

TCDA to develop plan to 'diversify' local economy

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development plan to diversify the local economy. **Immediate Human Needs** "The first (prong) would be the immediate human need, as well as longer-term needs of the affected workers, not just at the mill, but contracting companies," Brown said. "There will be other layoffs simply because the economy is going to shrink because of this closure."

According to Brown, those issues include: unemployment payments, severance packages, extension of healthcare benefits, job fairs, job searches, education and re-training assistance, establishment of new or expansion of existing food banks and meeting mental health needs.

"Maybe even other essential needs like assistance with utility bills or housing," Brown said (see related story).

He added that he talked with Tax Collector Mark Wiggins about the possibility of tax deferments to delay the due date for property taxes.

"There are precedents

at the state level, where at times they have allowed people to pay their property taxes later than normal as a form of assistance," Brown said. "They (state) have even transferred money to county governments and then come collect after revenues come in."

Brown said there are already local and state organizations that handle many of these needs, but there is a need to coordinate between them all, so people know about available services.

However, the commission appeared to balk at Brown's suggestion that County Administrator LaWanda Pemberton run point on coordinating the effort, with several commissioners stating that Pemberton had "enough on her plate" overseeing the county government.

After a brief discussion, Pemberton said she would search for an organization or agency that would be able to create a centralized listing of available services for those in need.

As for mental health needs, it was mentioned that Big Bend 221, which can be reached by dialing 211, can help those in need 24 hours

a day to connect them with the resources they need.

Preservation of the Industrial Employment Base

"The second [prong] is the preservation of the local employment base," Brown said. "First and foremost, we all want the mill to stay open. If GP can't run it, maybe another company can come in and do so, but there are any number of reasons why that might not be possible."

"If it's determined that's not possible, then the next best thing would be for something new to come in and fill that void," he said. "What would be best for this region is if there was a focus made on getting replacement silviculture or forestry-support industries to come in here, because we do have an entire region whose economy is largely based on forestry products."

"They don't have to necessarily produce the same kind of product that GP was producing, but if we can at least have (a company) that continues to support that industry, then that is going to benefit the whole region and minimize the damage of the mill's closure long-term," he said.

This effort is being led by the Citizens Action Task Force led by Michele Curtis, which includes numerous former mill employees and managers.

Stewardship of the Mill Property

"If Georgia Pacific isn't going to run the mill, and if there isn't someone else who is going to come in and run it right away, that means the mill is going to have to shut down," Brown said.

"I feel certain that the mill and GP have a plan to properly shut that down and keep certain systems up and running," he said. "I assume this is also in their permits from [the Florida Department of Environmental Protection] and [the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency], but none of us have access to that yet."

"We need to make sure the regulatory agencies on the state and federal level are aware that Georgia-Pacific is shutting down," Brown said. "They're the ones with the authority to go in there and make sure that a plan is in place and is being followed, but it's us locals that are going end up getting the shaft if it doesn't happen."

Pemberton suggested her staff could reach out to DEP and others in the state "to ensure that there is a plan."

"I certainly feel that is something we can work with our state partners to ensure," Pemberton said.

On Monday, GP's Foley Mill Public Affairs Manager Scott Mixon told Perry Newspapers, "Georgia-Pacific will collaborate with all regulatory agencies during and after closure to ensure compliance with all environmental regulations."

Long-term Economic Development Plan

According to Brown, the TCDA will be taking point on the fourth prong of the response, which is the development of a long-term county-wide economic development strategic plan to diversify the local economy.

"I think we've all learned this week, if we didn't know it before, that there's some danger in being a company town," Brown said. "That's great if the company is doing well, but if the company falters or has difficult economic times, that throws the entire economy into turmoil."

"We need to, as a community, decide what

the future would hold and how can we support a local economy that is more diversified and also take a regional approach," he said. "We also learned this week that it's not just Perry or just Taylor County that's involved, it's multiple counties in this area. We're all in this together."

Commissioner Pam Feagle said she wanted to see TCDA work to help local businesses expand their operations and produce more jobs.

