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Editorial | Community members can help out

Working together will make us Work Ready

Now is the time for all good employers and employees, both in the private and government sectors, to come to the aid of Brunswick and the Golden Isles. Your community needs you. It needs you today.

You can help the hometown simply by volunteering to take a written test. It's an action that, when enough men and women do it, will earn Glynn County – every individual and family in the city and county – Work Ready status.

That we achieve this status as a community is critical to future employment prospects. You see, it is the state's yardstick for determining which of its 159 counties has the know-how, the experience and readiness to handle new business and industry.

Failing to measure up, failing to interest enough adults to take the test, can mean all the difference in the world to people and communities hungry for jobs here and across the rest of the Peach State.

Counties that have been successful

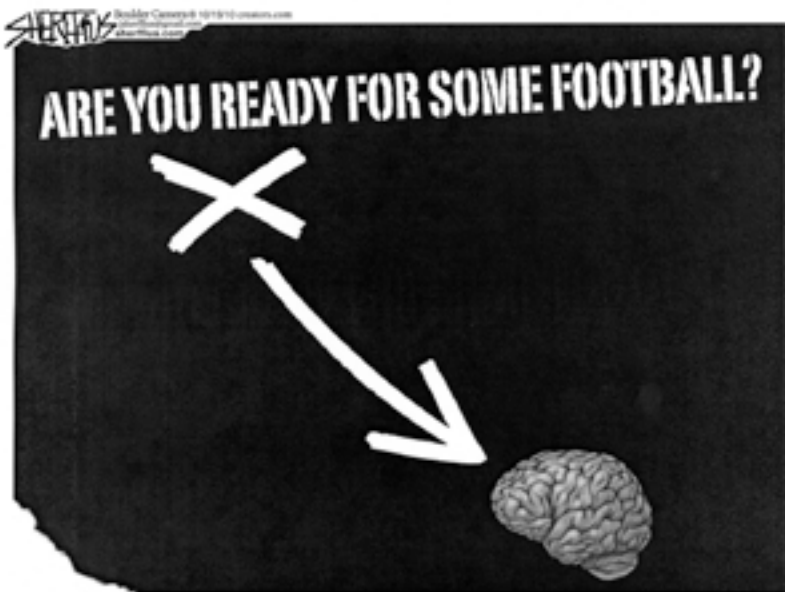
in convincing a sufficient number of residents to carve a few hours out of a single day to take the test will be among the first considered by a company looking to expand or relocate. The list of successful counties includes several of Glynn County's neighbors – Camden, McIntosh and Wayne counties. Their residents understood the value of the program and wasted no time helping to make their communities eligible for Work Ready designation and whatever rewards that could come their way as a result of the accomplishment.

A lot of businesses in Glynn County also comprehend the value of the program and have recruited volunteers for the test. Their ranks include us, The Brunswick News. Five of our employees stepped forward and took the test.

Glynn County needs others to do the same. The community's future depends on it.

To schedule to take a Work Ready assessment test, call the Star Foundation, 1907 Gloucester St., at 554-0540.

Another view | John Sherffius



Letters to the editor

Send letters on topics of general interest to readers in Southeast Georgia by :

• **Mail** Letters to the Editor, The Brunswick News, 3011 Altama Ave., Brunswick GA 31520

• **E-mail** editor@thebrunswick

news.com

• **Fax** 280-0926

Letters should be no more than 250 words in length and may be edited for clarity.

You must include your name, address and phone number.

Use retirement wisely

Dear Dr. Graham: I retired last year, and at first I really enjoyed not having to work. But now I'm bored to death, and I know my wife wishes she could get me out of the house. Was I wrong to retire? Did people in the Bible retire when they reached a certain age? – K.R.

Dear K.R.: Some people in the Bible did retire at a certain age; the Levites (who assisted in the Temple ceremonies) had to retire at the age of 50 (see Numbers 8:25). Farmers and other laborers, however, apparently worked as long as they could.

It wasn't necessarily wrong for you to retire – but what was wrong was failing to plan how you'd spend your retirement.

I don't blame you; most people, I've found, don't give much thought to it. They look forward to not working; they have their financial plans in place; they even may have a hobby they want to pursue. But that's as far as they get in their planning, and – like you – they end up bored. Perhaps your experience will encourage others who are nearing



Billy Graham

www.billygraham.com

My Answer

retirement to give it more thought – and prayer.

