, Wayne Haven, Buckatunna and Clara gathered in Waynesboro to pack non-per-

ishable foods for shipment to places where people face the real prospect of starving to death.

The effort was held in conjunction with the organization Stop Hunger Now, which is an international relief agency that coordinates the distribution of food and other life-saving aid around the world.

Stop Hunger Now’s meal packaging program provides volunteers the opportunity to package dehydrated, high protein and highly nutritious meals that are used in crisis situations and in feeding programs for schools and orphanages in developing countries around the world.

And in roughly two hours time last week, 12,990 meals were packaged by the local volunteers — a small amount of time when one considers that the supplies will feed more than 13,000 people.

Drew Miller, who heads up missions for Waynesboro United Meth-

odist Church, said the items that were prepared locally for shipment will be destined for Haiti — an impoverished island nation that was devastated by an earthquake and is still struggling to get back on its feet.



Sean Dunlap/The Wayne County News

Area United Methodist Church youth and members of Boy Scout Troop No. 39 of Waynesboro were part of the effort to pack and send food to the hungry in other parts of the world on Wednesday, Aug. 18 at Waynesboro United Methodist Church. Among those taking part were, from left, Ashton Sellers, Sarah Sellers, Michael Harrold, Colton Coxwell, Phillip Hayes, Sumi Singh, Hunter Holifield and Sophie Coxwell. The young people are pictured holding bags of rice that were included in the shipment.

“There is an urgent need for this kind of humanitarian assistance in places all over the world, and our focus is to help the people of Haiti,”

Miller said. “We were able to raise \$3,247.50 in the Wayne County area alone for this effort. When you consider that for 25 cents you can feed a family of four a meal ... it’s really easy to see how this will help in a big way.”

Miller, who is also involved in leading Boy Scout Troop 39 of Waynesboro, had members of his church-sponsored youth service

organization lending a hand alongside the small army of Christian volunteers.

Waynesboro First United Methodist Church Pastor David A. Hill said he was pleased with the community effort, but more so with the outpouring of love that went into packing each item for shipment.

See Hungry, Page 5A



Sean Dunlap/The Wayne County News
CeeCee Johnson was among the local volunteers taking part in an effort at Waynesboro United Methodist Church on Wednesday, Aug. 18 to package food for distribution around the globe to people in need. Some 12,990 meals were packaged in two hours and will feed more than 13,000 people.

Southern Sweethearts to take part in Mississippi Clogging Council event

Katrina relief for state listed



Submitted/The Wayne County News

The Mississippi Clogging Council will sponsor its third annual "Mississippi Clogging Extravaganza" in Gallman Aug. 27-29. Cloggers from around the state will converge at Camp Wesley Pines for two days filled of activities. Scotty Bilz, certified clogging instructor from Atlanta, Ga., and Brian Tucker, owner of Taps 'N' Things in Michigan, will begin teaching workshops on Friday evening. Workshops will continue in two halls on Saturday and Sunday with these nationally-known instructors and local Mississippi instructors leading the programs. Saturday evening, the state's cloggers will present "Rock to the Clogging Beat." Teams will perform their best routines at this showcase. Cloggers will also compete for the Mississippi Grand Champion Freestyle Award. Dancers have competed throughout the year at regional events to qualify for the Grand Champion contest. The public is invited to this Saturday evening "Showcase" beginning at 7 p.m. The cost is \$5 per person for those not registered for the weekend event. The Southern Sweethearts will present several routines in the "Showcase." The team, under the direction of Adrienne Hartley, consists of cloggers from Greene, Perry and Wayne counties. They are very active in the communities as they perform at local events including festivals, benefits and pageants. They also enjoy attending clogging competitions where they have won numerous awards.

WCN submitted report

BILOXI — When Hurricane Katrina made landfall on Aug. 29, 2005, the face of the Mississippi Gulf Coast and thousands of lives were changed forever.

During the five-year recovery process, both the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency have worked with local governments and communities statewide to ensure that Mississippi rebuilds stronger and safer.

