

Relay for Life set for April 24 & 25

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shirts. Businesses or individuals operating on tighter budgets may have their names printed on tote bags for a \$100 donation. These bags will be presented to cancer survivors the night of the relay.

To become a Relay for Life sponsor, contact Linda Wilgus at 706-359-5536.

In addition to the activities listed above, there will also be all kinds of great food and plenty of amazing entertainment.

Since 2002, Lincoln County has raised over \$275,000 for the American Cancer Society.

The executive committee for the upcoming relay is as follows:

- Co-Chairmen — Mary Lowe, Debbie Tutt, and Brenda Danner McGahee.

- Sponsorship — Linda Wilgus.
- Luminaries and Team Recruitment — Travis Reid and Tawanda Cullars.

- Survivorship — Paula Henderson.

- Accounting — Renee Guthrie.
- Entertainment/Spirit — Melissa Burgess.

- Ms. Relay — Sharon Bryan.
- Kick-Off Planning — Doris Blackwell hosted the kick-off festivities at the Pleasant Grove C.M.E. Church.



The Courthouse Crew served hotdogs with all of the trimmings on Friday, March 27, to raise money for the Seventh Annual Lincoln County American Cancer Society Relay for Life set for April 24 and 25. Pictured are: (l-r) Billy Norman, Tawanda Cullars, Brenda Danner McGahee, and Linda Wilgus.

Local residents are reminded that one of the highlights of each relay actually takes place prior to the all-night event. Scheduled for Friday, April 17, the dinner honoring cancer survivors and caregivers is always a meaningful time of camaraderie, fun, and inspiration.

The banquet is set to begin at 6:30

p.m. in the fellowship hall at Lincolnton UMC.

According to Paula Henderson, who is in charge of survivorship, "A person becomes a survivor the minute he is diagnosed with cancer. We encourage all survivors and caregivers to attend the dinner and be a part of what promises to be one of the best relays ever."

For more information about the special activities planned for cancer survivors, contact Henderson at 706-825-0259.

The funds raised during the relay will go toward furthering the American Cancer Society's mission to eliminate cancer through research, prevention, and early detection programs.

The annual event represents the hope that those lost to cancer will never be forgotten, that those who face cancer will be supported, and that, one day, cancer will be eliminated.

Relay for Life is the American Cancer Society's signature fundraising activity. It all began in 1985 when Dr. Gordy Klatt of Tacoma, Washington, walked around a track for 24 hours and raised \$27,000 for the ACS.

Since then, Relay for Life has grown into an international event that is held annually in 19 countries on six continents and in over 4,960 communities.

Today, Relay for Life is the largest nonprofit fundraising activity in the world, with over 3.5 million participants.

For more information about the Lincoln County ACS Relay for Life, visit www.relayforlife.org or call Mary Lowe at 706-595-0617, Debbie Tutt at 706-359-3733, or Brenda Danner McGahee at 706-359-5536.



Work is progressing on the new high school, located off of Metasville Road. In fact, the Lincoln County Board of Education voted to sell \$15,625,000 in general obligation bonds to help pay for the facility at a meeting held Thursday, March 26. Classrooms are pictured in the foreground, with the gymnasium appearing in the background.

Gunby hired as LCMS asst. principal

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program for the past seven years.

He is the son of Katie Gunby of Lincolnton and the late Norris W. Gunby, Sr.

In other business, the board voted to sign a resolution and a purchase agreement for the sale of \$15,625,000 in general obligation bonds for the new high school, following a presentation by Tom Owens, vice president of Morgan Keegan & Company, Inc.

Board Member Denise Freeman cast the lone opposing vote against the motion.

The system is selling the bonds in two phases for a total of \$25,150,000. In the fall of 2007, the board voted to approve the sale of \$9,525,000 million in bonds.

The bonds will be supported by SPLOST (Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax) and property taxes.

