



THE BRUNSWICK NEWS

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DAYBREAK
Your weekend in Brunswick and the Golden Isles

The Weather

Saturday
HIGH 68
LOW 42

Sunday
HIGH 65
LOW 45

Temperatures will be pleasantly normal

In case anyone has forgotten after a run of cold weather what normal winter temperatures are like in Brunswick and the Golden Isles, this weekend should be a pleasant reminder. In fact, daytime highs may even be a little better than normal. The only chance of rain – and only 20 percent – will be Sunday night. **Tides and five-day forecast, 16A**

Worth doing

Girl Scouts will put talents on display

They say America's got talent, well, Brunswick has talent, too. You can see it at 6 p.m. Saturday when the Marshes of Glynn Girl Scout Talent Show takes the stage at the Ritz Theatre, 1530 Newcastle St., Brunswick. Admission is \$3 per person.

Reappearance will be like magic

If the time disappeared before you could catch illusionist Jason Bishop Friday at the Brunswick campus of College of Coastal Georgia, you can still see his magic at 7 p.m. Saturday at the college's Camden County campus, in Kingsland. It's free, whether you are a student or not.

Talk about

Details of meeting national goals

Both Democrats and Republicans do it, talk about goals without a plan to get there. What are some of the blanks to fill in after the State of the Union address? **Reg Murphy, 6A**

Get involved

Plan to participate in blood drive

If you are planning your week ahead, plan to donate blood Tuesday at the American Red Cross blood drive. It will be from 1 to 6 p.m. at First United Methodist Church, 1400 Norwich St., Brunswick.

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WORST MAY BE OVER IN GLYNN ECONOMY

By SHANESSA FAKOUR
The Brunswick News

If the Glynn County economy has not yet hit rock bottom, it is almost there and will turn quickly upward, predicts Don Mathews, economics professor at College of Coastal Georgia.

of about 280 executives and civic leaders at the Coastal Georgia Economic Outlook luncheon at the Morgan Center on Jekyll Island. Mathews joined Robert Sumichrast, dean of the Terry College of Business at the University of Georgia, in predicting what the local, state and national economy will look like by the end of this year.

causing the unemployment rate to rise, Mathews said.

"2010 was a very bad year for the local economy," he said. "While the national economy began a recovery in June 2009, Georgia began (recovering) a few months after that. It's not clear if the recovery has

Mathews spoke Friday to an audience The local labor markets softened in 2010, Please see ECONOMY, 4A

BEHIND THE NUMBERS

How long unemployment is hitting people at home



At Star Foundation, a job-training center in Brunswick, unemployed workers Cathy Moody Berrian, left, and Cashonna Johnson, center, practice computer skills they are developing with Katie Orrel, right, Star Foundation program director.

By JOE GAINES
The Brunswick News

Ask them and they'll tell you: I'm willing to work; just give me a chance.

Cathy Moody Berrian, 53, of Brunswick, is one of the long-term unemployed. After more than 25 years as a nurse, she filed for unemployment benefits for the first time in December 2009, after a car accident. She was unable to move as fast or lift as much, and she was fired from her job as a private nurse.

"I was limping a little, I admit," Berrian said. She recovered from her injuries months ago, but she still can't find a job, despite completing dozens of online applications, reaching out through friends, family and strangers for job leads and recently beginning training to improve her computer skills.

"I just want a job," she said. Berrian is one of thousands of people in Georgia who have been looking for a job for more than six months, the initial period for state unemployment insurance before Congress extended benefits to as long as 99 weeks.

In Georgia, more than half — 54.1 percent — of

I've worked all my life. It feels like my independence has been taken away.

— Cashonna Johnson, out of work since April 2009

the roughly half million unemployed persons receiving benefits have been jobless for more than six months. Every month since October 2010, about 11,000 people join Berrian in the ranks of the long-term unemployed, and more than 40,000 statewide have exhausted their 99 weeks of benefits, according to state Department of Labor.

Possibly nearing the end of her benefits is Cashonna Johnson, 30, of Brunswick. Johnson, who has an 8-year-old daughter, had worked in production at King & Prince Seafood for about nine years when she was laid off in April 2009 because there was not enough work for her, she said.

