

PUTNAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

1



117 Putnam Drive, Suite A ♦ Eatonton, GA 31024

Called Meeting

Agenda

Friday, September 26, 2025 ♦ 10:00 AM

Putnam County Administration Building – Room 203

Opening

1. Call to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance (RG)

Called Meeting

- [3.](#) Ratification of the Board of Education Mill Rate and Authorization for Chairman to sign Tax Levy Resolution (staff-CM & Finance)
- [4.](#) Authorization for Chairman to sign Resolution setting 2025 Mill Rate for Incorporated and Unincorporated County Maintenance and Operation (staff-CM & Finance)
- [5.](#) Authorization for Chairman to sign Resolution setting 2025 Mill Rate for Special Service District (staff-CM & Finance)

Closing

6. Adjournment

The Board of Commissioners reserves the right to continue the meeting to another time and place in the event the number of people in attendance at the meeting, including the Board of Commissioners, staff, and members of the public exceeds the legal limits. The meeting cannot be closed to the public except by a majority vote of a quorum present for the meeting. The board can vote to go into an executive session on a legally exempt matter during a public meeting even if not advertised or listed on the agenda. Individuals with disabilities who require certain accommodations in order to allow them to observe and/or participate in this meeting, or who have questions regarding the accessibility of the meeting or the facilities are required to contact the ADA Compliance Officer, at least three business days in advance of the meeting at 706-485-2776 to allow the County to make reasonable accommodations for those persons.

File Attachments for Item:

3. Ratification of the Board of Education Mill Rate and Authorization for Chairman to sign Tax Levy Resolution (staff-CM & Finance)

2025 Tax Levy- Putnam County Board of Education

WHEREAS, the Putnam County Board of Commissioners sitting for the County purposes has this day met to hear and fix the tax rates for **Putnam County Board of Education**, its maintenance and operation and its bond retirements and

WHEREAS, the governing authority of Putnam County, Georgia has no jurisdiction over the setting of tax levies for Putnam County Board of Education and cannot alter or reset the requested amounts and

WHEREAS, the Putnam County Board of Education in a letter dated August 19, 2025 has requested the 2025 tax levy and

WHEREAS, the tax digest of said County shows taxable property for the year 2025 in the total amount of \$2,466,825,805 for maintenance and operation,

THEREFORE, it is ordered and adjudged that 11.983 mills on each thousand dollars

worth of property in both the incorporated and unincorporated areas be and same is hereby levied on the total amount of property, producing a net tax levy of 11.983 mills returned for taxation by the payers of Putnam County for the year 2025, said mills to produce a total revenue of \$29,559,975 for the maintenance and operation for Putnam County Board of Education.

The Tax Commissioner of Putnam County, Georgia, is hereby ordered to levy and collect the above tax rates on the taxable property designated for the year 2025 and for the purpose heretofore set forth, with due date of no later than December 20, 2025.

Witness our hands and official seal this 26th day of September 2025.

PUTNAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Bill Sharp, Chairman

ATTEST:

Lynn Butterworth
Putnam County Clerk



PUTNAM
COUNTY CHARTER SCHOOL SYSTEM

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September 2, 2025

MEMORANDUM

TO: Linda Cook
Putnam County Commissioner Office

Terrell Abernathy
Putnam County Tax Commissioner

FROM: Coretta Harris
PCBOE Finance Director

RE: 2025 Millage Rate & Advertisement

Please find enclosed the following:

- Notice of Tax Levy
- Form PT 32.1 Millage Rate Rollback
- Current 2025 Tax Digest and 5 Year History of Levy
- July 24, 2025 Advertisement of Current Tax Digest and Five Year History Tax Increase & Budget
- July 31, 2024 Advertisement of Current Tax Digest and Five Year History, Tax Increase, & Budget
- August 7, 2025 Advertisement of current Tax Digest and five Year History, Tax Increase, & Budget
- Affidavit of Publisher
- Screen Print of District Website posting

Please let me know if you need anything else.



PUTNAM
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September 16, 2025

To Putnam County Board of Commissioners:

Based on the Net Tax Digest Figures supplied by Mr. Terrell Abernathy, Putnam County Tax Commissioner, of \$2,466,825,805 for Maintenance and Operation of Schools, the Putnam County Board of Education approved at the August 18, 2025 board meeting a levy in taxes of 11.983 mills for M & O, exclusive of any collection fees, calculated as follows.

Maintenance and Operations of Schools

\$29,559,974 (11.983 mills)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dr. Austin'.

Derick Austin
Superintendent

PT-32.1 - Computation of MILLAGE RATE ROLLBACK AND PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN PROPERTY TAXES - 2025				
COUNTY: Putnam		TAXING JURISDICTION: School		
ENTER VALUES AND MILLAGE RATES FOR THE APPLICABLE TAX YEARS IN YELLOW HIGHLIGHTED BOXES BELOW				
DESCRIPTION	2024 DIGEST	REASSESSMENT OF EXISTING REAL PROP	OTHER CHANGES TO TAXABLE DIGEST	2025 DIGEST
REAL	2,761,662,765	164,983,514	99,687,468	3,026,333,747
PERSONAL	145,903,917		23,443,347	169,347,264
MOTOR VEHICLES	11,647,520		71,750	11,719,270
MOBILE HOMES	15,390,661		1,325,935	16,716,596
TIMBER - 100%	3,030,356		1,853,732	4,884,088
HEAVY DUTY EQUIP	644,221		(303,861)	340,360
GROSS DIGEST	2,938,279,440	164,983,514	126,078,371	3,229,341,325
EXEMPTIONS	600,835,632	123,129,266	38,550,622	762,515,520
NET DIGEST	2,337,443,808	41,854,248	87,527,749	2,466,825,805
	(PYD)	(RVA)	(NAG)	(CYD)
2024 MILLAGE RATE: 10.724		2025 MILLAGE RATE: 11.983		
CALCULATION OF ROLLBACK RATE				
DESCRIPTION	ABBREVIATION	AMOUNT	FORMULA	
2024 Net Digest	PYD	2,337,443,808		
Net Value Added-Reassessment of Existing Real Property	RVA	41,854,248		
Other Net Changes to Taxable Digest	NAG	87,527,749		
2025 Net Digest	CYD	2,466,825,805	(PYD+RVA+NAG)	
2024 Millage Rate	PYM	10.724	PYM	
Millage Equivalent of Reassessed Value Added	ME	0.182	(RVA/CYD) * PYM	
Rollback Millage Rate for 2025	RR - ROLLBACK RATE		10.542	PYM - ME
CALCULATION OF PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN PROPERTY TAXES				
If the 2025 Proposed Millage Rate for this Taxing Jurisdiction exceeds Rollback Millage Rate computed above, this section will automatically calculate the amount of increase in property taxes that is part of the notice required in O.C.G.A. § 48-5-32.1(c) (2)		Rollback Millage Rate	10.542	
		2025 Millage Rate	11.983	
		Percentage Tax Increase		13.67%
CERTIFICATIONS				
I hereby certify that the amount indicated above is an accurate accounting of the total net assessed value added by the reassessment of existing real property for the tax year for which this rollback millage rate is being computed.				
----- Chairman, Board of Tax Assessors		----- Date		
I hereby certify that the values shown above are an accurate representation of the digest values and exemption amounts for the applicable tax years.				
----- Tax Collector or Tax Commissioner		----- Date		
I hereby certify that the above is a true and correct computation of the rollback millage rate in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 48-5-32.1 for the taxing jurisdiction for tax year 2025 and that the final millage rate set by the authority of this taxing jurisdiction for tax year 2025 is _____				
CHECK THE APPROPRIATE PARAGRAPH BELOW THAT APPLIES TO THIS TAXING JURISDICTION				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	If the final millage rate set by the authority of the taxing jurisdiction for tax year 2025 exceeds the rollback rate, I certify that the required advertisements, notices, and public hearings have been conducted in accordance with O.C.G.A. §§ 48-5-32 and 48-5-32.1 as evidenced by the attached copies of the published "five year history and current digest" advertisement and the "Notice of Intent to Increase Taxes" showing the times and places when and where the required public hearings were held, and a copy of the press release provided to the local media.			
<input type="checkbox"/>	If the final millage rate set by the authority of the taxing jurisdiction for tax year 2025 does not exceed the rollback rate, I certify that the required "five year history and current digest" advertisement has been published in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 48-5-32 as evidenced by the attached copy of such advertised report.			
----- Responsible Party		----- Superintendent Title		----- 9/18/25 Date

NOTICE

The Putnam County Board of Education does hereby announce that the millage rate will be set at a meeting to be held at the Putnam County Board of Education, 158 Old Glenwood Springs Road, Eatonton, GA on Monday, August 18, 2025 at 6:00 P.M. and pursuant to the requirements of O.C.G.A. § 48-5-32 does hereby publish the following presentation of the current year's tax digest and levy, along with the history of the tax digest and levy for the past five years.

CURRENT 2025 PROPERTY TAX DIGEST AND 5 YEAR HISTORY OF LEVY

BOARD OF EDUCATION		2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
V A L U E	Real & Personal	1,565,119,837	1,684,086,673	2,118,094,369	2,650,730,844	2,907,566,682	3,195,681,011
	Motor Vehicles	16,408,500	12,162,530	11,332,490	11,561,230	11,647,520	11,719,270
	Mobile Homes	5,807,932	6,094,521	7,921,026	13,949,878	15,390,661	16,716,596
	Timber - 100%	4,038,573	3,211,267	4,254,512	3,124,287	3,030,356	4,884,088
	Heavy Duty Equipment	488,484	400,564	397,715	680,512	644,221	340,360
	Gross Digest	1,591,863,326	1,705,955,555	2,142,000,112	2,680,046,751	2,938,279,440	3,229,341,325
	Less Exemptions						
		206,853,656	227,324,103	368,890,854	538,486,047	600,835,632	762,515,520
	NET DIGEST VALUE	1,385,009,670	1,478,631,452	1,773,109,258	2,141,560,704	2,337,443,808	2,466,825,805
R A T E	MILLAGE RATE (Maintenance & Operation)						
		15.772	14.900	12.900	11.250	10.724	11.983
TAX	TOTAL M&O TAXES LEVIED	\$21,844,373	\$22,031,609	\$22,873,109	\$24,092,558	\$25,066,747	\$29,559,974
	Net Tax \$ Increase		\$187,236	\$841,501	\$1,219,448	\$974,189	\$4,493,226
	Net Tax % Increase		0.86%	3.82%	5.33%	4.04%	17.93%

NOTICE OF PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

The Putnam County Board of Education has tentatively adopted a millage rate which will require an increase in property taxes by 20.03 percent.

All concerned citizens are invited to the public hearing on this tax increase to be held at the Putnam County Board of Education Office, 158 Old Glenwood Springs Road, Eatonton, Georgia on August 11, 2025 at 12:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

Times and places of additional public hearings on this tax increase are at Putnam County Board of Education Office, 158 Old Glenwood Springs Road, Eatonton, Georgia on August 18, 2025 at 5 p.m.

This tentative increase will result in a millage rate of 11.983 mills, an increase of 2.000 mills. Without this tentative tax increase, the millage rate will be no more than 9.983 mills. The proposed tax increase for a home with a fair market value of \$200,000 is approximately \$140.00 and the proposed tax increase for non-homestead property with a fair market value of \$150,000 is approximately \$120.00.

ELLIS

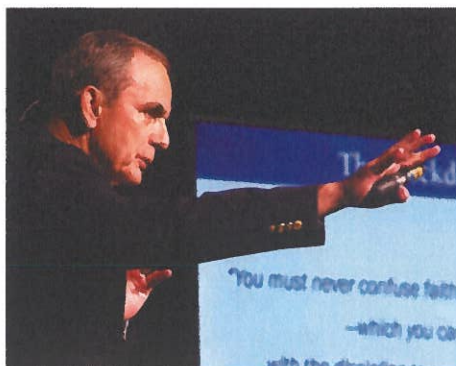
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however, translating them into real life lessons for approximately 130 rapt audience members, most of whom no doubt held their own first-hand memories of the Vietnam War—era, whether stationed overseas or sitting at home watching nightly coverage of the world's first televised military conflict.