The following is a summary of the federal and state assistance provided throughout the state during the last five years:

- \$3 billion - the total spent to help individuals and families meet their basic needs and begin to recover. This includes \$1.5 billion to provide temporary housing units for families displaced by the storm.
 - 175 families - the number of families still living in temporary FEMA housing. More than 45,000 individuals and families used FEMA trailers and mobile homes.
 - 2,826 - the number of families who used a Mississippi Cottage during MEMA's Mississippi Alternative Housing Program.
 - \$3 billion - the amount committed to restore schools, public buildings, roads and bridges, medical facilities, parks and other infrastructure and for debris removal and emergency response during and after the storm.
 - \$294 million - federal funds for safe rooms, shelters, hurricane-proofing and other projects to reduce the effect of future disasters.
- REBUILDING MISSISSIPPI INFRASTRUCTURE**
- Three billion dollars in FEMA Public Assistance funds has been obligated to rebuild infrastructure in Mississippi, including:
- \$187 million for public recreation facilities.
 - \$890 million for public utilities.
 - \$652 million to restore public buildings.
 - \$91 million for roads and

bridges. • \$66 million for medical facilities.

Nearly 900 state and local governments in Mississippi have applied for FEMA's Public Assistance grant program.

The program provides assistance for debris removal, emergency protective measures and the repair, replacement or restoration of disaster-damaged, publicly owned or supported facilities and the facilities of certain private nonprofit organizations.

The program is managed and funds disbursed by MEMA.

To date, MEMA has distributed more than \$2.16 billion to local governments through the program.

PREPARING FOR FUTURE DISASTERS

FEMA has obligated more than \$180 million for 287 Hazard Mitigation Grant Program projects statewide.

This is part of the \$294 million available to Mississippi for projects to reduce the impact of disasters on people and property.

More than \$138 million has been approved for shelters and safe rooms to protect approximately 69,000 residents and first responders.

More projects are being reviewed.

The program provides grants to states and local governments for long-term hazard mitigation measures to reduce the loss of life and property due to natural disasters and to enable mitigation measures to be implemented during the immediate recovery from a disaster.

The program is managed by MEMA who identifies and manages projects from beginning to closeout.

Since August 2005, MEMA has also assisted 92 local governments with a FEMA-approved hazard mitigation plan for their county/city.

ASSISTING INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES

FEMA has provided more than \$1.3 billion to help families and individuals recovery and begin rebuilding immediately after the disaster.

Hunger

"The work of missions begins at home, and by reaching out to people in need, we can hopefully share the news that God truly loves them," Hill said.

"The blessings were multiplied here tonight because we will be able to help people that really need it in places like Haiti, and we are blessed in return by helping reach others for Christ. This will say more to people in need about

the salvation and love available through Jesus Christ."

Both Miller and Hill also noted the cross section of people involved — some as young as 8 years old, like Jessica Long and Ashton Sellers — to those in their 70s.

"It is glorifying to see young and old alike coming together for a cause such as this," Hill continued. "It says alot about how important it is that they be a part of this outreach and

in sharing the Good News."

Stop Hunger Now Program Coordinator Matt Casteel of Richland said his organization created the meal packaging program in 2005.

"The program perfected the assembly process that combines rice, soy, dehydrated vegetables and a flavoring mix including 21 essential vitamins and minerals into small meal packets," Casteel said. "Each meal costs only 25

cents. The food stores easily, has a shelf-life of five years and transports quickly."

Stop Hunger Now works with international partners to ship and distribute the meals where they are needed most.

Casteel said the majority of Stop Hunger Now's meals supply school lunch programs in impoverished nations and regions.

"And due to the ease of assembly and transport, meals can be shipped to areas in crisis or those that are remote," he continued.

Stop Hunger Now is a 501(c)3 non-governmental relief organization based in Raleigh, NC.

It operates meal packaging programs from its locations in Raleigh, Goldsboro and Charlotte, N.C.; South Hill, Hampton Roads, Richmond and Lynchburg, Va.; Jackson, Miss.; Phoenix, Ariz.; and South Africa.

From Page 1A

Police

Officials said they were amazed at how access was gained to the store, and have recovered a tool that was allegedly used in connection with the break-in.

"From all indications, the individual stayed inside the store for about 10 minutes,

and did not trip the alarm," Bunch said. "But when he walked by a cooler, the alarm was activated and the suspect broke out the front door to exit the store."

Police said the individual was wearing mostly dark-colored clothing, and was wear-

ing a cloth around his face.

Physical evidence in the case is being investigated.

Anyone with information pertaining to this case is asked to contact Wayne County CrimeStoppers at 601-735-5323 or the Waynesboro Police Department at 601-735-3192.

From Page 1A

Ruffin

The multi-agency investigation is sifting through evidence related to the case, and is looking for a motive in connection with the slaying.

Meanwhile, family members and friends gathered on Saturday, Aug. 21 for the funeral services for Ruffin, which were held at New Point Baptist Church in Waynesboro. Interment was in the Waynesboro Cemetery.