"Absolutely, that's actually one of the foundations of an economic development program," Brown said.

He added that the county can "leverage" the impacts of Hurricane Idalia and the plant closure to secure support and funding from various agencies and organizations for the development of the economic development plan.

Commissioner Thomas Demps urged Brown and the TCDA to poll local businesses to determine how many job openings already exist locally to meet the needs of those who have or will soon lose their existing jobs.

Bankers: 'We're committed to helping our people'

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charter expansion for our credit union," Hilley said. "It really was part of our strategic plan (to ask) what if this were to happen. What kind of jeopardy would we be in if all of our business was strictly tied to the mill?"

"We're not wrapped up in a lot of mortgages at our credit union, and we are very well capitalized," he said.

According to Hilley, BCFCU has 11,000 members and \$140 million in assets.

BCFCU currently has about 406 loans with employees at the mill totaling approximately \$7.5 million, he said.

"We have almost \$100 million in total loans, so you're talking about 7% of our loan volume tied directly just to the mill employees," Hilley said. "That is a big chunk of money, but we have broadened out."

"We are very strong financially, and we're not going anywhere," he said.

As for what they can do for affected employees, Hilley said, "We've really worked hard, starting with the storm, just like Marvin was saying. It doesn't help us to have a bunch of collateral sitting in our parking lot all the time."

"We will do all we can, if it's skipping payments, which we did for our entire membership after the storm," Hilley said. "We had

emergency loans...to help people. If it's restructuring an auto loan to make a \$400 payment a \$200 payment, we'll look at that."

"We're regulated just like a bank, and we've been in contact with our governing body, [the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA)] and our examiners to talk about things we can do to make sure we also have our governing body's blessing to do what is necessary to take care of our membership."

Taylor County Community Bank

Next to speak was Cindy James with Taylor County Community Bank, whose new building is currently under construction on Jefferson Street.

"I'm the new kid on the block," she said. "I represent Taylor County Community Bank, who is going to be coming here soon. That is still our plan. We are a division of Madison County Community Bank."

"Although we don't have a branch here up and running obviously, we're here to support the local community," James said. "It's not going to just affect Taylor County. It's going to affect everyone, especially Madison. There are a lot of people in Madison who worked at GP."

James noted the local loan office was damaged by Idalia, so staff has been working out of the chamber

of commerce office while construction continues at their new location.

"We're here to support in any way we can," she said. "We're here to give financial advice, budgeting advice, just to try to help the community we are going to be in. We are here to stay."

Vystar Credit Union

Chris Clark with Vystar Credit Union, formerly Citizens State Bank, also pledged his support for those affected by the closure.

"We've started pulling member names for people who work out at the mill to see if we can start reaching out to them (to see) if there is anything we can do to help," he said. "Just trying to be proactive at this point."

"It's already enough stress on them trying to figure out what is the next step for them," Clark said. "Maybe we can step in and help with some of that stress."

"We're here," he said. "We're committed to helping our people."

Duke Energy

"We have a program called Share the Light, where we take funds and disperse them to a local organizations to help people with their power bills," said Danny Collins with Duke Energy.

Locally, the program is run by the Suwannee River Economic Council.

"I can't promise, but we will probably beef up our donations to assist this program, given what is

going on here," Collins said.

According to Collins, Duke customers can donate to the program, and all donations are matched by the Duke Foundation. Additionally, all donations from Taylor County are returned to Taylor County.

As for the economic development issues surrounding the mill closure, Collins said "we're committed to bring any resources we can to help you."

"We have a full economic development team of 10 in Florida that just focuses on economic development in Florida," he said. "That team is committed to helping Taylor County -- all 10 of them. Normally we have one person assigned to Taylor. We're going to have all 10 working with the [Taylor County Development Authority] and the county with the recruitment of

businesses, with strategic planning, whatever you need. There is no cost associated with that. That's us coming to help Taylor County."

"Aside from that, we have national recruitment folks in Charlotte (N.C.) that focus on big businesses -- bringing them in," he said. "We've already got a person trying to identify a project or business that could relocate here."