Ellis grew up in Commerce and said he knew the first time he sat in an airplane at age 5 that he wanted to become a pilot. He achieved his goal upon graduating from UGA in 1965 and joining the U.S. Air Force. During a slide presentation accompanying his talk, Ellis showed a late-1950s photo of him plowing a field behind a horse alongside an image of a squadron of USAF F-4 Phantom II fighters.

It all came crashing down, quite literally, however, in November 1967 when Ellis, serving with the 366th Tactical Fighter Wing, was forced to eject over North Vietnam while flying his 68th combat mission. Ellis was careful to emphasize, too, that he was not shot down but instead was the victim of a faulty bomb fuse that triggered a bomb less than two seconds after he'd released it.

"The cockpit was tumbling end over end ... so me and my partner in the airplane, both pilots, we jumped out, ejected, ... just doing what I was



Part history teacher and part motivational life coach, U.S. Air Force Col. (ret.) Lee Ellis kept his audience enthralled with remarkable tales of courage, perseverance, and hope surrounding his more than five years in a Vietnamese POW facility.

trained to do ... so I landed my parachute landing ... wasn't too badly injured, just some cuts and bruises on my body," he recalled.

"There was a bomb crater about three feet deep and I jumped in it," Ellis continued. "Well, I was captured within two minutes, and they stripped me down, gave me my flight suit back, didn't give me any shoes, and tied my hands behind my back and put a blindfold on me and put a rope around my neck like the lead of a dog. And then they started dragging me around."

After spending 1,955 days as a prisoner of war (POW), Ellis was finally freed in March 1973, just one month shy of the Vietnam War being

declared officially over.

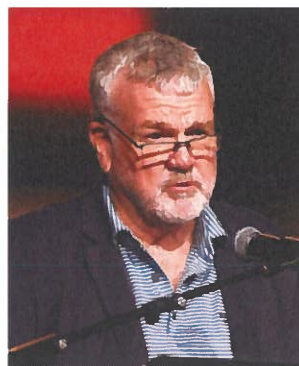
During his five-and-a-half-years stay at the ironically nicknamed "Hanoi Hilton," Ellis said he and his fellow U.S. servicemen captives developed several methods to cope and remain alive despite repeated rounds of neglect, starvation, and explicit torture.

"We were willing to sacrifice and to take torture to keep our ethics and to live up to the code of conduct and not give the enemy any information and not make them any propaganda," Ellis explained in his presentation. "That was a very important message and lesson for us, and we really grew more every day. That's what happened in the POW camp. Ellis described his cell,

shared with three other POWs, as being about six-and-a-half feet by seven feet in size with no bathroom facilities other than a plastic bucket in the corner.

"When you're in a cell like that with four guys for eight months, 24 hours a day, except when you're taken out and being interrogated or tortured, you get to know 'em pretty well," Ellis said. To help cope, he and his fellow POWs also created a system of hand signals to converse silently and covertly among themselves. It was a lesson in cooperation that remains with him to this day.

"We had shortcuts and abbreviations a long time before the internet came along," Ellis said. "You've got to develop your people,



BankSouth President and CEO Harold Reynolds introduced retired U.S. Air Force Col. Lee Ellis to the Lake Oconee Church crowd.

you've got to believe in them, and you've got to develop yourself."

Ellis lived what he preached. Even while imprisoned, he recited poems remembered from his days as an English major at UGA. He said he also memorized in alphabetical order the names of more than 150 other POWs. He also learned Spanish and German from fellow U.S. POWs.

"I don't care who you are or how old you are: you've got to keep learning and growing," he told his Greensboro audience. Ellis hosted a brief Q&A session following his talk, providing a unique opportunity for attendees to reflect and share personal stories of connection to the Vietnam War era. Several touching testimonies from the audience highlighted the emotional and historical impact of Ellis' message.

Following the program, a reception in the Lake

Oconee Church lobby offered guests a chance to speak directly with Ellis, have one or all three of his books signed (leadingwithhonor.com), and connect further with others in attendance. Many lingered in conversation, expressing their appreciation for the event's message.

"This was our first time doing an event like this at a completely new location and everyone made it appear as though we did this all the time," BankSouth Chief Administrative Officer Rebecca Matthews said. "I think the event was very impactful for the attendees. Any time you elicit an emotional response from the audience, you know you touched a chord."

"We are thankful for the BankSouth volunteers that helped make this happen and of course Lake Oconee Church for their hospitality in hosting the event," she added.



CONTRIBUTED

U.S. Air Force Col. Lee Ellis, shown here with an F-4 Phantom he flew in the mid-'60s, received the Silver Star, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Meritorious Service Medal, and Air Medal (several of them multiple times) for his service to his country.

STUDENTS

CONTINUED FROM >> A1

with asthma were twice as likely to miss school and cited an American Lung Association report that children with asthma missed 8.3 million school days nationwide.

Justin Hill, a deputy state school superintendent, said illness is a top driver of absenteeism but that weather, family emergencies and vacations also contribute. High school students who skip school often cite fatigue, he said.

Carol Lewis, president and CEO of the group Communities in Schools, a non-profit with the mission of keeping kids in school, said many high school students are tired because they are helping to care for siblings or holding down jobs to help pay family bills.

She said lack of mental health services is a barrier, noting that many chronically absent students lost family members during the pandemic. Basic

needs are a problem too, she added, such as clean clothes, feminine hygiene products, food, housing and internet service.

McGiboney recommended that the state enforce a law requiring the chief superior court judge in each county to form

a multi-agency student attendance committee. Those committees can be effective, but not all counties have one, he said.

Wade, Gov. Brian Kemp's House floor leader, said some schools don't have a nurse and asked if getting one into every

school would help. McGiboney responded that it would be one of the most important things the state could do.

The committee will meet two more times, with the next hearing scheduled for Sept. 22 at the Capitol.

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Ending a bad dye job



Bill Crane
One Man's Opinion

Colorful candies and cereals, cheese slices brighter than the color of any real cheese, mac 'n' cheese without any real dairy, these are the food staples of my childhood and adolescence.

And now, though still standing, I'm also battling a highly aggressive form of colon cancer. I am a capitalist and want companies large and small to make a profit. So, I'm not blaming the artificial food coloring dyes or preservatives; however, the data on both has been troubling for decades.

American food manufacturers began using food coloring and dyes in the early 1900s. The U.S. government first allowed food dyes for butter and cheese. Many of the earliest artificial colors and dyes were derived from coal tar, a toxic byproduct of burning coal to produce energy. Coal tar plants, which run power stations, were subsequently taken out of service or banned, due to a variety of negative environmental impacts and the food industry in large measure shifted to petroleum-based dyes.

Due to health concerns and numerous studies linking these dyes to cancer, the European Union and Canada banned the use of most petroleum-based artificial dyes during the 20-teens. Yellow #5, Red #40, and six other dyes — used to

enhance products from Froot Loops to Nutri-Grain cereal bars — are called the "rainbow of risk" by the Center for Science in the Public Interest.

They were banned in Norway, Finland, France, Austria, and the U.K. On June 25, 2013, Gatorade was not sold in most European countries due to the use of Yellow dyes #5 and #6. There are of course natural alternatives, yet "Big Food" will repeatedly cite consumers — especially children — "preferring" brighter colored food and products.

The most popular color additives are Red #40 (patent number), Yellow #5 and Yellow #6, making up almost 90 percent of all food dye used in the United States, according to Healthline. Artificial food dye consumption in the U.S. has increased by 500 percent over the past 50 years.

Perhaps if the packaging contained cancer

warnings like cigarettes, those preferences would quickly wane. Thanks to food colorings, Froot Loops cereal in the U.S. remains much brighter colored (and possibly tastier) — as well as has the real potential of being more deadly after long-term consumption.

There is plenty of precedent for prior banning of toxic dyes, including the earlier prohibition of use of Red #3, 12, 4 and 32, as well as Yellow #1, 2, 3 and 4, Violet #1, Orange #1 and 2, and my favorites (in terms of the name), Sudan #1 and Butter Yellow (banned in 1919).

Longtime plaintiff attorney and now Secretary of Health & Human Services Robert F. Kennedy Jr. announced plans earlier this spring to ban all petroleum-based dyes and artificial food colorings from the U.S. food supply. He has been winning multi-million judgments for similar concerns with Big Food for decades.

So, before those regulations are even in draft form, Heinz Ketchup Foods, and General Mills, two of the larger players in the industry globally, have announced their proactive phase-out and removal of these dyes from all of their product lines by 2027. Within two years, though Kraft Singles still won't actually be cheese and its Mac n' Cheese will no longer contain petroleum

byproducts, healthier options like turmeric will become coloring staples for them.

However, the cereal king, Kellogg's, and M&M's Mars, one of the world's largest candy and confection manufacturers are still clinging to the toxic dyes. M&M's says its candies won't look or preserve as well using natural organic products. Thank you for making it easier for me to leave behind my beloved M&M's Peanuts. And we can expect Froot Loops and Toucan Sam to continue sharing the same toxic rainbow for years to come.

I, of course, routinely comment here when I think the Trump Administration has mis-stepped. So, this is instead a call for applause and tip of the hat for protecting American health by holding Big Food accountable, particularly for products aimed at children. We recognize good deeds here as well as the bad.

So, start taking your readers with you when grocery shopping and read what's actually in the food you're buying. And feel safer knowing that soon there will only be actual organic tomato coloring inside Heinz Ketchup and other beloved brand staples. But also know that the phase out will take some time and is not yet universal. This is one bad dye job that really needs to go — completely.

Putnam Past

LAST YEAR, JULY 25, 2024

Public art will soon be popping up all over Eatonton as the new sculpture trail backed by The Artsans Village and the Eatonton-Putnam Chamber of Commerce is almost ready for installation. The first piece is already in place, as "Rival Readers" by Georgia artist Gregory Johnson, featuring a bronze sitting of a young boy and a girl reading a book while sitting on a stone bench was installed last week between Georgia Writers Museum and Sylvia's Coffee Shop on South Jefferson Avenue.

FIVE YEARS AGO, JULY 23, 2020

The Eatonton City Council at its July 7 meeting discussed requiring the wearing of masks throughout the city of Eatonton to prevent the spread of COVID-19. That was rejected because there was concern it would violate Gov. Brian Kemp's executive order restricting cities and counties from setting their own coronavirus policies. But the council did approve a ruling that required wearing masks inside City Hall for both employees and citizens, thinking that this would be allowed under the governor's mandate.

10 YEARS AGO, JULY 23, 2015

The Putnam County 12U All-Stars finished first place in the 2015 Dixie Youth "D" Zone Baseball Tournament July 17-19 at Riverside Park in Evans, capturing the state championship title.

25 YEARS AGO, JULY 27, 2000

An Eatonton native moved his political career a notch this month with a bid to become the first African-American Chief Executive Officer of Dekalb County. His bid in last week's Democratic primary was unsuccessful, but Porter Sanford III had already had a successful business career by the time he was elected six years ago to the Dekalb County Board of Commissioners, a body for whom he sat as presiding officer for two years and as chairman of its budget committee.

50 YEARS AGO, JULY 24, 1975

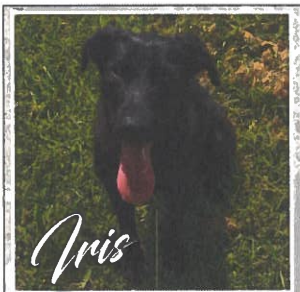
The City of Eatonton will receive a \$100,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, according to Mayor James P. Marshall. A grant application filed by the city was developed by local citizens groups, the mayor of Eatonton and city council, Charles Hudson, and the Okunee Area Planning and Development staff.