Survivors of Ruffin include his father, William George "Popeye" Ruffin; his mother, Lula Smith; his step-father,

James Smith; his wife, Catina Ruffin; two sons, Keyshawn and KiJana Everett, both of Waynesboro; two daughters, Feneshanna Hundley (who was loved and cherished as a daughter) and Raven Rhodes, both of Waynesboro; two brothers and sisters-in-law, Patrick and Keshia Ruffin, and Courtney and Quatasha Ruffin, all of Waynesboro; a sister, Jasmine Smith of Waynesboro; and a step-sister, Monica Smith.

Anyone with information related to the case is asked

to contact Wayne County CrimeStoppers at 601-735-5323, the Wayne County Sheriff's Department at 601-735-3801, the Waynesboro Police Department at 601-735-3192 or the Clarke County Sheriff's Department at 601-776-5252.

In addition, anonymous tips from the public can also be submitted via the sheriff's department Website — www.waynecoso.org. Once there, click on the "Submit a Tip" link on the left side of the page and fill out the requested information blocks.

From Page 1A

Plan

Ward 4 Alderman Johnny Gray said he was interested in developing a new plan that addresses the annexed areas.

"I'm interested in the newly annexed areas, especially in the bypass for commercial development," he said. "I attended a seminar on this, and it was suggested that you don't just go out and zone everything commercial because you end up hurting yourself in the long run."

Watson agreed. "A lot of plans are using commercial nodes rather than strip commercial now," he said.

"This allows for development of residential and other-use facilities rather than just industrial and commercial."

"Where this is coming into play is with your downtown areas. Downtown is something every place in Mississippi is trying to create and develop. Downtown, for the most part, is a commercial, retail and office area. Does your zoning allow for residential spaces in downtown, especially above the businesses where

there is a two-story building? I recommend that you look at that type of zoning."

"The problem with zoning the bypass as all commercial is that it hurts your downtown area. If you zone it all commercial, are you not cannibalizing your downtown by encouraging more competition out there with your downtown merchants? I don't think that's what anyone wants to accomplish."

Mayor Joe Taylor agreed, saying, "We don't need to make it all commercial because there are some beautiful homesites and pieces of land out there with a lot of potential."

Alderman at Large Greg Johnson said while he wasn't opposed to retaining the services of Watson and his firm, he wanted to read the 1998 comprehensive plan first before voting on the matter.

"Right now, I would be voting in the dark because I'm not familiar with the old plan," Johnson said.

"I'm all for doing this, I would just like to have some

background information on where we are at right now before voting to move forward."

Gray said action needed to be taken quickly in order to begin the process of zoning the annexed areas.

"It's important that we move ahead with this because the land use is getting out of hand in the newly annexed areas," Gray said. "This needs to be done immediately in my opinion."

Gray later said that he felt it was also important to have a unanimous decision on the matter, as it could effect the city for the next few decades.

"I don't have a problem with waiting and letting people get familiar with the 1998 plan," he said.

"I also feel that it's important to be unified on this, and it's not very often that you get a chance to have a unanimous vote on an issue of this importance."

The Board of Aldermen will take the matter up in a special called meeting to be held at 5 p.m., Tuesday, Aug. 31 at Waynesboro City Hall.

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Drills

"These are only tests to make certain everyone does what he or she needs to do in a crisis situation," Clay said. "Unfortunately, we live in a society where our schools face a variety of threats that they

really haven't had to deal with in the past."

No timetable for the drills was announced by school officials so that there will be an element of surprise involved to test each school's plans.

In related news, the Waynesboro Board of Aldermen will meet at 6 p.m., Tuesday, Sept. 7 for the annual municipal budget hearing.

The session will be open to the public to allow for comments on the municipality's revenue and spending plan for fiscal year 2011, which begins Oct. 1.

NOTICE OF BUDGET HEARING AND PROPOSED TAXES

The Wayne County Board of Supervisors has under consideration a proposal to permit its fiscal year 2010-2011 property tax revenue to increase from said property tax revenue for fiscal year 2009-2010, exclusive of new growth. The proposal under consideration would result in a millage increase of 4.6 mills.

All concerned citizens are invited to attend the public hearing on the budget and proposed taxes to be held at 9:00 a.m., Tuesday, September 7, 2010, in the Supervisors Board Room at the Wayne County Courthouse, Waynesboro, Mississippi.

The budget will be adopted, and the tax levy will be set at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, September 7, 2010, in the Supervisors Board Room, Wayne County Courthouse, Waynesboro, Mississippi.