"We will receive the money on April 16, 2009, and the interest starts accruing at that time," said Owens. "The system will make two payments yearly; the first is due in October of this year."

The same holds true for the 2007 series of bonds.

With a fixed interest rate of 4.21 percent, the 2007 bonds were issued for 20 years; whereas, the March 26, 2009, bonds were issued for 30 years at a fixed interest rate of 4.924 percent.

"The longer you go out, the higher the interest will be," stated Owens. "Hopefully, we can refinance the bonds and save a good deal on interest. This is one of the things we can do to mitigate costs. Nevertheless, there is a strong likelihood the general market could get worse."

Owens then gave the board a recap of SPLOST revenues, saying the tax topped out in 2006 with a total of \$867,146.

"The average SPLOST check for the first three months of 2009 was \$60,387 — that's encouraging," noted the investment banker. "Still, I don't want to give anybody false hope that it will continue. It may get worse."

Owens went on to point out that SPLOST revenues will have to grow at an annual rate of about two percent to enable the system make payments at the current level of property tax over the life of the bonds. For the past five years, the annual growth rate averaged 11 percent.

"The picture of the system's overall debt service is not the greatest it has ever been, but it could be worse," he continued. "You now have a bird in hand. You can sell the bonds and finish your building."

The system will be obligated to find the money to pay the bond indebtedness, whether with ad valorem taxes or sales tax.

"There's a certain degree of risk anytime you borrow money," stated Owens. "This is why you have an underwriter. We have approached this project conservatively. The longer the term of the bonds, the more likely the economic situation will even out."

The new building will cover 164,865 square feet, which does not include a 2,100-square-foot greenhouse and out buildings measuring a total of 6,737 square feet.

In further business, the board voted to allow a \$125,000 OSMO-DRAIN system to be installed at Buddy Bufford Field at no cost to the board. In return, the field will be used to showcase the system to potential buyers by OSMO-DRAIN partner Greg Ruddell.

The procedure was developed at the request of Walter Lindenmaier, owner of Golf de L, formerly known as the Rocky Branch Golf Course.

Lindenmaier AG of Germany is the

OSMO-DRAIN's parent company. According to Dale Fryer, director of business development for OSMO-DRAIN, "This is an amazing system. You will not see anything happening above ground. There is no impact to the field."

"The system fertilizes, aerates, irrigates, and provides temperature control sub-surface. Groundskeepers are always trying to deepen root systems, but when watering takes place on the surface, the roots go toward the water. OSMO-DRAIN doubles the length of the roots, and the resistance of the turf is significantly improved."

Fryer went on to say that OSMO-DRAIN will help with the drainage problem at Buddy Bufford Field as well as cut water usage by 70 percent.

"The system will be controlled by a computer, which will be located under the bleachers on the home side of the field and allow maintenance workers to program the field as called for," he explained. "With internal sensors monitoring the soil 24 hours a day, the computer will know what the field needs."

Installation is scheduled to begin on Wednesday, April 15, with a 10-day turnaround. OSMO-DRAIN will be responsible for all maintenance on the system.

Some of the benefits are as follows:

- Economical operation — There is no need for expensive infrastructure such as high pressure pumps, pressure pipes, or supply systems.

- Practically no maintenance — Costly maintenance becomes a thing of the past because the hoses are laid underground. Empirical experience to date confirms that the membrane hoses generally function without any problems for more than 20 years, with an expected total lifetime of at least 30 years. Moreover, damaged

hoses can be repaired quickly and easily.

Likewise, mechanical damage is more or less excluded because the system has practically no moving parts.

- OSMO-DRAIN hoses are made of a fully recyclable rubber compound.

- The system operates according to a principle of water and air injection and extraction thereby minimizing the impact on the environment.

Also during the meeting, the board voted to enter into executive session to discuss personnel matters. Board Member Freeman cast the lone opposing vote.

Upon returning to regular session, the board:

- Voted to accept the retirement of Elaine Beggs from her teaching position at LCES, effective at the end of the current school year.