75 YEARS AGO, JULY 27, 1950

The king of the king-sized catfish was caught this week by Emory V. Manley and his daughter Jane, popular Eatonton High School student. The anglers pulled in a 29.5-lb. cat Monday morning on a limb-set hook. The hook, baited with cutfish, had been dangling from a small limb into water about six feet deep. Mr. Manley said.

100 YEARS AGO, JULY 24, 1925

At a recent meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Eatonton Public Schools, Professor Flowers, a well known educator from Tennessee, was elected superintendent of the Eatonton school to succeed Prof. Graham, who recently resigned to accept a more lucrative salary at Blakely.



Talk about a sweet pup... This is Iris, a REALLY sweet girl around a year old. She's absolutely dog friendly and wants to make friends with every human she meets! Iris is very neat and clean, and really wants to meet you!

Learn more about Rico and other great pets by calling us at 706-485-1970, or just stop by. We're in Eatonton next to the Putnam County Sheriff's Department.



FELLOWS

CONTINUED FROM >> A4

Brant IV's daddy, who I assume was Brant Frost III, but my daddy would have said a men's Timex Easy Reader will tell time just as well and costs only \$29.60.

Brant IV is now full of regret. "I take full responsibility for my actions and am resolved to spend the rest of my life trying to repay as much as I can to the many people I misled and let down. I will be cooperating with

the receiver and federal authorities." He should. What he did was not only shameful; it was stupid.

If I ever decide to give cheating a fling, it won't involve the federal government. The odds are heavily stacked in their favor. Sooner or later, they are going to catch you, as Mr. Frost found out. Did he ever think they wouldn't?

As for the "Christians" and "patriots" to whom First Liberty's efforts were targeted, they evidently were too trusting. Maybe gullible is

a better term. Or greedy.

"The promise of a high rate of return on an investment is a red flag that should make all potential investors think twice or maybe even three times before investing their money," said Justin C. Jeffries, associate director of enforcement in the SEC's Atlanta Regional Office.

Now comes news that just days after Brant IV's firm was shuttered, his son, Brant Frost V, filed paperwork with state regulators to create a new lending firm, Heartland Capital,

incorporating as a mortgage and non-mortgage loan broker. Give the kid points forchutzpah.

I don't know what life lessons, if any, Brant V learned from Brant IV, but what I learned from my dad is that right is right and wrong is wrong and there is no in-between. He would have no sympathy for anyone involved in the First Liberty Building and Loan fiasco. Neither do I. You can reach Dick Yarbrough at dick-yarbrough.com or at P.O. Box 72-5373, Atlanta, Ga. 31139.

WILLIS

CONTINUED FROM >> A1

Assistant District Attorney Allison Mauldin and Carter Harvell did because it was a very tedious process to get the outcome that we got."

Willis was arrested Oct. 21, 2022, on various racketeering and fraud charges stemming from a reported pattern of stealing from the local Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #6686 and from the Putnam County Veterans Wall of Honor Park. When he received a phone call from the sheriff, Willis turned himself in without incident. He was later released on property bonds.

In addition to being

a longtime insurance agent in Eatonton, Willis also was well-known as a veterans advocate and former commander of the VFW post as well as a co-founder of the veterans wall park. At the time of his arrest, he also was State Commander of the Department of Georgia Veterans of Foreign Wars.

In the spring before his arrest, leaders with the VFW filed formal complaints at the sheriff's office, which led to the investigation and subsequent arrest. The pending trial was delayed when Willis' defense attorney, William H. Smith III, filed requests for his client to undergo mental evaluations by the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental

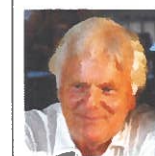
Disabilities to determine his competency to stand trial, and then a different evaluation to determine the degree of criminal responsibility and sanity at the time of the thefts. Court records also reveal several court dates had to be rescheduled due to conflicts in Smith's schedule.

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"Every body thinks something might have been going on with this, but it wasn't. It just took that long because of the evaluations," Sills said. As required by special conditions of his sentence

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Winston Churchill and Donald Trump

BY RANDALL HARMAN

Winston Churchill was Prime Minister from 1940 to 1945 and was heavily integral to the end of World War II. In his comparison to Trump, that he was extremely disliked as his country's leader and also as a leader. However, who is leader in difficult times. For those that have 21 problems with Trump... For those that hate the man but as an American, you should appreciate his accomplishments in 6 months:

- Set united borders
- Defeating Hitler
- The Lend Lease Act
- Led the playing field to the billions in U.S. investment
- RUPO New manufacturing jobs
- Rescued American hostages
- The Israeli state drive

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The Putnam County Board of Education announces its intention to increase the property taxes it will levy this year by 20.03 percent above the rollback millage rate.

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Public Record

Information found on the Putnam County Public Record page has been gathered by The Eatonton Messenger from various institutions and public offices. Reports gleaned from public records reflect the information as it appears on the documents provided. Subscribe online at www.msgnews.com.

PUTNAM COUNTY JAIL REPORT



Ralph Reid Howard
Austin Lee Dennis III
Rakya Trance Pope



Gary Lamar Denny
Taliyah Maiyah Justice
Lontavious Cantrell Nelson



Alejandro Fuentes
Kemmy Jennings
Courtney Britney Hill



Deborah Kim Dawson
John Devenish Chase



Sabrina Paulette Burke
Deontae Klean Burke

MONDAY, JULY 14

Ralph Reid Howard, 68, of Eatonton — probation violation (aggravated assault, aggravated battery)
Austin Lee Dennis III, 50, of Eatonton — livestock running at large

TUESDAY, JULY 15

Rakya Trance Pope, 20, of Milledgeville — bench warrant, failure to appear (simple battery, family violence, 2 counts, cruelty to children, third degree)
Gary Lamar Denny, 48, of Wichita, Kansas — financial transaction card fraud, identity theft, fraud when using/possessing identity info concerning a person (felony), possession of cocaine
Taliyah Maiyah Justice, 18, of Sparta — driving without a valid license (misdemeanor)

WEDNESDAY, JULY 16

Lontavious Cantrell Nelson, 35, of Eatonton — sentenced from court

THURSDAY, JULY 17

Alejandro Fuentes, 24, of Eatonton — driving without a valid license (misdemeanor)

FRIDAY, JULY 18

Kemmy Jennings, 47, of Eatonton — battery, family violence (first offense, misdemeanor)
Courtney Britney Hill, 36, of Milledgeville — criminal trespass (family violence)
Deborah Kim Dawson, 63, of Greensboro — driving under the influence of alcohol, open container in vehicle
John Devenish Chase, 45, Eatonton — driving under the influence of alcohol, failure to maintain lane

SUNDAY, JULY 20

Sabrina Paulette Burke, 43, of Covington — loitering; willful obstruction of law enforcement officers by use of threats or violence
Deontae Klean Burke, 20, of Covington — loitering; willful obstruction of law enforcement officers (misdemeanor)



Putnam County Property Transfers Through July 14

Sale	Price	Buyer	Seller	Property Address
5/20/25	\$297,500.00	Ferguson, Errol	Ferguson, Pat	122A028
5/30/25	\$410,990.00	PARKS, LORIE	EUCHEE CREEK LLC	201 SAGE CT
6/10/25	\$472,741.00	BROWN, SCOTT	EUCHEE CREEK LLC	220 SAGE CT
6/30/25	\$2,222,082.00	Charles Richard Hightower, Trustee of the Charles Richard Hightower Living Trust dated June 30 2025	Hightower, Charles	188 Bradford DR
6/30/25	\$2,222,082.00	Barbara Kaye Hightower, Trustee of the Barbara Kaye Hightower Living Trust dated June 30 2025	Hightower, Charles	188 Bradford DR
6/30/25	\$120,000.00	TRICE, BRYAN	TRICE, ALLISON	120 HARLALSON DR EATONTON
6/30/25	\$120,000.00	TRICE, BRYAN	TRICE, BENJAMIN	120 HARLALSON DR EATONTON
7/1/25	\$1,107,252.00	SDH Central Georgia, LLC	HDP Maudox Station LLC	106 002 (acreage)
7/1/25	\$540,000.00	Wallace Newby Jr. and Tracy Newby	James Larry Avea and Susan Walker Franklin a/k/a Susan Walker Avea	121 Bluegill RUN
7/2/25	\$100,000.00	White Oak Assets, LLC	Buyside Capital Advisors, LLC	109 Coleman DR Eatonton
7/3/25	\$866,858.00	Carnet, Marc	Carnet, Sandra	107 029
7/9/25	\$311,000.00	MCCARTHY, DESTINY	CAMPBELL, DONNA	126 002018
7/9/25	\$394,626.00	HEAD, CHARLES	RELIANT HOMES GA, LLC	107 HARMONY FARMS ORCH
7/9/25	\$230,000.00	Stegall, Jerald	Urban, Chandler	138 Forest Hill DR
7/9/25	\$997,000.00	PENDER, MATTHEW	192 Jackson, LLC, a Georgia limited liability company	192 JACKSON RD
7/9/25	\$438,500.00	Jewers, John	Reed, Cheryl	119 Reids RD
7/10/25	\$850,000.00	Nietlen, Christian	Lebel, Brian	104C057
7/10/25	\$2,474,000.00	920 Greensboro Road, LLC	Bg Property Holdings, LLC	920 Greensboro Rd
7/10/25	\$415,000.00	Leblanc, Trustee Richard Leblanc and Annette Leblanc Living Trust utd 10/29/19, Richard	Diversified Plastics of GA, LLC	214 Sinclair RD
7/11/25	\$350,000.00	JKT Real Estate, LLC	Parked Investments, LLC	5 Jefferson AVE
7/11/25	\$600,000.00	Gary Alan Collins, Trustee of The Collins Revocable Trust	Asset Secure, Inc.	228 Pine Knoll LN
7/11/25	\$547,500.00	Hearn, Samuel	Risherry, Larry	198 Shelton Drive Eatonton
7/14/25	\$594,000.00	Blanchette, James	Justice, Robert	193 Southshore RD

SCHOOL

CONTINUED FROM >>A1

announced to begin, conduct, or complete what presumably will be extensive, expensive modifications to transform the outdated school into a modernized city government and services center. In related news, the Putnam BOE will hold a ribbon-cutting ceremony this Thursday at 5 p.m. for its recently completed Putnam County Elementary School at 126 Sparta Hwy., southwest of the existing county middle school across Hwy. 16 from Putnam General Hospital.

In other city business, the council unanimously approved a request from Eatonton resident Laura Pilafas on behalf of the Georgia Council for Recovery to close South Madison Avenue from West Marion Street to the old Hotel Eatonton, beginning at 8:30 a.m. on Monday, Sept. 22. The closure will accommodate parking the "Recovery Bus" streetside for approximately half an hour. The parking authorization will officially be in effect until 9:30 a.m. Sept. 22, though if the bus leaves early, South Madison Avenue will reopen as soon as possible.

While in Eatonton, the Recovery Bus will provide addiction recovery literature and information to interested visitors, as well as lost a yet-to-be-named person describing their recovery journey, with additional remarks from Pilafas and potentially a city council representative. Later, the Eatonton Council confirmed it will also issue an official proclamation declaring September as Addiction Recovery Month, as requested by Pilafas during the July 1 council meeting. The council also heard multiple requests from Eatonton Main Street for multiple temporary street closures at various times on Aug. 22, Sept. 25, Oct. 31, Nov. 8, and Dec. 13. According to City Administrator Gary Sanders, these dates will respectively accommodate two downtown Farmer's Markets, "Candy Mania" in relation to Halloween, November's Mistletoe Market, and the annual Eatonton Santa Claus Parade in December. All related temporary road closures for Eatonton Main Street were unanimously approved by the council.