"We're working with workforce development needs," he continued. "We hire. We want people to come to work with us too, so we will be involved in job fairs and that sort of thing."

Tri-County Electric Cooperative

County Administrator LaWanda Pemberton read a statement from Kaitlynn Culpepper with Tri-County Electric Cooperative.

"We are very disheartened over the news of the mill

closure and understand the impact it will have on our members," Culpepper said. "We are prepared, as always, to assist our members through difficult times such as these. We will continue to work with them individually and assist with payment arrangements and extensions as needed."

"The key will be that members contact us if they are struggling to pay their bill so we are better able to assist them before it gets behind or their account disconnected," she said.

City of Perry

The city council has authorized staff to continue waiving all late fees and water and gas disconnections (in effect since the hurricane) until further notice.

The city has also pledged to consider tax and utility incentives on a case-by-case basis for new or expanding industries.

Faison-Clark 'understands rural medicine, the unique challenges'

DMH CEO Continued from page 1

and served as interim CEO in late 2021 and again in 2023.

DMH Board Chair Pat Barbaree expressed his support for Faison-Clark, stating, "Lauren's boundless energy and can-do attitude will make a positive impact on DMH. She has a real love for our community and our rural hospital. We look forward to her leadership in providing quality healthcare here at Doctors' Memorial."

TMH President/CEO Mark O'Bryan also serves on the DMH Board and has worked with Faison-Clark for many years.

"Lauren has been an integral part of regional development for TMH, and I look forward to continuing to work with her as she

leads the DMH team," he said. "She is a powerhouse, an innovative and strategic leader and will help DMH reach its full potential."

As CEO, Faison-Clark will work with Alliant Management Services, which is contracted to support administrative operations at DMH. Alliant President/CEO Michael Kozar added, "Alliant is excited to have Lauren's leadership, experience and knowledge on board to help lead DMH into the future. We have the utmost confidence in her."

As interim CEO, Faison-Clark was at the helm during Hurricane Idalia's landfall in Taylor County and was able to capitalize on relationships built over her career to secure support after the storm. She worked with community partners and her DMH team to get

operations back up and running in record time, all while making sure that colleagues had the resources they needed to recover personally.

DMH Vice President of Operations Sara Grambling works closely with Faison-Clark and has seen her in action. "Lauren is a knowledgeable, energetic, visionary leader. She understands rural medicine and the unique challenges we face day to day. I trust Lauren and am excited to serve alongside her and all our DMH team to create and sustain a culture of excellence."

Faison-Clark looks forward to continuing to drive initiatives and grow programs that make Doctors' Memorial a premier healthcare partner for employees, patients and the community.

Remains have not been ID'd

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the area on Wednesday and continued until dark before resuming the following morning (Thursday, Sept. 28), according to Evans.

"Several pieces of the vehicle and more of the human remains were found," Evans said.

"Once divers finished searching, the vehicle was

removed from the river. The Medical Examiner's Office collected the human remains. Identification has not been made at this time," Evans added. "This investigation is still ongoing. When more information is available, we will update."

According to a story posted by Ryan Wyatt Turbevill of ABC affiliate WCJB-TV20 sources said

the crews clearing debris from Hurricane Idalia dredged up pieces of a vehicle with a tag that was last registered in 1995, as well as clothes and bones.

Contractors hired by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) began clearing debris from the Steinhatchee River, Suwannee River and canals in Horseshoe Beach two weeks ago.