- Voted to approve Kevin Banks for a teaching contract at the alternative school for the 2009-2010 school year.

- Voted to approve Rebecca Wright to serve as a part-time school psychologist for the 2009-2010 school year.

- Voted to approve Randall Ganus to serve at the will of the board as a substitute bus driver.

- Was informed by School Superintendent Randall Edmunds that the group needs to come to its next meeting prepared to nominate an individual to represent the board on the Lincoln County Board of Elections and Registration.

- Voted to recruit qualified minority teachers at job fairs, colleges, and universities. Board Member Freeman volunteered to assist personnel in this effort if funding was not available.

The next regular meeting of the board will be held Tuesday, April 14, at 7 p.m. at the board office on Metasville Road.

First online small business community up and running

The United States Small Business Administration's (SBA) Business Gateway Program has launched the first government-sponsored online community built specifically for small businesses.

The address for the new web initiative is www.communitybusiness.gov.

The Business.gov Community, which supports the White House's mission to create a transparent and connected democracy, aims to provide small business owners, potential entrepreneurs, bloggers, and the government with a place to discuss and share information about starting and running a successful business.

The new community is an extension of Business.gov, which is managed by the SBA in partnership with 21 federal agencies. The partnership is known as the Business Gateway.

In addition to an exchange of ideas through forums and blogs, Business.gov Community offers advanced tools for navigating the labyrinth of government policies and laws that impact the small business owner.

The website also keeps business owners informed of the various resources and opportunities made available by the government.

Along with supplying a "home" where users can share their expertise and unique experiences, the site likewise gives small business owners the chance to provide direct input into Business.gov and voice how the government and the online community can better serve them.

In essence, the "community" is

divided into three areas:

- Discussion Topics — Members ask and answer questions as well as discuss business issues.

- Idea Exchanges — Members share their ideas concerning ways to improve and refine the pages on the Business.gov website.

- Expert Insight and News — This area features articles on timely business topics.

According to Nancy Sternberg, program manager of the Business Gateway, "Over the past year, we have significantly expanded our efforts to engage with small business owners by giving them easy access to the information they need to run their businesses."

"The launch of the Business.gov Community represents a new milestone," she continued. "Through the application of Web 2.0 technologies, we hope to unite small business owners, industry experts, and government representatives to take the program to a new level of collaboration."

Over the next few months, the Business.gov Community will expand to include additional features that address specific user interests and provide access to a wider pool of government and Business.gov partner resources.

The Business Gateway Program was designed to offer innovative information services to the small business community. These services save time and money, encourage shareholder participation, and enable collaboration across all key levels of government.

Holy week services

Community Holy Week Services will be held Monday through Friday, April 6-10, at various churches throughout Lincoln County.

The services will begin at 12 noon, with lunch served by the host church each day at 12:30 p.m.

The host churches, along with the designated speakers, are as follows:

- Monday — New Hope Baptist Church, Rev. Steve Rayner, pastor of Rehoboth Baptist Church.
- Tuesday — Lincolnton Baptist Church, Rev. Dennis Quinn, pastor of First Baptist Church.
- Wednesday — First Baptist Church, Rev. Thomas Moon, pastor of the Bethany-Pine Grove Charge of the United Methodist Church.
- Thursday (Communion) — Morningside Baptist Church, Rev. Dan Fernandez, pastor of the church.
- Friday — Pine Grove UMC, Rev. Lori Blocker, pastor of St. Paul UMC.

Residents of the community are encouraged to be present at each service as the Christian Church remembers the last week of Jesus Christ's life on earth and thereby prepares itself for the celebration of Easter.

Sponsored by the Lincoln County Ministerial Association, these services will provide a meaningful time of worship and fellowship for the residents of the county.

The offering received each day will be used for benevolent works in the community. Canned food will also be collected at each service to help stock the shelves of the Lincoln County Food Pantry.

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