Sanders also mentioned a late request July 17 from New Life Christian Outreach to temporarily close Agnes Jenkins Drive in front of the church this past Saturday, July 19. The request was made at City Hall and approved there by Mayor Reid; however, Ward 3 Councilmember Janie Reid stressed the need for New Life to be made aware of the need to obtain prior authorization through traditional channels. "Most of New Life street closings they do around some holiday or evening," she pointed out. "So, I'm thinking they may have a calendar already, so we'll all know in advance when they have to close there." All councilmembers agreed, then unanimously ratified the mayor's prior action to approve the temporary Agnes Jenkins Drive closure. The Eatonton City Council will next meet at 7 p.m., Aug. 25 at the Putnam County Commission Room 203, 117 Putnam Dr., Eatonton. The council is scheduled to meet at 7 p.m. on the first Tuesday and the third Monday of each month.



CREATE, CULTIVATE AND CELEBRATE
Upcoming Events
SEE OUR AD IN THE COMMUNITY CALENDAR ON >> PAGE C7

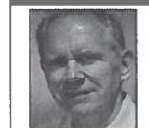
Eatonton • Putnam County Souvenir Coins Now Available

\$5.00 each

Proceeds benefit the Eatonton-Putnam Tourism Arts Heritage Partnership, Inc. (EPTAHP)

• The Peoples Bank • Farmers and Merchants Bank • The Eatonton Messenger • Lake Oconee News • Chamber of Commerce • Putnam County • City of Eatonton • Tytan Pictures • Nuovo Corso • Artisan's Gallery

IN MEMORY



In Memoriam, Card of Thanks, Thank You and In Memory Of starting at just **\$25.00**
The Eatonton Messenger
706-485-3501 or email dianee@msgnews.com

NOTICE

The Putnam County Board of Education does hereby announce that the millage rate will be set at a meeting to be held at the Putnam County Board of Education, 158 Old Glenwood Springs Road, Eatonton, GA on Monday, August 18, 2025 at 6:00 P.M. and pursuant to the requirements of O.C.G.A. § 48-5-32 does hereby publish the following presentation of the current year's tax digest and levy, along with the history of the tax digest and levy for the past five years.

CURRENT 2025 PROPERTY TAX DIGEST AND 5 YEAR HISTORY OF LEVY

BOARD OF EDUCATION		2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
V A L U E	Real & Personal	1,565,119,817	1,664,086,673	2,118,094,769	2,650,730,844	2,907,564,682	3,202,508,396
	Motor Vehicles	16,406,500	12,162,330	11,332,490	11,561,230	11,647,520	11,719,270
	Mobile Homes	5,807,432	6,094,521	7,921,026	13,949,378	15,390,661	16,716,546
	Timber - 100%	4,018,373	3,211,267	4,254,512	3,124,287	3,030,356	4,884,088
	Heavy Duty Equipment	488,484	406,564	397,715	600,512	644,251	140,160
	Gross Digest	1,591,863,326	1,705,955,555	7,142,000,112	7,680,046,751	7,938,279,440	8,736,168,710
L E S S E X E M P T I O N S	Less Exemptions	206,853,656	227,324,103	368,890,654	515,486,047	600,335,631	768,157,372
	NET DIGEST VALUE	1,385,009,670	1,478,631,452	1,773,109,258	2,141,560,704	2,337,943,808	2,467,811,338
M I L L A G E R A T E	MILLAGE RATE (Maintenance & Operation)	15.772	14.900	12.900	11.250	16.724	11.951
	TOTAL M&O TAXES LEVIED	\$21,844,373	\$22,031,609	\$22,873,109	\$24,092,558	\$25,066,747	\$29,571,783
T A X	Net Tax \$ Increase		\$187,236	\$841,501	\$1,219,448	\$974,189	\$4,505,036
	Net Tax % Increase			0.86%	3.82%	5.33%	17.97%

BankSouth buys State Bank of Cochran

BankSouth announced on Tuesday, it has entered into an agreement with Central Georgia Banking Company to acquire State Bank of Cochran, also operating under the names of First Laurens Bank in Dexter and Dublin, and Community Bank of Johnson County in Wrightsville.

"This purchase and assumption agreement provides the opportunity for a solid presence in the central Georgia market, and it just makes sense

for where we're headed," BankSouth President and CEO Harold Reynolds said.

"We're joining forces with a bank that's not only financially strong, with a loyal customer base and dedicated team members, but one that shares the same values we do. They're good people who care about their customers and communities, just like we do. That cultural fit is what really makes this exciting," State Bank of Cochran is a locally owned

community bank with deep roots dating back to 1921 and a strong presence in central Georgia, including Bleckley, Laurens, and Johnson counties. With four full-service branches operating under the State Bank of Cochran, First Laurens Bank, and Community Bank of Johnson County names, the bank offers modern banking services while maintaining a tradition of personal, hometown service. Upon closing, customers

of State Bank of Cochran, First Laurens Bank, and Community Bank of Johnson County will continue working with the same familiar bankers, receiving the local service and support they rely on every day. "From the beginning, it was clear that BankSouth shares our values: putting people first, supporting local communities, and building lasting relationships," State Bank of Cochran President Jackie Rowen said.

"This partnership isn't about changing who we are; it's about joining with a bank that complements our strengths and enhances what we can offer our customers. It's the right move for our team, our customers, and the future of community

banking in the markets we proudly serve." The purchase and assumption agreement has been unanimously approved by the boards of directors of BankSouth and State Bank of Cochran.

—Contributed

WIGGINS

CONTINUED FROM >> A1

The DA said he noticed subtle signs of unusual fatigue in his investigator during a murder trial in Morgan County. After the concerns were confirmed, Wiggins began chemotherapy immediately with the first round starting the day before the birth of his youngest daughter.

"Since that time, Clay has continued to serve with unwavering commitment. Despite the physical and emotional toll of his treatments, he remained on the front lines of our most challenging cases," Barksdale said.

That included four separate murder trials in 2024 and three more this year. "He has never allowed his illness to deter him from his responsibilities," he added.

Wiggins was profiled in an article by Greenberry Moore in *The News* earlier this year. During that interview, he talked about his wife Heather and blended family that includes three biological and two adopted children.

He was diagnosed after a procedure that was expected to take 30 minutes. The investigator woke up hours later from what was to be minor surgery to receive the life-altering news about the stomach cancer.

After receiving several opinions, it was determined he was not a surgical candidate and chemotherapy was his only option. Wiggins had the option of never working again and drawing disability, but that was not going to work for him.

Wiggins regularly goes through cycles of chemotherapy. He said he will not be running marathons, but he can work. There have been some setbacks since February. The bottom line is the investigator continues to battle the odds that 80 percent of the people with his type of cancer do not live more than five years.

Wiggins said staying home would not help him. The work gives him a purpose as he has children. He wants to walk his daughters down the aisle and be best man at his son's wedding.

In a text this past weekend, the investigator said he feels honored to be selected.

"I know there are others who deserve it just as much or more than I do," he said.

The final paragraph in Barksdale's nomination letter sums up the reason Wiggins was selected as Investigator of the Year.

"Too short, Clay Wiggins exemplifies the very best of public service. His integrity, skill and perseverance set a standard for others to follow. His commitment to justice, and to this office, even in the face of personal adversity, is nothing short of heroic."



Investigator Clay Wiggins (right) and Ocmulgee Circuit District Attorney Wright Barksdale after the award was announced.

CONTRIBUTED

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NOTICE OF PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

The Putnam County Board of Education has tentatively adopted a millage rate which will require an increase in property taxes by **20.03** percent.

All concerned citizens are invited to the public hearing on this tax increase to be held at the Putnam County Board of Education Office, 158 Old Glenwood Springs Road, Eatonton, Georgia on **August 11, 2025 at 12:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.**

Times and places of additional public hearings on this tax increase are at Putnam County Board of Education Office, 158 Old Glenwood Springs Road, Eatonton, Georgia on **August 18, 2025 at 5 p.m.**

This tentative increase will result in a millage rate of **11.983 mills**, an increase of **2.000 mills**. Without this tentative tax increase, the millage rate will be no more than **9.983 mills**. The proposed tax increase for a home with a fair market value of **\$200,000** is approximately **\$140.00** and the proposed tax increase for non-homestead property with a fair market value of **\$150,000** is approximately **\$120.00**.

NOTICE

In accordance with Official Code of Georgia Annotated 36-81-5 the following is a summary of the proposed FY2026 Budget for Putnam County, GA as presented to the Putnam County Board of Commissioners July 29, 2025. Copies of the proposed FY2026 Budget are available weekdays at the Putnam County Board of Commissioners Office, 117 Putnam Drive. The proposed budget is also available at www.putnamcountypa.us.

THE FY2026 BUDGET HEARING WILL BE HELD ON AUGUST 19, 2025 AT 6:00 P.M. IN THE PUTNAM COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, 117 PUTNAM DRIVE, EATONTON, GEORGIA. THE PUTNAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS WILL MEET ON AUGUST 29, 2025 AT 10:00 A.M. TO ADOPT THE FY2026 BUDGET.

GENERAL FUND (Proposed)		SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS (Proposed)	
ESTIMATED REVENUES		Revenues	Expenses
Taxes	22,013,625	Law Library Fund	15,225 15,225
License and Permits	114,500	Jail Fund	74,700 74,700
Intergovernmental Revenues	372,407	Juvenile Services Fund	8,000 8,000
Charges for Services	3,430,800	Drug Abuse Education & Treatment	171,382 171,382
Fines	452,000	Drug Confiscation Fund	50,000 50,000
Interest and Miscellaneous	563,000	Federal Forfeiture Fund	1,010 1,010
Transfer from Other Funds	405,123	Emergency 911 Fund	471,880 471,880
Appropriation from Fund Balance	1,097,032	Special Service District	4,219,429 3,950,584
TOTAL Proposed General Fund Revenues	28,448,487	Hotel/Motel Tax Fund	1,187,000 1,187,000
		Local Maintenance Improvement Grant	632,000 632,000
		Juvenile Prosecutor Fund	285,047 226,100
ESTIMATED EXPENDITURES		ENTERPRISE FUNDS (Proposed)	
General Government	6,310,449	Revenues	Expenses
Judicial	2,227,692	Solid Waste Fund	110,000 110,000
Public Safety	13,909,657	Oconee Springs Park	662,686 662,686
Public Works	2,208,513		
Health & Wellness	1,523,160		
Culture & Recreation	1,879,482		
Development	389,534		
TOTAL Proposed General Fund Expenditures	28,448,487		

*Start time for the meeting may be delayed if another public hearing is scheduled prior to this meeting.

Individuals with disabilities who require certain accommodations in order to allow them to observe and/or participate in this meeting, or who have questions regarding the accessibility of the meeting or the facilities are required to contact the ADA Compliance Officer, at least three business days in advance of the meeting at 706-485-2776 to allow the County to make reasonable accommodations for those persons.

The Board of Commissioners reserves the right to continue the hearing to another time and place in the event the number of people in attendance at the hearing, including the Board of Commissioners, staff, and members of the public exceeds the legal limits. Hearings will be conducted pursuant to O.C.G.A. 50-14-1 and Section 2-42 of the Putnam County Code of Ordinances.

RUSSELL W. WALL | ATTORNEY AT LAW
122 North Main St. Ste. 6 Greensboro, GA
Other: 706-453-9089 Fax: 706-453-9094
Email: russ@rwwall.com

Football is here

August 1st is the beginning of football season to me.

— Colin Cowherd

Football is officially here. High school football in the Peach State begins this week with scrimmages. The Georgia Bulldogs start fall camp. There is also an NFL preseason scrimmage between the Los Angeles Chargers and the Detroit Lions.