Her husband's paycheck, along with her weekly unemployment check, which is less than \$300 a week, carries the family along, she said. The maximum available per week under unemployment is \$330; however, the state average is about \$257 a week.

"When I had a job, if I wanted shoes I would get them," Johnson said. "Now, we only buy what we need."

After losing her job, Johnson finished classes at

Please see JOBLESS, 5A



The house at 1137 Ocean Blvd., St. Simons Island, where a confrontation began Sept. 10, 2009.

Shooting probe in limbo

Internal review off radar in 2009
St. Simons standoff

By LOUIE BROGDON
The Brunswick News

Glynn County officials say they are unsure what became of a county investigation of a police shooting that left a St. Simons Island man dead following a standoff with police almost 17 months ago.

Then-county administrator Charley Stewart, now retired, said he was conducting an internal investigation into a confrontation between code enforcement personnel and Martin "Marty" Reagin that sparked a fatal standoff for Reagin with police.

Reagin was shot and killed by Glynn County police during an armed standoff Sept. 10, 2009. His brother and former wife, who is representing their minor daughter, filed suit Monday in U.S. District Court at Brunswick against the county, claiming that police used excessive force against an intoxicated and mentally unstable Reagin after he had threatened to kill police.

Reagin was armed with a high-powered rifle and had allegedly threatened to shoot police. He was shot outside his residence, after being stunned by a Taser when an officer thought he was armed and positioning himself to fire a weapon. The Glynn County administration said it started an internal investigation shortly after the incident into actions of the unarmed code enforcement officers, who have no arrest power, who were the first officials at the house.

Police actions were investigated in 2010 by the police department, the district attorney's office and separately by the Glynn County Grand Jury. All concluded that there was no police misconduct.

But Glynn County officials say they don't know what the code enforcement investigation found or if it found anything — or even if it was ever completed.

Stewart initiated the investigation, despite recommendations by several commissioners that it be conducted by someone outside county government.

Reagin first confronted code enforcement officers outside his residence at 1137 Ocean Blvd., St. Simons Island, when the code enforcement officers attempted to remove an allegedly illegal sign from his yard. The sign advertised the sale of Reagin's house through his

Please see PROBE, 5A

Temperatures promising warmer days ahead



Nick Nichols/The Brunswick News
With temperatures around 60 degrees Friday, Essence Williams, 11, swings at McIntyre Court Park.

By LINDSEY ADKISON
The Brunswick News

Groundhog Day is still four days away, but temperature-wise it may feel like Gen. Beauregard Lee has already given spring the go-ahead.

The thermometer in the Golden Isles will move to the mid- to upper-60s this weekend and through early next week, the National Weather Service says.

Andrew Sashy, meteorologist with the weather service in Jacksonville, says the warm-up will be a clear departure from the lower mercury levels the past few weeks.

"We are expecting to see some warm-up conditions for the Brunswick

area over the next few days," he said.

The weather service projects temperatures for the coming week to be in the upper-60s, around 67 to 68 degrees, with overnight lows in the mid-40s. That's a change from the previous weeks' temperatures that climbed no higher than the low 50s.

"The average high temperature in Brunswick this time of year is 65 degrees. But in contrast to what we've had over the last four weeks, it's going to be nice," he said.

Outdoors will be, overall, more pleasant, the weather service says.

"Saturday, it will be sunny, and Sunday we'll see some clouds pushing through, but it will only partly

cloudy," Sashy says.

The trend will continue through the beginning of next week.

"Through Monday and Tuesday the highs will be in the mid-60s, about 64, then going into next week we will continue to see high temperatures near normal, 65 degrees, or a little above normal," Sashy said.

Of course, there are no guarantees that the warm-up will last too long. Sashy says overnight freezes, as well as chilly daytime temperatures, usually run into mid-February.

"On average, the last freeze is around Feb. 18. But we won't see any sort of overnight freezes this weekend."

• **Five-day forecast, 16A**

Jobless: Families have to cut back

Continued from 1A

Altamaha Technical College to be a patient care assistant, and she's waiting until she has \$107 to take the state exam. When she passes the test and is certified, she hopes to land a job at a nursing home or in home care.

