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FAST NEWS

Boater pulls man from Brunswick River

An 18-year-old man was pulled from the Brunswick River after falling in the water from the peak of the Sidney Lanier Bridge around 9 a.m. Sunday.

The boater, who was from Moultrie, said he heard a splash and with binoculars saw a head bobbing in the water. The man was able to pull himself out of the water and into the boat.

The rescuer said the man was conscious and talking when he dropped him off at the state Department of Natural Resources dock on Plantation Creek. He was taken to Memorial University Medical Center in Savannah where he was being treated Monday for traumatic lung injuries.

Police, who alleged the incident was a suicide attempt, said the man was distraught.

Sheriff warns of phone scams

Glynn County Sheriff Neal Jump is again warning residents of an attempt by criminals to defraud people by claiming to be deputies seeking to collect a fine for failing to appear in court.

Jump said the scammers tell those who they call to buy a Green-Dot or other prepaid card from a retail store to pay the fine.

"Citizens should know that this is a scam and that the Glynn County Sheriff's Office does not collect or accept money over the phone in this manner," Jump said.

Anyone with questions about the legitimacy of a caller who claims to be a deputy or an employee of the sheriff's office should contact the office at 554-7600 for assistance.

County finance committee to meet

The Glynn County Commission's Finance Committee is slated to hear requests to adjust the budget for several courts at its monthly meeting at 1 p.m. today at the Harold Pate Building, 1725 Reynolds St., Brunswick.

Among the requests is to reduce the budget for Glynn County Juvenile Court by more than \$73,000 after a grant the court applied was not received. The county budgeted \$73,095 in revenues and \$97,460 in expenses with the understanding that the Georgia Department of Human Services grant would fund the KidsNet Glynn program.

Poll Question

Should college athletes be compensated?

There is more talk today about paying college athletes. You think:

- Covering the full cost of college ought to be enough
- Pay them a monthly allowance no greater than \$2,000
- Pay them a percentage of ticket and jersey sales
- Let each college decide the issue on its own

Cast your vote online at www.thebrunswicknews.com.

You do not have to be a subscriber to participate.

Interim chief leads fire department

By **MICHAEL HALL**
The Brunswick News

By his own admission, Chipper Gardner always needs something to do.

"I'm a can't-be-still person," the retired Spalding County fire chief said Monday, sitting in his new office at the Glynn County Fire Department's administration building, where he started work a week ago as interim chief.

Gardner is the temporary replacement for recently retired Glynn County Fire Chief Al Thomas who left July 31 after 34 years of service.

For a man who also runs a farm in Locust Grove and will finish a term in December as chairman of the Spalding County Commission, the decision for Gardner to serve as interim chief for several months as Glynn County searches for a new, full-time replacement was a no brainer.

His family has been visiting the area and vacationing on Jekyll Island for five decades.



Bobby Haven/The Brunswick News

Interim Glynn County Fire Department Chief Chipper Gardner, right, talks with Capt. Neal Mann, left, and Deputy Chief Ray Marat at the fire department administrative offices Monday.

"So I'm very familiar with the area," Gardner said.

While he is here in Glynn County, Gardner said he plans to apply the same philosophy by which he has worked as a chief and elected official in Spalding County.

"I'm a believer in that when you work for a local government, you work for the local people," he said. "If you take care of the citizens,

they will take care of you."

He said that philosophy served him well in Spalding County, where he served as chief from 1985 to 2010.

Gardner said he is getting to know the staff in Glynn County and is looking forward to maintaining what already in his eyes is an efficient fire department.

"It's a good staff here," Gardner

said.

But regardless of how much he likes the job here, Gardner said he already has informed Glynn County Administrator Alan Ours that he does not plan to seek the permanent position.

Ours said work has begun to find a permanent chief that he hopes will be hired before the end of this year.

He said the county has hired Slavin Management Consultants out of Norcross, Ga., to take applications and screen candidates. Once the list of qualified candidates has been narrowed to around six, Ours said he will begin the interviewing process.

"I expect that to happen sometime in September," Ours said.

Until then, Gardner said he is excited about getting the chance to once again be a part of a fire department.

• **Reporter Michael Hall** writes about public safety, environment and other local topics. Contact him at mhall@thebrunswicknews.com or at 265-8320, ext. 320.