We are so back, man. This is the best time of the year. Football is a sport that everyone can rally around, whether it's rec ball or the NFL. Baseball was always my first love and I played it longer, but football has always been my favorite sport to watch.

There's just something about it. Maybe it's because football in the South is king, or perhaps it just means more.



Lance McCurley

Sports Reporter

While I prefer college ball over the NFL, high school football will always be my favorite. I loved attending games as a kid, listening to the band, watching the cheerleaders, and seeing the town shut down every Friday.

Now, I get to cover high school football for both of my jobs. I think it's very important to tell the stories of young athletes. Highlighting

how they overcome adversity or how they performed in a big game is important to me. I also think it's essential to cover coaching changes and the recruitment of players, too.

It lets the community know what's going on, and going on year five now. I take a lot of pride in doing that.

Last season was my favorite. I got to see some exciting games, and most of my local teams made the playoffs. I don't root for the teams I cover because it's my job to stay unbiased — but it is a lot easier when they win.

So, here's to year five and hopefully five more. I wish all the local teams well, and let's get after it. I'll be on the sidelines at Al Reeves Field this Friday for Putnam County's scrimmage versus West Laurens. I can't wait!



Putnam County will rotate quarterbacks this Friday, likely between seniors Ethan Whatley (pictured) and Branan Griffin.

LANCE MCCURLEY/Staff

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St. Mary's Hospital
1220 Baxter Street
Athens, GA 30606
706.859.3500

Good Samaritan Hospital
5401 Lake Odessa Parkway
Greensboro, GA 30642
706.451-1731

Sacred Heart Hospital
367 Clear Creek Parkway
Lawson, GA 30557
706.944-7800

PUTNAM

CONTINUED FROM >> B1

"We have to hit a little more this week and can prepare a little more for the physical aspect of the game," he said. "While also working on the fundamentals, we need to be successful. We want to see how the guys we have moved around to play new positions will play and we want to see which guys will do the little things right."

West Laurens is a good litmus test for Putnam County. Entering his fifth season, head coach Kip Burnette led the Raiders to an 8-1 overall record last year and a trip to the playoffs. They return a lot of starters in 2025.

Most notably, tailback Ty Cummings returns for his junior year. He rushed for 1,765 yards and 18

touchdowns in 2024 and will lead the West Laurens' rushing attack, which will challenge Putnam County's defense.

The War Eagles' front seven, anchored by Bryson Brown among others, will be tasked with stopping the run.

The Raiders are also stout on defense, especially on the defensive line and at the linebacker position. They return seven of their leading tacklers from last season, including Shannon Adkins, who totaled 102 stops.

But Putnam County has an experienced offensive line, so it needs to make running paths for the offense to succeed.

The War Eagles will play a second scrimmage next week, too, facing former region rival Washington County, also at 7:30 p.m. on Aug. 8 at home on Al Reeves Field.

HERSCHEL

CONTINUED FROM >> B1

of course, but found the classroom experience exhilarating. He loved interacting with classmates, impressed by their intelligence and creativity, and was transfixed by his professors' lectures.

"I was motivated, happy even, to do the work I needed to do, and it was inspiring to work with these bright, enthusiastic students and professors every day," he said. "It also made me pleased to live up to the commitment I made to my mother many years ago."

When Herschel waxes philosophically, he allows that "earning his degree is as important as anything I have ever done." This coming from a three-time, all-America running back who won the 1982 Heisman Trophy; a man who holds 41 records at Georgia and 16 in the SEC; and one who gained 5,259 yards in college and 8,225 rushing yards

as a professional. Now, Herschel talks to UGA athletes about the importance of making getting a degree a priority.

Of being voted into the Circle of Honor, he says it "is nice" to be elected to this select group. Ever grateful, he prefers to talk about the great athletes already chosen before him and nothing about himself. Unaware that earning his degree also made him eligible to join the Circle of Honor, he remains appreciative of the recognition, but deflects, turning the focus to how education is the key to opportunity. He is eager to testify to the intrinsic values of the learning experience.

"Education," Herschel says, "is the equalizer. You have to have an open mind. You have to take advantage of so many smart people on our college campuses. I feel so fortunate to have had the experience I had."

His journey is a study in perseverance. That has always been the Herschel Walker way.

MINDFUL MOVEMENT



Fitness Program for Adults & Seniors

Crooked Creek Community Association Building

Chair Exercises for Seniors
9 Easy Moves to Get Stronger

Starts August 19
20 sessions - \$100

Contact Don: djones@trilogymn.com

STEPs being taken to accredit Georgia Writers Museum

This summer, the Georgia Writers Museum (GWM) took its first step toward receiving accreditation.

"Most people know that schools are accredited; that they undergo routine external reviews to ensure they meet best practices for their profession," GWM Executive Director Melissa Swindell said. "Similarly, museums can be accredited, too."

The American Alliance of Museums (AAM) reviews and ensures that museums achieve their mission and goals and meet performance standards and best practices in the museum field. More than 1,100 museums are AAM-accredited in the United States, but only 19 of those are in Georgia.

"The ultimate goal is to reach AAM accreditation, and there is a step-by-step process to help small museums reach this lofty goal," Swindell added.

The American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) works with more than 5,500 small- to mid-sized

organizations through a program called STEP (Standards and Excellence Program for History Organizations) to build their accreditation portfolios.

The STEP's program was created in 2008 with funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to help history organizations, no matter how small, reach accreditation. It provides workbooks, online resources, and an online community to review museums' policies and practices and benchmark themselves against six national museum standards: Mission, Vision, and Governance; Audience and Community Engagement; Interpretation; Stewardship of Collections; Stewardship of Historic Structures and Landscapes; and Management.

As each museum works its way through each national standard, it will receive a Bronze, Silver, or Gold certificate from AASLH to recognize the achievements. Georgia Writers Museum is one of seven Georgia-based

organizations enrolled in the STEP's program. This summer, GWM received its Gold Certificate — the highest level of achievement — in the Mission, Vision, and Governance category. This sets the bar for completing the remaining five standards by focusing on GWM's core purpose, strategic direction, and leadership structure.

Despite being a relatively new member of the Eatonton community after relocating with her husband to Lake Oconee from Philadelphia about a year ago, GWM volunteer Judi Bell is at the heart of the museum's STEP's initiative, Swindell said. "It's been my goal to look toward STEP's certification, but Judi has really made this come to fruition," Swindell said. "Judi comes to us with a background in operations and vital experience with accreditation processes, and we are truly fortunate to have her — and all our volunteers — to help move GWM forward."

—Contributed



CONTRIBUTED

Georgia Writers Museum Executive Director Melissa Swindell (left) and volunteer Judi Bell work on documents to support the museum's first STEP's certificate.

Georgia Power seeks new energy projects certification

David Williams
Capital Beat News Service

Georgia Power asked state energy regulators last Thursday to certify 9,500 megawatts of new energy resources that would come from a variety of power-generating projects.

In a filing with the Georgia Public Service Commission, the Atlanta-based utility proposed projects the PSC has already approved in Georgia Power's last two Integrated Resource plans (IRPs). The company submits IRPs every three years outlining

the mix of energy sources it intends to rely upon for power generation during the coming years.

About 8,000 megawatts would come from bids received from an "all-source" request for proposals the commission approved in the 2022 IRP. The projects include power-purchase agreements (PPAs) from existing resources as well as new company-owned natural gas generation, battery energy storage systems (BESS), and projects that combine BESS and solar.

A second filing requests

certification of 1,886 megawatts that would come from projects the PSC approved this month in the utility's 2025 IRP, including PPAs from existing resources, new battery energy storage construction, and company-owned BESS paired with solar.

The list of projects includes previously approved new gas turbines to be built at Georgia Power's Plant Yates near Newnan, and Plant McIntosh near Savannah. It also requests five additional turbines, including two at Plant Bowen

near Cartersville, two at Plant Wando in Heard County, and one at Plant McIntosh.

Environmental groups have opposed the new gas turbines as a doubling down on Georgia Power's commitment to continue using fossil fuels for power generation rather than more aggressive investment in renewable energy.

On the other hand, Georgia Power is stepping up its reliance on battery energy storage systems as a way to improve the efficiency of renewable power. Construction is currently

underway on new BESS projects in Bibb, Lowndes, Floyd, and Cherokee counties, while the company is seeking certification of 10 new BESS facilities at eight sites across the state.

Georgia Power also is requesting approval of two new state-of-the-art solar systems paired with BESS. Those would be located in Laurens County and at the site of the former Plant Mitchell in Dougherty County. The PSC will hold hearings on the two certification requests in October and early December, with a Dec. 19 vote planned.



IAN TOLCHER/Staff

L-R: Putnam General Hospital Authority Board member Lou Benjamin, PGH Human Resources Director Rhonda Largo, and hospital CEO Alan Horton address county commissioners with detailed financial stats displayed on screens behind them.

PGH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A1

salary today also requires giving a raise to those doing the same job but hired previously.

"So, one of the significant cost increases to the hospital right now is we've got to bring our people up closer to market so that they will come on board [and then] we can save the inordinate amount of money that we're paying for contract employees," Benjamin explained.

PGH Human Resources Director Rhonda Largo also addressed the commission, confirming Benjamin's statements. Largo used a registered nurse's pay rate as an example, explaining PGH typically pays \$32-\$36/hour, compared to a competitive rate of approximately \$45/hour statewide, including at hospitals in Milledgeville, Greensboro, Madison, and Athens, among others.

"I get applications all the time and we go through the interview process, but we can't match what other people are paying. We just can't," Largo told the commission. She said she and her staff consistently attend job fairs seeking new nurses, but without competitive pay rates it's nearly impossible to attract employees to PGH.

"You'll see the students; they walk right by Putnam because we're not big and flashy. But what they don't understand is they'd get to do everything at our hospital," she said. "We're so small that our people wear so many hats ... so it's really a great

place for people to start out. But we just can't pay the market rate."

Answering a question from McElhenney about PGH finances, Largo explained when she joined the hospital five years ago, PGH was heavily indebted to Navient

Health in Macon.

"They helped bail us out before with several million dollars and we have worked so hard to pay that off so that we don't have any debt now," she said. "So, we're pretty proud of that."

Ironically, however, that debt-free status works against PGH when it comes to securing state-provided financial support. Hospital CEO Alan Horton explained to the commission that because PGH is presently debt free, it is not considered as "needy" as hospitals that are underwater, financially speaking. For example, he suggested St. Mary's Hospital in Greensboro consistently carries debt, though many would consider it a more prosperous hospital than PGH.

"And there are other hospitals like them that are rated ahead of us in terms of need, but we take a lot of pride. I mean it took us a long time to get out of debt and we don't want to be there again," Horton said. "We know it has more cost than just paying the principal back. You've got to pay interest

on that as well, so we worked hard to get out of debt, but because of that we are not ranked as most needy [under the Georgia HEART designated taxes

program]."

No action was taken on the matter during the work session, though it could be revisited during a future council meeting.

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NOTICE OF PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

The Putnam County Board of Education has tentatively adopted a millage rate which will require an increase in property taxes by **20.03** percent.

All concerned citizens are invited to the public hearing on this tax increase to be held at the Putnam County Board of Education Office, 158 Old Glenwood Springs Road, Eatonton, Georgia on **August 11, 2025 at 12:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.**

Times and places of additional public hearings on this tax increase are at Putnam County Board of Education Office, 158 Old Glenwood Springs Road, Eatonton, Georgia on **August 18, 2025 at 5 p.m.**

This tentative increase will result in a millage rate of **11.983 mills**, an increase of **2.000 mills**. Without this tentative tax increase, the millage rate will be no more than **9.983 mills**. The proposed tax increase for a home with a fair market value of **\$200,000** is approximately **\$140.00** and the proposed tax increase for non-homestead property with a fair market value of **\$150,000** is approximately **\$120.00**.