In the meantime, like Berrian, she has filled out online applications and knocked on doors looking for a job. So far, the answer has always been no, if she gets a reply at all.

"I've worked all my life," she said. "It feels like my independence has been taken away."

Recent state unemployment numbers and economic forecasts paint a mixed picture for job-seekers.

- Georgia's unemployment rate in December was 10.2 percent, the 39th consecutive month the state has been above the national employment rate, which is currently 9.4 percent. The state rate is one-tenth of a percent lower than a year ago, but more than the 9.8 percent in October and 10 percent in November.

- The metro Brunswick's unemployment rate, which includes McIntosh and Brantley counties, remained unchanged — 10 percent — from November to December. In December 2009, the unemployment rate was 9.2 percent.

- The number of payroll jobs in the metro-Brunswick area dropped by 200 in December, to 41,000. That's 1,100 fewer jobs than there were in December 2009, when there were 42,100. The monthly job total has averaged 41,369 over the past 13 months.

- More people filed for unemployment benefits for the first time last month in Glynn County than in November. In December, there were 576 initial claims, compared to 479 in November, a rise of 20.3 percent. The state reported a rise of 11.7 percent for first-time claims, to 75,636. Numbers of first-time claims, however, were lower than a year ago. In December 2009, Glynn County had 803 initial claims, a drop of 28.3 percent, while the state had 100,896 claims, a drop of 25 percent.

- While economists at the University of Georgia predict that this year will mark the end of three straight months of job losses in the state, they forecast Brunswick's job growth will be more sluggish at 0.1 percent. That's a positive departure from the initial forecast which had the area losing more



Bobby Haven/The Brunswick News

Cathy Moody Berrian, who has been looking for a job for more than a year, keeps a collage she made on a wall at the Star Foundation, a job-training center, to for inspiration

jobs in 2011.

At the state unemployment office in Brunswick, the number of available jobs already appears to be on the increase, said manager Tamela Shirah.

"It's just not enough as there is demand," Shirah said.

Jobs range from a cook to a bank vice president. To help the jobless secure employment, the state's Brunswick Career Center offers resume and interviewing workshops and other initiatives.

Berrian took advantage of one of the programs, Georgia Works. The program allows the unemployed to learn skills and train at a business for eight weeks. The state picks up the paycheck, with the hope that the jobless person will learn new skills and businesses will choose to hire the person at the end of the training.

Berrian said she was able to learn some computer skills at the Brunswick Multipurpose Center, although the nonprofit's tight budget prevented her from being hired afterward.

She found herself back on her own, caring for two grandchildren. She says her family, especially her mother, sister and nieces, help.

"They are a big helping hand," she said.

Berrian and Johnson are both in a class at the Star Foundation, an organization that helps low-income persons with job skills and training. As the economy slowly recovers, the nonprofit's waiting list for its quarterly classes is growing and has seen a shift in who's applying.

"We're seeing more older women now," said Ellen Murphy, Star Foundation director.

The organization had been mostly trying to impress upon a younger clientele the importance of appearance and arriving on time, but a growing number of older clients who already have those habits are seeking computer skills to gain an advantage with potential employers, Murphy said.

The number of people graduating from the foundation's classes and who are without jobs is growing, too. Murphy said the organization follows up with its graduates to see how they're progressing on their goals, whether it's education or finding a job.

"If they're having trouble, we try to get them back in here," Murphy said. Sometimes graduates need a skills refresher or pep talk, she said.

One of her graduates is Barbara Wooten, a one-time project manager at an appliance store who helped large and small clients with orders.

Being laid off in October 2009 as the real estate market dwindled and after more than 25 years with the company was just one of a string of bad events for her.

One of her sons had died in an accident a year before, and in January 2010 her sister was diagnosed with cancer. Her sister died a few months later. Along with their 16-year-old son, Wooten and her husband are caring for their 16-year-old nephew.

Also, Wooten's husband joined the ranks of the unemployed after he was unable to find work in his field of installing industrial turbine engines.

The Wootens, who live near Sterling on nearly 5 acres, saw their income drop to less than

\$30,000 a year on unemployment, less than half what Wooten made at the appliance store.