I added “and prayer” to that sentence deliberately – because God knows all about your situation, and He has a plan for these years. Why not seek it? Perhaps he wants you to explore a part-time job, or take some classes you'll enjoy.

But God also wants to use you to help others, now that you have the time. What opportunities does your church offer? What mission projects could you join? Don't live just for yourself during these years; you'll keep getting bored. Instead live for Christ, and ask Him to use you. The Bible says, “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord” (Colossians 3:23).

Economy | Bank to fund transportation projects comes after damage is done

Obama late on infrastructure

One of the smartest policy thinkers I know, the Brookings Institution's Bill Galston, praises President Barack Obama's proposal to develop a National Infrastructure Bank as “win, win, win,” but he fears the president is advancing it too late.

So do I. Sadly, the politics of winning-through-infrastructure is turning terrible, with public investment of all kinds increasingly dismissed as mere “spending” or “pork.”

The NIB is a piece of Obama's plan – unveiled on Labor Day and bolstered with a White House conference this week – to build or repair 150,000 miles of roads, 4,000 miles of rail tracks and 150 miles of airport runways over a six-year period.

First-year costs would be \$50 billion – doubling federal transportation funding – with declining (but unspecified) outlays over the following five years. Details will be in next year's budget.

It's not clear how much money the NIB would get as seed capital, but the idea is that the independent entity would choose projects of major significance on a non-political basis, then leverage public money to attract private investment.

Galston, a top domestic policy adviser in Bill Clinton's White House, says win No. 1 is that the bank “would mobilize large amounts of private capital that is currently sitting on the sidelines.”

It's estimated that as much as \$3 trillion is being held in cash or Treasury bills by banks, corporations and institutional investors, and is not being put to work. Republicans and Democrats fight over why – “uncertainty” about taxes and regulation versus lack of demand for goods – but properly structured user-fee infrastructure programs clearly could give investors better returns than 0.25 percent for T-bills.

Win No. 2, Galston says, is that a large-scale infrastructure program would “create good jobs that can't possibly be outsourced,” especially in the construction industry, where the unemployment rate is 15 percent.

Estimates are that the economy needs to create 200,000 new jobs a month for five years to get the unemployment rate down from 9.6 percent to 5 percent, but job creation has averaged less than 12,000 a month over the past year.

The White House calculates \$1 billion in infrastructure spending would create 10,000 jobs. The Federal Highway Administration says \$1 billion in federal outlays, plus a 20 percent state match, creates nearly 35,000 jobs.

Win No. 3, Galston says, is that “this is a way to deal with an infrastructure problem that is truly massive – trillions of dollars in deferred maintenance, which we are paying for in lost efficiency and, sometimes, reduced safety. This is work that needs to be done.”

A bipartisan panel of transportation



Rick Bowmer/AP

Columnist Morton Kondracke writes that President Obama's proposal to develop a National Infrastructure Bank is too late to be worthwhile.



Morton Kondracke

Roll Call executive editor

experts assembled by the Miller Center of Public Affairs at the University of Virginia and headed by former Transportation secretaries Norman Mineta and Sam Skinner just reported that the nation needs to spend \$134 billion to \$262 billion a year for 25 years to make its roads, rail systems and air transport world class.

As one example of America's falling behind, a White House economic analysis this week noted that China has already built a rail line that covers 600 miles in three hours – the time it takes Amtrak's “high-speed” Acela to cover 200 miles from Washington, D.C., to New York.

According to a Texas study, Americans in 439 urban areas spent some 4.2 billion hours sitting in congested traffic in 2007, the equivalent of a full workweek for the average commuter – and wasted about \$87 billion in fuel.

According to the Mineta-Skinner report, the U.S. spends just 0.6 percent of gross domestic product on transportation infrastructure versus 1.85 percent spent by Western Europe.

As Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., pointed out in recent testimony, Europe's infrastructure bank spent \$350 billion from 2005 to 2009 modernizing seaports, expanding airports, building rail lines and reconfiguring city centers.

Actually, as Galston notes, there's a win No. 4 to be had in creating a NIB:

Governments – federal, state and local – can't afford huge building programs. Private capital, which now represents a small fraction of infrastructure investment, needs to be deployed, and the bank is the way to do it.