Public Record

Information found on the Putnam County Public Record page has been gathered by The Putnam Messenger from various institutions and public offices. Reports gleaned from public records reflect the information as it appears on the documents provided. Subscribe online at www.msgnews.com.

PUTNAM COUNTY JAIL REPORT

WEDNESDAY, JULY 30

Savaisha Shaunice Boykin, 30, of Eatonton – failure to stop at a stop sign; no insurance; suspended license
Mario Munoz, 56, of Eatonton – driving on wrong side of road; expired tag or decal; open container in vehicle; VGC SA trafficking methamphetamine; remove or affix plate to conceal vehicle identification



Savaisha
Shaunice
Boykin



Mario
Munoz



Roy
Shain
Griffin



Melvin
Willis



Robert
Ronyea
Harrison



Vernon
Porter



Gregory
Ronyea
Harrison



Janet
Franklin



Jasmine
Elvishea
Zyklin Smith



David
Lewis
Reese



Solita
Lerese
Dunn



Brian
Douglas
Skinner



Jybrica
Lycola
Jones



Davionne
Naiga
Chaney



David
Sanchez



Cory
Jensen



Pablo
Romero
Gonzalez



Mary
Grace
Lindley

HEAT

(CONTINUED FROM >> A4)

I first arrived in Athens and began watching football practice. I cannot remember seeing a water bucket on the field.

Vassai Cate, a highly regarded fullback in the late '30s, once told me about scrimmaging just outside the entrance to Sanford Stadium. He said on wide runs that would take him out of bounds, he would run all the way to Tanward Creek and splash into the stream and lap up as much water as he could before returning to the huddle.

When Vince Dowley became Georgia's head coach, things were beginning to change. I remember that the big thing was to take ice breaks. After a period of heavy contact work, he would blow his whistle, and the team would sit on the hillside of Woodruff Field and with cups of ice. That was a breakthrough. Today athletes in all sports have all sorts of drinks to stay hydrated.

It took a long time for that to come about. Even so, you never heard

of anyone dying of heat stroke in the old days. That would become an issue later. Unfortunately, it still happens.

So, while I appreciate being ensconced in air conditioning, I take my

hat off to those who earn their bread by the sweat of their brow — especially roofers; they are my heroes.

And, not to be overlooked, haven't those rain showers been a godsend?

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 Email: rw@vwall.com



Putnam County Property Transfers Through July 28

Sale	Price	Buyer	Seller	Property Address
6/19/25	\$240,000.00	Hutchings, Jacob	Powell, David	918 Crooked Creek RD
7/14/25	\$1,150,000.00	Trautweiler, Jr, Clark	Smith, Bradley	372A Possum Point DR
7/15/25	\$250,000.00	OPIE LOVE 1 LLC	REGISTER, HEZY	240 SHELTON DR
7/15/25	\$550,000.00	Ruffner, Charles	Borgmeier, Roger	104Y012101
7/15/25	\$425,000.00	Frame, Camilla	Mack, Kelly	086B046
7/16/25	\$80,000.00	Wilson, Anthony	Hilley, Daphney	002 014 009
7/16/25	\$56,000.00	Granville, Monique	Harets, Andrew	83001011
7/17/25	\$415,000.00	Spivey, Kevin A. and Spivey, Chelsey M.	Weatherford, Emily and Weatherford, Coleton	169 Hunters Chase CT
7/17/25	\$610,000.00	Musgrove, Delorah	Justin W. Green and Melissa A. Forster-Green	105 S Bay RD 902
7/18/25	\$264,900.00	Watkins, Sr, Mark	BFA, LLC	109 Clogton DR
7/18/25	\$300,000.00	Rose Creek Home Builders, LLC	Joshua R. Daniel, as Trustee and RFD 5820, LLC	097 001, 097 001001, 097 001002, and 097001003
7/21/25	\$950,000.00	Nastler, Rebecca	Hutchings, Michael	152 Parkside LN
7/22/25	\$69,145.00	GPA Grass, LLC	D&M Investment Group, LLC	140 Lakeshore DR
7/22/25	\$405,000.00	Taylor, Ernest	Carolyn Thompson /K/a Carolyn Lunsford	200 Sage CT
7/23/25	\$419,000.00	Jon Norris Mills and Hannah Elizabeth Mills	Johnson, Michelle	115 Sage ST
7/24/25	\$10,000.00	Kemp, Gregg	The Alvin E. Romershauser Living Trust	122A026
7/24/25	\$223,000.00	Bleau, Denny	Moss, Elizabeth	119 Lower Little River DR Eatonton
7/24/25	\$59,000.00	Nunnally, Bobby	McPherson, Karen	166 E River Bend DR
7/25/25	\$25,000.00	Plowden, Herman	Sandra L. Kurd, Executor of Estate of Sarah Martin	109B085
7/25/25	\$105,000.00	Avant Jackson General Contractor, LLC	Active Acres Properties, LLC	Thomas DR Eatonton
7/28/25	\$1,382,000.00	Hardy, Jr, John	San Innocencio, Marisol	112 Dogwood PT
7/28/25	\$850,000.00	Em & M Oil, LLC	Key Realty USA, LLC	103 Walmart DR
7/28/25	\$700,000.00	The Eagle 1995 Family Trust	The James and Zelina Hines Living Trust	228 S Steel Bridge RD

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\$30,000–\$60,000

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Applicants should apply to:

A. Mark Smith

Smith Communications Inc.
amsmith@msgnews.com
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NOTICE

The Putnam County Board of Education does hereby announce that the millage rate will be set at a meeting to be held at the Putnam County Board of Education, 158 Old Glenwood Springs Road, Eatonton, GA on Monday, August 18, 2025 at 6:00 P.M. and pursuant to the requirements of O.C.G.A. § 48-5-32 does hereby publish the following presentation of the current year's tax digest and levy, along with the history of the tax digest and levy for the past five years.

CURRENT 2025 PROPERTY TAX DIGEST AND 5 YEAR HISTORY OF LEVY							
BOARD OF EDUCATION		2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
V A L U E	Real & Personal	1,545,119,517	1,684,086,673	2,115,094,369	2,650,730,434	2,997,566,682	3,202,509,296
	Motor Vehicles	16,406,530	12,163,530	1,332,490	11,861,230	11,647,520	11,719,370
	Mobile Homes	5,817,912	6,091,571	7,921,026	13,949,878	15,790,661	16,716,396
	Timber - 100%	4,018,573	3,211,267	4,254,512	3,124,287	3,630,336	4,684,088
	Heavy Duty Equipment	188,184	400,564	197,715	680,512	644,221	740,460
	Gross Digest	1,591,863,326	1,705,955,555	2,142,000,112	2,680,046,751	2,938,279,440	3,236,168,710
V A L U E	Less Exemptions		227,324,103	368,990,554	838,494,047	600,335,812	768,357,473
	NET DIGEST VALUE	1,385,009,670	1,478,631,452	1,773,109,558	2,141,560,704	2,337,943,608	2,467,811,338
M I L L A G E	MILLAGE RATE (Maintenance & Operation)	13.72	14.900	12.900	11.250	10.725	11.963
	TOTAL M&O TAXES LEVIED	\$21,844,373	\$22,031,609	\$22,873,105	\$24,092,558	\$25,066,747	\$29,571,783
T A X	Net Tax \$ increase		\$187,236	\$841,501	\$1,219,448	\$974,189	\$4,505,036
	Net Tax % increase		0.86%	3.82%	5.33%	4.04%	17.97%

Smart preaches clear message at fall camp

Lance McCurley
lance@msgnews.com

Georgia football head coach Kirby Smart is known for his ability to prepare and motivate his teams each season.

Whether it's crining a saying like, "better never rests," or a lesson in history about Spanish conquistador Hernando Cortes telling his soldiers to "burn the boats" as they headed into battle, Smart conveys the message effectively. This past offseason, he's been preaching about wanting players who possess FPE — "fire, passion, and energy."

Smart wants players who lead and hold others accountable. The message has been well received by Bulldogs players, including junior inside line-backer Raylen Wilson, heading into his third season with the program.

"I feel like everybody's more bought into the fire, passion, energy thing because I feel like nowadays college football, mostly people care more about money and here we make sure that's not the biggest issue," Wilson told reporters last week on the first day of fall camp. "We focus on the passion and the love for the game."

Georgia's back-to-back national championship victories in 2021 and 2022 had outspoken leaders. Despite winning the SEC Championship and making the College Football Playoff last season, the Bulldogs appeared to lack some of that strong leadership.

Tight end Oscar Delp has returned to Georgia for his final season. He's seen what it takes to win a national title. Delp acknowledged that he



Georgia tight end Ethan Barbour runs over cones during a drill on the first day of fall camp.

and veteran players like Wilson have preached that message to the younger guys. "I know how it was when we won games and we won national championships. I was here for that, so I just share with them the standard and what those older guys were holding

me to when I was younger," he said. "I try to keep it the same. The standard is the standard. You've got to do it a certain way to win championships."

This season's roster is young, Smart acknowledged in July at SEC Media Days that this team is mostly made up of first- and



Georgia veteran defensive back Joel Aguero prepares to catch a pass while participating in position drills during a practice on Thursday, July 31.

second-year players. However, the 10th-year head coach believes this young group is "hungry" to win.

"We are young ... but we are hungry. We've got a team that's fun to coach. We go out to practice each day, and they've been enthusiastic," Smart said. "They've been out there working out, just doing all the things you ask."

Smart also recognizes FPE in his staff, which includes veteran coaches who have been with the program for a long time.

"I feel it every day, because if you don't have it, it's hard to be successful," Smart said. "You can't keep up. Our staff has it.

Our staff has great juice. We've had a chance to reenergize."

Georgia's been practicing in the heat over the last week, but Smart highlighted his players are still bought in.

"I see it in the players every day. And it starts with 110 heat index last week, seeing them out there running in that and facing it. They don't always have it all the way through that ... but they do push and challenge each other," he said.

"That's what I've enjoyed about this team so far, is they're not afraid to hold each other accountable and get after each other, because they know that they're stronger together than they are apart."

TITLE

CONTINUED FROM >> B1

travel ball teams and arranged games against them before the start of the state tournament in Greensboro.

"That gave us four to six games a day on Saturdays with these girls," Huskins said. "I truly believe that was the turning point. I can't remember the exact record, but it was around 12-1 or 11-2. We knew we had something special with them, and it all depended on the competition."

Putnam finished 4-1 at

the state tournament to win the championship. The team easily beat Johnson County (23-1), Berrien County (15-1), and Metter (16-0) to reach the final round from the winner's bracket.

In the final, Putnam faced Adel, out of Cook County. However, after outscoring their opponents 52-4 in its first three contests, the Eatonton girls lost 7-3 to Adel, forcing a winner-take-all game two to decide the state champion.

Putnam rebounded, defeating Adel 12-6 in the deciding game for the state title.

"Cook had to win, and

they won the first game. They were a really good team," Huskins said. "It was a challenge, although we knew what to say to our players, because they were beaten down. They hadn't lost a game in a long time, and then they just lost one. But they came back and really swung the bat well to win."

Arthur said the entire season's journey to winning the title was exciting for everyone involved.

"They built lifelong friendships and memories," he said of his players. "One day, they can share those with their kids."

KIRBY

CONTINUED FROM >> B1

the records of Saban and Smart are so impressive. Kirby has always been very respectful of his old boss, saying, "I wouldn't be where I am today without having coached with him."

I can't think of another successful coach who has seen one of his assistants win two national championships, as has Saban with Kirby. Obviously, there continues to exist more opportunity for the protégé, but you also must have an enormous amount of luck to win a championship. But the Smart man knows if you are in the hunt year after year, you create your opportunities to claim the big prize.