"We cut everywhere," she said. There was no more eating out or going to the movies. Groceries and utility bills are supplemented by family members and assistance. At Christmas, the gifts were utilitarian — clothes.

In the past two weeks, Wooten said she's probably filled out 50 job applications.

"And for every 10, I probably get one response," she said.

The response is either an acknowledgement that her application has been received, a notice that the job has been filed or that she doesn't qualify.

Like Berrian, Wooten, who is 54, worries if her age is hindering her search. The women worry that potential employers might see them as overqualified or too expensive because of their experience or because of health insurance costs.

Wooten did find some luck recently. She was able to use the skills she gained at the Star Foundation to be hired as a production assistant at \$100 a day during filming of the "X-Men" movie on Jekyll Island. As she watched half-million-dollar sets go up for a few seconds for a scene in the film and then be discarded, she was thinking how to stretch her paycheck to keep the lights on.

"The producer I worked for did let me bring my laptop and let me look for jobs while I was there," she said.

While she worked, her unemployment checks stopped. She is now working to get them restored because she is jobless again, though hopefully not for long.

Wooten is banking her hopes on becoming a life and health insurance agent, a job that will cost her about \$300 for training and a license in the beginning.

"I have to (do it)," she said. "I've got kids, grandkids," she said.

Even though they have been without permanent work for a long time and have few signs of prospects, Wooten, Berrian and Johnson remain positive that a job will develop.

Eventually, they believe, an employer will look beyond a resume or boxes on an application form and see them for the hard workers they say they are.

"I'm just asking for the chance," Berrian said.

• National economy growing, but not fast enough to reduce unemployment, 15A

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Public Announcement:

The St. Simons Boating and Fishing Club, Inc. will be closed for repairs from Tuesday, February 1 through Monday, February 14, 2011. The Marina will reopen Tuesday, February 15, 2011. The Board wishes to thank you in advance for your understanding.

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Reservations are required and space is limited.

Chef Eric will also be offering a
Special Valentine's
Dinner Saturday, Feb. 12 and Sunday Brunch Feb. 13.

Probe: Commissioners don't recall report

Continued from 1A

online auction business.

After a heated argument between Reagin and code enforcement officer Mickey Milton, Milton called police to assist in removing of the sign. Milton told dispatch officers, "This guy here, we're fixing to have to whip his a--," when he called for back up.

Glynn County Commission Chairman Tom Sublett, who was on the commission when the Reagin shooting occurred, was in favor of the investigation. But this



Reagin

Charley Stewart) was handling, and honestly I don't recall what happened with it," he said.

Commissioners Bob Coleman and Amy Callaway, also on the

week, he said he was not sure what, if any, conclusions were drawn from it or actions taken.

"That was something

(former County Administrator

Commissioner Candice Temple confirmed that Milton was still employed by the county. She said, however, that County Attorney Aaron Mumford advised against commenting fur-

ther because of the suit.

The News requested the results of the investigation by the county administration Thursday, under provisions of the state's open records law. Assistant County Attorney Will Worley said Thursday he was researching the information, but could not confirm whether the code enforcement investigation was ever completed.

Under state law, the county is given three business days to respond to an open records request, and had not released the report as of Friday.

Sedative used to free entangled right whale

By RAY HENRY
The Associated Press

ATLANTA — Researchers have a new tactic to save endangered whales tangled in fishing line: Get them to calm down with sedatives shot from a dart gun so they can pull closer and cut the potentially fatal gear away.

The method was used Jan. 15 off the Florida coast to free a young North Atlantic right whale from about 50 feet of line wrapped through its mouth and around its flippers. A satellite monitor attached to the whale during the rescue attempt this month shows it survived.

"It's a big step for us," said Mi-

chael Moore, a senior research specialist at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in Massachusetts who was on the rescue team. The same team has tried the technique during one other rescue of a free-swimming whale.

Wildlife authorities for years have tried different ways to save whales tangled in gear that cuts

their flesh, restricts feeding and causes infection and starvation.

It's a major threat to the 300 to 400 critically endangered North Atlantic right whales that remain. They generally migrate seasonally from the Lower Bay of Fundy in Canada during the summer to calving grounds off the Florida coast in the fall and winter.

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Love offering will be collected during the service
Dinner will be served afterward