LEGALS

BE ENTERED AGAINST YOU FOR THE RELIEF DEMANDED IN THE COMPLAINT OR PETITION. Dated on September 26, 2023 Gary Knowles As Clerk of Court By: Kathryn Lago Deputy Clerk

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT, THIRD JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR TAYLOR COUNTY, FLORIDA, CIVIL DIVISION CASE NO.:2023-403-CA
LAMAR CARMICHAEL, SR. Individually and LAMAR CARMICHAEL, SR., as the SUCCESSOR TRUSTEE of the WILLARD P. CARMICHAEL and EVELYN L. CARMICHAEL REVOCABLE

INTER VIVOS TRUST AGREEMENT DATED OCTOBER 10, 2002 Plaintiff, v. JAMES CLAYTON PARKER; IRVIN BOWDOIN; LESLIE CLAMP; and KELSEY BOGGS, Defendants. **NOTICE OF ACTION** TO: LESLIE CLAMP, 107 Cherry Hill Lane, Lexington, South Carolina, 29072. YOU ARE NOTIFIED THAT AN ACTION FOR PARTITION AND QUIET TITLE TO THE FOLLOWING DESCRIBED PROPERTY IN TAYLOR COUNTY, FLORIDA Commence at the (NW) corner of Lot 7 of Block 2 of the RIVERSIDE SUBDIVISION as recorded in Plat Book 1, Page 64, of the Public Records of Taylor County, Florida, for POINT OF BEGINNING. Thence run East 118.86 feet; thence run S

7°54'07" W 65.96 feet; thence run N 82°05'03" W 17.54 feet; thence run N 61°48'09" W 113.47 feet to a point on the westerly line of Lot 7; thence run N 39°10'00"E 12.0 feet to the POINT OF BEGINNING. ALSO: That part of Lots 7 and 8 of Block 2 of RIVERSIDE SUBDIVISION being described as follows: Commence at the Southwest (SW) corner of Lot 8 of Block 2 of the RIVERSIDE SUBDIVISION as recorded in Plat Book 1, Page 64 of the Public Records of Taylor County, Florida, for POINT OF BEGINNING. Thence run East along the South line of Lot 8, 180.00 feet; thence run N 22°47'25" E 99.96 feet; thence run NW 188.0 feet to the POINT OF BEGINNING. HAS BEEN FILED AGAINST YOU AND

YOU ARE REQUIRED TO SERVE A COPY OF YOUR WRITTEN DEFENSES, IF ANY, TO IT ON, SALLY ROBERTS, THE PLAINTIFF'S ATTORNEY, WHOSE ADDRESS IS PO BOX 2026, PERRY, FL 32348, ON OR BEFORE OCTOBER 27, 2023, AND FILE THE ORIGINAL WITH THE CLERK OF THIS COURT, EITHER BEFORE SERVICE ON THE PLAINTIFF'S ATTORNEY OR IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER; OTHERWISE A DEFAULT WILL BE ENTERED AGAINST YOU FOR THE RELIEF DEMANDED IN THE COMPLAINT OR PETITION. Dated on September 28, 2023 Gary Knowles As Clerk of Court By: Kathryn Lago Deputy Clerk

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO REGISTER FICTITIOUS NAME TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: Notice is hereby given that the undersigned, pursuant to the fictitious name statute, Chapter 20953 or Section 865.09, Florida of State, Corporation Division, Tallahassee, Florida, upon receipt of proof of publications of this notice the fictitious name, to-wit: Benji Chevrolet of Perry under which we/I will engage in business. I/we expect to engage in business in Perry, Florida and our address is: 2128 S. Byron Butler Parkway, Perry, FL 32348. The extent of ownership is Benji Auto Center LLC 100%

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of Lot 8, 180.00 feet; thence run N 22°47'25" E 99.96 feet; thence run NW 188.0 feet to the POINT OF BEGINNING. HAS BEEN FILED AGAINST YOU AND YOU ARE REQUIRED TO SERVE A COPY OF YOUR WRITTEN DEFENSES, IF ANY, TO IT ON, SALLY ROBERTS, THE PLAINTIFF'S ATTORNEY, WHOSE ADDRESS IS PO BOX 2026, PERRY, FL 32348, ON OR BEFORE OCTOBER 27, 2023, AND FILE THE ORIGINAL WITH THE CLERK OF THIS COURT, EITHER BEFORE SERVICE ON THE PLAINTIFF'S ATTORNEY OR IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER; OTHERWISE A DEFAULT WILL