Kirby has been a difference maker, making an impact from the beginning by winning the SEC championship in just his

second season and getting his team to the national championship game where it lost in overtime to Alabama.

It took Vince Dooley 16 years to win a national title. Bear Bryant needed 19. Darrell Royal required 16. Saban, 14. Tom Osborne, 11. Woody Hayes and Dabo Swinney grasped the Holy Grail after nine seasons. Bobby Bowden had the best record in football during his peak years at Florida State, but his first title came after 28 years as a head coach. That Kirby almost won it in his second year further reflects his brilliance as a coach.

Georgia has upgraded its facilities across the board; other UGA sports teams are enjoying noteworthy success, too — the rising tide lifts all boats effect — and the university remains in popular demand, regionally and nationally. Home state

pride in the Bulldogs has never been higher.

With that success, however, comes an unrelenting pressure to win. Everybody has the highest expectations, but Kirby can handle that and will work harder to over-achieve. He will never fall victim to resting on his laurels. He will never underestimate an opponent, and he will never get la-headed with the potential of any of his teams.

A UGA alumnus who wants nothing but the best for his alma mater, Kirby is built for the long haul and is as anxious for the season to get underway as even the most passionate Bulldog fan. The Kirby kickoff awaits.

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City of Eatonton Natural Gas Department

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3. DO NOT TURN ANY ELECTRICAL SWITCHES ON OR OFF, OR USE THE TELEPHONE. LEAVE IMMEDIATELY AND DO NOT RE-ENTER UNTIL NOTIFIED BY GAS DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL THAT EVERYTHING IS OK.
4. DO NOT light matches, smoke cigarettes, or create any other source of combustion.

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PRESS RELEASE ANNOUNCING A PROPOSED PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

The Putnam County Board of Education announces its intention to increase the property taxes it will levy this year by 20.03 percent above the rollback millage rate.

Each year, the board of tax assessors is required to review the assessed value for property tax purposes of taxable property in the county. When the trend of prices on properties that have recently sold in the county indicate there has been an increase in the fair market value of any specific property, the board of tax assessors is required by law to re-determine the value of such property and adjust the assessment. This is called a reassessment.

When the total digest of taxable property is prepared, Georgia law requires that a rollback millage rate must be computed that will produce the same total revenue on the current year's digest that last year's millage rate would have produced had no reassessments occurred.

The budget tentatively adopted by the Putnam County Board of Education requires that a millage rate higher than the rollback millage rate, therefore, before the Putnam County Board of Education may finalize the tentative budget and set a final millage rate, Georgia law requires three public hearings to be held to allow the public an opportunity to express their opinions on the increase.

All concerned citizens are invited to the public hearings on this tax increase to be held at the Putnam County Board of Education Office, 158 Old Glenwood Springs Road, Eatonton, Georgia on August 11, 2025 at 12:00 PM and 6:00 PM and on August 18, 2025 at 5:00 PM.

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CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWERS



REFER TO PUZZLE ON PAGE C5

The Eatonton Messenger

18

100 N. Jefferson Ave., P.O. Box 4027 - Eatonton, Georgia 31024-4027 - msgr@msgr.com



Lake Oconee News

AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLISHER **CURRENT TAX DIGEST AND FIVE-YEAR HISTORY OF LEVY** **PUTNAM CO BD. OF EDUCATION - Eatonton, Georgia**

STATE OF GEORGIA
COUNTY OF PUTNAM

On behalf of A. Mark Smith, Publisher, I certify that the advertisement of the Current Tax Digest and Five-Year History of Levy was published in The Eatonton Messenger, a newspaper of general circulation in the State of Georgia in the county of Putnam. Further, I certify that the following information with the respect to the advertisement(s) is true and correct.

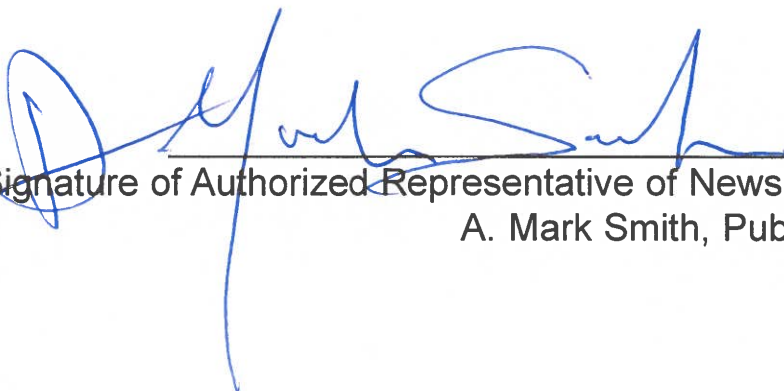
Date(s) of Publication: 07-24, 07-31; 08-07-25

Size of Advertisement: 8.31 inches X 5.00 inches

Location of Advertisement: The advertisement was not published in the legal ads section of the newspaper.

Witness my hand and official signature, this August 7, 2025




Signature of Authorized Representative of Newspaper
A. Mark Smith, Publisher

SWORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED
BEFORE ME THIS 7 DAY
OF August, 2025

Becky C Meyer
NOTARY PUBLIC
MY COMMISSION EXPIRES:
Notary Public, Putnam County, Georgia
My Commission Expires March 31, 2025

NOTICE

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CURRENT 2025 PROPERTY TAX DIGEST AND 5 YEAR HISTORY OF LEVY

BOARD OF EDUCATION		2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
V A L U E	Real & Personal	1,565,119,837	1,684,086,673	2,118,094,369	2,650,730,844	2,907,566,682	3,202,508,396
	Motor Vehicles	16,408,500	12,162,530	11,332,490	11,561,230	11,647,520	11,719,270
	Mobile Homes	5,807,932	6,094,521	7,921,026	13,949,878	15,390,661	16,716,596
	Timber - 100%	4,038,573	3,211,267	4,254,512	3,124,287	3,030,356	4,884,088
	Heavy Duty Equipment	488,484	400,564	397,715	680,512	644,221	340,360
	Gross Digest	1,591,863,326	1,705,955,555	2,142,000,112	2,680,046,751	2,938,279,440	3,236,168,710
	Less Exemptions						
		206,853,656	227,324,103	368,890,854	538,486,047	600,835,632	768,357,372
	NET DIGEST VALUE	1,385,009,670	1,478,631,452	1,773,109,258	2,141,560,704	2,337,443,808	2,467,811,338
R A T E	MILLAGE RATE (Maintenance & Operation)						
		15.772	14.900	12.900	11.250	10.724	11.983
TAX	TOTAL M&O TAXES LEVIED	\$21,844,373	\$22,031,609	\$22,873,109	\$24,092,558	\$25,066,747	\$29,571,783
	Net Tax \$ Increase		\$187,236	\$841,501	\$1,219,448	\$974,189	\$4,505,036
	Net Tax % Increase		0.86%	3.82%	5.33%	4.04%	17.97%

The Eatonton Messenger

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100 N. Jefferson Ave., P.O. Box 4027 - Eatonton, Georgia 31024-4027 - msgr@msgr.com



Lake Oconee News

AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLISHER **NOTICE OF PROPERTY TAX INCREASE** **Putnam County Bd. of Education, Eatonton, GA**

STATE OF GEORGIA
COUNTY OF PUTNAM

On behalf of A. Mark Smith, Publisher, I certify that the advertisement of the notice of property tax increase was published in The Eatonton Messenger, a newspaper of general circulation in the state of Georgia in the county of Putnam. further, I certify that the following information with the respect to the advertisement(s) is true and correct.

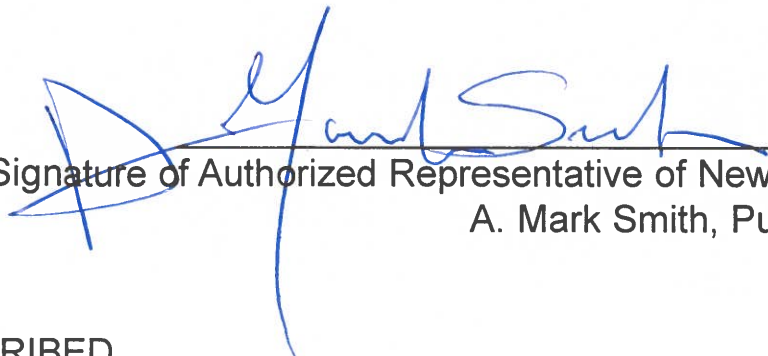
Date(s) of Publication: 07-24, 07-31, 08-07-2025

Size of Advertisement: 8.31 inches x 6 inches

Location of Advertisement: The advertisement was not published in the legal ads section of the newspaper.

Witness my hand and official signature, this August 7, 2025




Signature of Authorized Representative of Newspaper
A. Mark Smith, Publisher

SWORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED
BEFORE ME THIS 7 DAY
OF August, 2025

Becky C Meyer
NOTARY PUBLIC

MY COMMISSION EXPIRES:
Notary Public, Putnam County, Georgia
My Commission Expires March 6, 2029

NOTICE OF PROPERTY TAX INCREASE


The Putnam County Board of Education has tentatively adopted a millage rate which will require an increase in property taxes by **20.03** percent.

All concerned citizens are invited to the public hearing on this tax increase to be held at the Putnam County Board of Education Office, 158 Old Glenwood Springs Road, Eatonton, Georgia on **August 11, 2025 at 12:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.**

Times and places of additional public hearings on this tax increase are at Putnam County Board of Education Office, 158 Old Glenwood Springs Road, Eatonton, Georgia on **August 18, 2025 at 5 p.m.**

This tentative increase will result in a millage rate of **11.983 mills**, an increase of **2.000 mills**. Without this tentative tax increase, the millage rate will be no more than **9.983 mills**. The proposed tax increase for a home with a fair market value of **\$200,000** is approximately **\$140.00** and the proposed tax increase for non-homestead property with a fair market value of **\$150,000** is approximately **\$120.00**.

Advertised on District website 7/24/2025 thru 8/18/2025



Putnam County Charter School System

158 Old Glenwood Springs Rd.

Eatonton, GA 31024

(706)485-5381

F: (706)485-3820

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Parent Links

Protecting Student Privacy

2025-2026 Voluntary Student Accident Insurance (Española)

2025-2026 Voluntary Student Insurance Claim Form

SLDS for Parents

2025-2026 Voluntary Student Accident Insurance

Public Notice Links

Current 2025 Tax Digest & 5 Year History

CEP Media Release

Invitation to Bid - SP 16 Entrance Road Improvements (PCES)

ADDENDUM NO.1 - SP 16 Road Improvements (PCES)

FY2026 Advertised Budget

USDA Non-Discrimination Statement

2024 SPLOST Schedule

News & Announcements

VIEW ALL NEWS >

SPECIAL PROGRAMS CHILD FIND MEETING





SEPTEMBER 24TH, 2025
9AM- 4PM. BOARD OF EDUCATION
158 OLD GLENWOOD SPRINGS RD



Child Finds Meeting

To register for the Special Programs Child Find Meeting, please scan the QR Code above.

Read More

2024-2025 Annual REPORT





24-25 Annual Report

CLICK HERE to view PCCSS' 24-25 Annual Report!