Giant watermelon an 80-pound treat

By **MICHAEL HALL**
The Brunswick News

It is not every day someone grows a watermelon that can wear a pair of pants, but the 80-pound watermelon 74-year-old Clarence "Coonie" Martel picked Friday in Thalman fit the bill.

With its 41-inch circumference and nearly 3-foot-long length, the massively sweet melon easily set a new record for watermelons grown by Martel.

That is quite a feat considering he has been growing watermelon for most of his adult life. "This one was my biggest one. It just took off," Martel said.

In years past, Martel said he has grown several that topped 40 or 50 pounds, but the 80 pounder was in a different league.

All it took to get the Carolina giant variety watermelon to that size was time and plenty of chicken manure when he planted it. Martel said after planting, he never even fertilized it again.

Of course, growing the giant melon is only half the story.

Martel said it took 11 people this weekend to polish off half of the behemoth.

His wife, Sylvia Martel, said getting through an entire slice was difficult.

"We had to force ourselves to eat half of a half of a slice," she said.

Next summer, Sylvia Martel said there are



Provided photo

Clarence Martel hoists a massive Carolina giant watermelon he grew that weighed 80 pounds, was more than 40 inches around and nearly three feet long. It took 11 family members to eat just half of the melon.

already six family members who plan to compete to see who can grow the biggest watermelon.

But first, the family must first polish off the rest of this year's giant.

• **Reporter Michael Hall** writes about public safety, environment and other local topics. Contact him at mhall@thebrunswicknews.com, on Facebook or at 265-8320, ext. 320.

Federal funding boosts health clinic

By **SARAH LUNDGREN**
The Brunswick News

A local health clinic will reap the benefits of some new federal funding, a boost it'll be able to pass on to patients.

The Family Health Centers of Georgia, Inc., will share \$23.4 million of its Title X grant award to fund a statewide collaboration of family planning medical providers.

Benefitting locally will be the Coastal Community Health Services facility in Brunswick, 106 Shoppers Way. The nonprofit facility will become a part of a collaborate group to be known as the Georgia Family Planning System.

The center provides a variety of primary and preventative health care services, including family planning, regardless of insurance status.

The grant will increase what the clinic can do, says executive director Barbara Meyers.

"While we were able to provide some family planning services — prescribing contraceptives, pregnancy testing, STD testing — this funding will allow us to serve more people and provide a full range of family planning services," Meyers said. "That includes contraceptive services, pregnancy testing and counseling, helping clients achieve pregnancy, preconception health services and sexually transmitted disease (STD) services, essential preventative services such as breast and cervical cancer screening and also addressing the needs of male clients and especially male and female adolescents."

Being able to expand this kind of care services can help reduce the teen pregnancy rate and other situations that befall adolescents, teens and young adults. Because the center does not turn anyone away because of inability to pay



Bobby Haven/The Brunswick News

Coastal Community Health Services Executive Director Barbara Meyers, from left, looks over family planning information with Office Manager Cheryl Ehrreich and Patient Advocate Quiana Kerr. The organization recently got funding for family planning services.

for medical care, crucial and reliable information and counseling for teens will be readily available, Meyers said.

"Since we offer a wide range of primary care services, it makes it easier for a teen to bring up any pregnancy or disease prevention issues during a visit for any other routine health concern," she said. "We have goals to reduce teen pregnancy, eradicate the spread of STDs, improve infant and maternal health and survival outcomes. But the first step is to establish reliable, consistent access to medical care and disease prevention."

Meyers says the funding the center will receive will be based on the number of patients it sees and does not have an estimate at this time. The center accepts private insurance, Medicaid, Peach-Care and more.

A sliding fee scale is available for those who do not have insurance.

This funding represents the first time since Title X's conception in 1970 that a Title X grant has been awarded to a network that consists mostly of Federal Qualified Health Center's like Coastal

Community Health Services.

• **Reporter Sarah Lundgren** writes about education and other local topics. Contact her at slundgren@thebrunswicknews.com, on Facebook or at 265-8320, ext. 322.

CLINIC HOURS

Coastal Community Health Services, 106 Shoppers Way Suite 1, Brunswick, is open from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday, 8 to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday and 8 to 2 p.m. Friday. For appointments or more information, call 275-8028.

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