But for all these potential wins, Galston thinks – and so do I – that Obama is a year or 18 months too late, possibly diverted by his eagerness to pass health care reform.

It now smacks of more “stimulus spending,” even though transportation projects accounted for only 7 percent of Obama's \$787 billion stimulus package.

All infrastructure, including broadband deployment and smarter electric grids, accounted for less than a third.

The infrastructure bank – if it's truly independent and replaces current Congressional formulas and earmarks for transportation projects – has support from Republican-leaning groups such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers.

But even some pro-infrastructure Republicans, such as former Congressional Budget Office Director Douglas Holtz-Eakin, say federal programs need to be reformed and the budget deficit dealt with before there are major new outlays.

Congressional Republicans, in their “Pledge to America,” contend that jobs can be created by keeping taxes low, cutting spending and eliminating regulation. There is no mention of public investment.

And then we have the tea party, which thinks “public” means “socialist.”

Obama could have – should have – based his economic recovery strategy on making U.S. infrastructure world class. Alas, he didn't.

Letters to the editor | Voices of the community

Many have zoning concerns

Although only a part-time resident of St. Simons Island, I nonetheless take an interest in its natural beauty, spectacular marshes and trees, and was therefore present at the Island Planning Commission meeting on Tuesday.

It was with great disappointment that I read Nevin Batiwalla's article on the meeting. He did not begin to accurately portray the overwhelming public outcry about this project.

Neither the Glynn County staff nor the developer addressed citizens' many valid concerns: Major drainage and flooding issues, traffic, health issues related to diesel fumes, loss of the valued tree corridor, damage to historic Harrington neighborhood. The list goes on and on.

And with reams of available large tract commercially-zoned property at the north end of the island, no one should be looking at Harrington; and in so doing, IPC Chairman, Mr. Kirkendall, made it appear that he never traveled to other parts of the island he is supposed to plan for.

**Roy Moakler
Greenwich, Conn.**

Interstate construction longer than three years

Regarding the article in Monday's paper entitled “I-95 construction nears end,” I believe a correction is in order. Construction has been ongoing on the Georgia stretch of the I-95 widening project for about 15 years, not three.

As a matter of fact, I remember seeing an article about five years ago about the widening of portions of Ga. 400 north of

Atlanta. To the best of my recollection, someone commented that they were tired of road-widening projects in the Atlanta area taking two or three years to complete and hoped the widening of Ga. 400 would be finished more much more quickly.

I recall thinking to myself, “Wow, you need to come down here and experience a highway construction project that has been under way for a decade and still has major uncompleted stretches. Then you will have some appreciation for projects that are completed in two or three years.”

I remember stretches of time where significant work was done on a section of I-95 in McIntosh and Bryan Counties and then no discernible progress was made for about one-and-one-half years. The state obviously routed the available funds elsewhere.

In the meantime, driving the gauntlet of roadside barrels and temporary and partially constructed access ramps was extremely hazardous in many places.

It generally works like this – Atlanta gets the lion's share of priority and funding on infrastructure projects and the rest of the state gets the leftovers, if any.

**Gary Wainright
St. Simons Island**

Groups do a lot to help people with Alzheimer's

I would like to commend the Georgia Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association for the informative presentation they sponsored at the Camden Campus of the Southeast Georgia Health System on

Tuesday for caregivers of people with Alzheimer's and related dementia.

Jenny House, Programs Director, did a fine job sharing information on the nature of dementia and how to keep our loved ones safe.

She explained steps to take if we find ourselves in the traumatic situation of having a loved one wander away from home.

The Alzheimer's Association also provided free member enrollment in MedicAlert for persons with Alzheimer's or a related dementia.

Caregivers were also given the opportunity to enroll in this important program free of charge.

Captain Michael Christoforo, support services commander for Camden County Sheriff's Office, spoke about Project Lifesaver.

This is another program specific to the safe and timely return of individuals with Alzheimer's disease and related dementia who wander and become lost.

I would also like to comment on the recent renovations to the Camden Campus. I work at the Health System's Brunswick Campus, and as I was walking in the facility, several meeting attendees commented on how wonderful the hospital looked. It made me very proud to be a team member.

As the primary caregiver for a person with dementia, I appreciate the coordinated effort made by the Alzheimer's Association, Camden County Sheriff's Office, and the Health System to provide a meeting place and vital information to the public on this devastating disease.

**Janet Douglas
Brunswick**

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