Read More



Notice of Proposed Property Tax Increase

Proposed Property Tax

PRESS RELEASE ANNOUNCING A PROPOSED PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

Read More



Proposed Property Tax

PRESS RELEASE ANNOUNCING A PROPOSED PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

The Putnam County Board of Education announces its intention to increase the property taxes it will levy this year by 20.03 percent above the rollback millage rate. Each year, the board of tax assessors is required to review the assessed value for property tax purposes of taxable property in the county. When the trend of prices on properties that have recently sold in the county indicate there has been an increase in the fair market value of any specific property, the board of tax assessors is required by law to re-determine the value of such property and adjust the assessment. This is called a reassessment. When the total digest of taxable property is prepared, Georgia law requires that a rollback millage rate must be computed that will produce the same total revenue on the current year's digest that last year's millage rate would have produced had no reassessments occurred. The budget tentatively adopted by the Putnam County Board of Education requires that a millage rate higher than the rollback millage rate, therefore, before the Putnam County Board of Education may finalize the tentative budget and set a final millage rate, Georgia law requires three public hearings to be held to allow the public an opportunity to express their opinions on the increase. All concerned citizens are invited to the public hearings on this tax increase to be held at the Putnam County Board of Education Office, 158 Old Glenwood Springs Road, Eatonton, Georgia on August 11, 2025 at 12:00 PM and 6:00 PM and on August 18, 2025 at 5:00 PM.

NOTICE OF PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

NOTICE OF PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

The Putnam County Board of Education has tentatively adopted a millage rate which will require an increase in property taxes by 20.03 percent.

All concerned citizens are invited to the public hearing on this tax increase to be held at the Putnam County Board of Education Office, 158 Old Glenwood Springs Road, Eatonton, Georgia on August 11, 2025 at 12:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

Times and places of additional public hearings on this tax increase are at Putnam County Board of Education Office, 158 Old Glenwood Springs Road, Eatonton, Georgia on August 18, 2025 at 5 p.m.

This tentative increase will result in a millage rate of 11.983 mills, an increase of 2.000 mills. Without this tentative tax increase, the millage rate will be no more than 9.983 mills. The proposed tax increase for a home with a fair market value of \$200,000 is approximately \$140.00 and the proposed tax increase for non-homestead property with a fair market value of \$150,000 is approximately \$120.00.

File Attachments for Item:

4. Authorization for Chairman to sign Resolution setting 2025 Mill Rate for Incorporated and Unincorporated County Maintenance and Operation (staff-CM & Finance)

2025 TAX LEVY PUTNAM COUNTY, GEORGIA

WHEREAS, the Putnam County Board of Commissioners sitting for county purposes has this day met to fix the tax rates for the maintenance and operation of Putnam County and

WHEREAS, the tax digest of said County shows taxable property for the year 2025 in the total amount of \$2,559,963,346.

THEREFORE, after careful consideration and estimate it is ordered and adjudged as follows.

THAT 7.651 mills on each thousand dollars worth of property in the incorporated and unincorporated area be and the same is hereby assessed and levied on the total amount of property less a roll back for Local Option Sales Tax Proceeds of 1.650 mills producing a net tax levy of 6.001 mills returned for taxation by the payers of Putnam County for the year 2025. Said 6.001 mills to produce a total revenue of \$15,362,340.

The Tax Commissioner of Putnam County, Georgia, is hereby ordered to levy and collect the above tax rates on the taxable property designated for the year 2025 and for the purpose heretofore set forth with due date of no later than December 20, 2025.

Approved and adopted this 26th day of September 2025.

PUTNAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Bill Sharp, Chairman

ATTEST:

Lynn Butterworth
County Clerk

PT-35 (Rev 03/25)

COUNTY MILLAGE RATE CERTIFICATION FOR TAX YEAR 2025

Please provide a copy of this form to your county's Clerk of Superior Court.

<http://www.dor.ga.gov>COUNTY: **Putnam**

Submit original signed copy with digest submission

COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2	COLUMN 3		COLUMN 4	COLUMN 5	COLUMN 6	COLUMN 7	COLUMN 8	COLUMN 9	COLUMN 10
District Number Must be Shown	District Name (Inc, Uninc, School, Special Districts, Etc.)	Mark X if District Falls In Unincorporated Area	Mark X if District Falls In Incorporated Area	Enter Gross Millage Rate Before Rollbacks	Sales Tax Rollback O.C.G.A § 48-8-91	Insurance Premium Rollback O.C.G.A § 33-8-8.3		Net M&O Millage Rate Column 4 less Columns 5, 6 & 7	Enter Bond Millage Rate	Total Millage Rate Column 8 plus Column 9
2	County Wide	X	X	7.651	1.650			6.001	0.000	6.001
3	School	X	X	11.983				11.983	0.000	11.983
	Special Service District	X		0.600				0.600	0.000	0.600

I hereby certify that the rates listed above are the official rates for the Districts indicated for Tax Year 2025

Date_____
Chairman, Board of County Commissioners

PT-32.1 - Computation of MILLAGE RATE ROLLBACK AND PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN PROPERTY TAXES - 2025

COUNTY: Putnam	TAXING JURISDICTION: County
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ENTER VALUES AND MILLAGE RATES FOR THE APPLICABLE TAX YEARS IN YELLOW HIGHLIGHTED BOXES BELOW

DESCRIPTION	2024 DIGEST	REASSESSMENT OF EXISTING REAL PROP	OTHER CHANGES TO TAXABLE DIGEST	2025 DIGEST
REAL	2,761,662,765	164,983,514	99,687,468	3,026,333,747
PERSONAL	145,903,917		23,443,347	169,347,264
MOTOR VEHICLES	11,647,520		71,750	11,719,270
MOBILE HOMES	15,390,661		1,325,935	16,716,596
TIMBER -100%	3,030,356		1,853,732	4,884,088
HEAVY DUTY EQUIP	644,221		(303,861)	340,360
GROSS DIGEST	2,938,279,440	164,983,514	126,078,371	3,229,341,325
EXEMPTIONS	600,835,632	123,129,266	(54,586,919)	669,377,979
NET DIGEST	2,337,443,808	41,854,248	180,665,290	2,559,963,346
	(PYD)	(RVA)	(NAG)	(CYD)
2024 MILLAGE RATE: 6.101		2025 MILLAGE RATE: 6.001		

CALCULATION OF ROLLBACK RATE

DESCRIPTION	ABBREVIATION	AMOUNT	FORMULA
2024 Net Digest	PYD	2,337,443,808	
Net Value Added-Reassessment of Existing Real Property	RVA	41,854,248	
Other Net Changes to Taxable Digest	NAG	180,665,290	
2025 Net Digest	CYD	2,559,963,346	(PYD+RVA+NAG)
2024 Millage Rate	PYM	6.101	PYM
Millage Equivalent of Reassessed Value Added	ME	0.100	(RVA/CYD) * PYM
Rollback Millage Rate for 2025	RR - ROLLBACK RATE	6.001	PYM - ME

CALCULATION OF PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN PROPERTY TAXES

If the 2025 Proposed Millage Rate for this Taxing Jurisdiction exceeds Rollback Millage Rate computed above, this section will automatically calculate the amount of increase in property taxes that is part of the notice required in O.C.G.A. § 48-5-32.1(c) (2)

Rollback Millage Rate	6.001
2025 Millage Rate	6.001
Percentage Tax Increase	0.00%

CERTIFICATIONS

I hereby certify that the amount indicated above is an accurate accounting of the total net assessed value added by the reassessment of existing real property for the tax year for which this rollback millage rate is being computed.

Chairman, Board of Tax Assessors

Date

I hereby certify that the values shown above are an accurate representation of the digest values and exemption amounts for the applicable tax years.

Tax Collector or Tax Commissioner

Date

I hereby certify that the above is a true and correct computation of the rollback millage rate in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 48-5-32.1 for the taxing jurisdiction for tax year 2025 and that the final millage rate set by the authority of this taxing jurisdiction for tax year 2025 is _____

CHECK THE APPROPRIATE PARAGRAPH BELOW THAT APPLIES TO THIS TAXING JURISDICTION

☐ If the final millage rate set by the authority of the taxing jurisdiction for tax year 2025 exceeds the rollback rate, I certify that the required advertisements, notices, and public hearings have been conducted in accordance with O.C.G.A. §§ 48-5-32 and 48-5-32.1 as evidenced by the attached copies of the published "five year history and current digest" advertisement and the "Notice of Intent to Increase Taxes" showing the times and places when and where the required public hearings were held, and a copy of the press release provided to the local media.

☐ If the final millage rate set by the authority of the taxing jurisdiction for tax year 2025 does not exceed the rollback rate, I certify that the required "five year history and current digest" advertisement has been published in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 48-5-32 as evidenced by the attached copy of such advertised report.

Responsible Party

Title

Date

NOTICE

The Putnam County Board of Commissioners does hereby announce that the millage rate will be set at a meeting to be held at the Putnam County Administration Building, 117 Putnam Drive, Eatonton, GA on September 26, 2025 at 10:00 AM* and pursuant to the requirements of O.C.G.A 48-5-32 does hereby publish the following presentation of the current year's digest and levy, along with the history of the tax digest and levy for the past five years.

CURRENT 2025 PROPERTY TAX DIGEST AND 5 YEAR HISTORY OF LEVY

C o u n t y w i d e A r e a	County Wide		2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
	V A L U E	Real & Personal	1,565,119,837	1,684,086,673	2,118,094,369	2,650,730,884	2,907,566,682	3,195,681,011
		Motor Vehicles	16,408,500	12,162,530	11,332,490	11,561,230	11,647,520	11,719,270
		Mobile Homes	5,807,932	6,094,521	7,921,026	13,949,878	15,390,661	16,716,596
		Timber - 100%	4,038,573	3,211,267	4,254,512	3,124,287	3,030,356	4,884,088
		Heavy Duty Equipment	488,484	400,564	397,715	680,512	644,221	340,360
		Gross Digest	1,591,863,326	1,705,955,555	2,142,000,112	2,680,046,791	2,938,279,440	3,229,341,325
		Less Exemptions	206,853,656	227,324,103	368,890,854	538,486,047	600,835,632	669,377,979
		NET DIGEST VALUE	1,385,009,670	1,478,631,452	1,773,109,258	2,141,560,744	2,337,443,808	2,559,963,346
	R A T E	Gross Maintenance & Operation Millage	9.642	9.536	8.574	8.113	7.747	7.651
		Less Rollbacks (Local Option Sales Tax)	1.564	1.816	1.795	1.713	1.646	1.650
		NET M&O MILLAGE RATE	8.078	7.720	6.779	6.400	6.101	6.001
	Tax	TOTAL M&O TAXES LEVIED	\$11,188,108	\$11,415,035	\$12,019,908	\$13,705,989	\$14,260,745	\$15,362,340
Net Tax \$ Increase		\$261,151	\$226,927	\$604,873	\$1,686,081	\$554,756	\$1,101,595	
Net Tax % Increase		2.39%	2.03%	5.30%	14.03%	4.05%	7.72%	
*Start time may be delayed if another public hearing is scheduled prior to this meeting								

File Attachments for Item:

5. Authorization for Chairman to sign Resolution setting 2025 Mill Rate for Special Service District (staff-CM & Finance)

**2025 TAX LEVY PUTNAM COUNTY, GEORGIA
SPECIAL SERVICE DISTRICT**

WHEREAS, the Putnam County Board of Commissioners sitting for county purposes has this day met to fix the tax rates for the maintenance and operation of Putnam County and

WHEREAS, the tax digest of said County shows taxable property for the year 2025 in the total amount of \$2,368,658,726.

THEREFORE, after careful consideration and estimate it is ordered and adjudged as follows.

THAT .600 mills on each thousand dollars worth of property in the special service district (unincorporated area) be and the same is hereby assessed and levied on the total amount of property producing a net tax levy of .600 mills returned for taxation by the payers of Putnam County for the year 2025. Said .600 mills to produce a total revenue of \$1,421,195.

The Tax Commissioner of Putnam County, Georgia, is hereby ordered to levy and collect the above tax rates on the taxable property designated for the year 2025 and for the purpose heretofore set forth with due date of no later than December 20, 2025.

Approved and adopted this 26th day of September 2025.

PUTNAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Bill Sharp, Chairman

ATTEST:

Lynn Butterworth
County Clerk