

CHATHAM COUNTY CONNECTION



APRIL 2011



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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Pete Liakakis

At the beginning of this term the Chatham County Commission set as a goal to become **"The Greenest County in Georgia."** What does **"Being Green"** mean? As a steward of public resources, Chatham County exercises its leadership to champion the protection of our community's natural environment for immediate and long term benefit of the citizens which your county government serves. However we feel that if we are to **"talk the talk we must also walk the walk."** To that extent I am pleased to report

on some of the accomplishments that we have made internally.

1. Facilities Maintenance completed an installation of a separate air conditioner for the Media Room located adjacent to the Commission Meeting Room in the Bull Street Courthouse. Previously, the entire section of the building was maintained at an extremely cool temperature to protect the media equipment from overheating. Energy savings will be realized because the section area temperature can be made warmer, without jeopardizing media equipment.

2. Facilities Maintenance placed recycling containers in both courthouses, the Public Defender's office, Citizens Service Center, both Tag Offices, and Mosquito Control. Aluminum, plastic 1 and 2, and office paper are recycled.

3. Facilities Maintenance purchased a "Bulb Eater®" to properly crush fluorescent bulbs and collect mercury for proper disposal. Bulbs are now recycled at a greatly reduced price compared

to whole bulb recycling.

4. To date, Chatham County staff have completed 25 action items listed in the Chatham Environmental Forum document, A Road Map for Chatham County for its Journey in Becoming the Greenest County in the State of Georgia. An additional 67 items are at various stages of completion. Significantly:

a. The Chatham County Board of Commissioners approved a motion to require all new Chatham County funded buildings and renovations costing more than \$100,000 to achieve at least LEED Silver certification.

b. The Purchasing Department ensures that county staff preferentially procure energy star appliances.

c. In 2010, Chatham County once again met its annual goal to plant 365 trees.

Chatham County follows a citizens'-bases plan developed by the Chatham Environmental Forum (CEF), a non-profit

organization which works on critical environmental issues within the community. The **"Greenest County Plan"** is a document that shows how an organization and community can become green. The plan presents a long-term vision for a community which acknowledges for a healthy balance between the natural environment and human activity as the cornerstone for a sustainable community which promotes economic prosperity and social equality.

For accountability to the citizens we serve, Chatham County will share information about its achieving its environmental performance goals and encourage objective oversight on its accomplishing the **"Greenest County Plan."**

Chairman
Pete Liakakis

For more information please visit our website at www.chathamcounty.org

Sheriff Breaks Ground on Jail Expansion Project

CHATHAMCOUNTY, GA (March 8, 2011) - The largest capital improvement project in Chatham County history is now underway. On March 8, 2011, Sheriff Al St Lawrence and Chatham County Commissioners broke ground on the Chatham County Detention Center Expansion Project.

This project is going to cost close to \$100 million dollars. It is being paid for by a Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax approved by voters in 2006. In December 2010, County Commissioners awarded a \$71 million dollar construction contract to Hunt-Mills, A Joint Venture. Sixty-six percent of the site preparation and construction work is going to local subcontractors. Construction will take approximately 2 1/2 years.

The current jail was built in 1992 with 1,224 inmate beds. Four and a half years later it reached its capacity. Today the inmate population count is close to 1,800. In late 2010 it reached a record 1,973 inmates. A vast majority of the people behind the bars and razor wire are felons. The expansion project will

add 400,000 square feet and bring the total number of inmate beds to 2,300, nearly double the current capacity. Major renovations will be done to the administration building, medical, kitchen, laundry and warehouse facilities. New security and fire alarm systems will be installed. A work-release center will also be built and the new facility will accommodate the need for any possible future expansions.

Sheriff St Lawrence said, "I would like to thank the taxpayers and voters for understanding the need for this facility—a facility that will help keep dangerous criminals locked up and out of our neighborhoods."

The Sheriff also thanks his deputies. "They are the ones who have felt the brunt of this overcrowding problem. They have put up with an increase in inmate fights and attacks and still they put their uniform on each day and come to work. This groundbreaking signifies a light at the end of the tunnel," he said.



How **FAR** Can We Go?

For a long time, while recycling was taking place at the Eisenhower Resource Conservation Education Center, it seemed that steps to having a fulling functioning education center were a long way off. Finally, after many months of work incorporating resource conserving concepts into its design and functioning, the Center is open and Staff is working at full throttle.

So far, the Center has played host to data destruction events, a Eco-Car show, highlighting local dealers offering hybrids and high fuel efficiency vehicles. Residents had the opportunity to see an electric CAT bus that converts back

and forth between fuel and electricity and the City of Savannah's electric truck that currently is servicing Bonaventure Cemetery. Solar Smith demonstrated PV solar panels and was on-site to answer questions.

Planned for the coming months at the Center are: recycled art demonstrations and recycled art shows to be held at the gallery within Center. The FAR Gallery (Fine Art of Recycling) will feature exhibits by local and regional artists utilizing recycled materials as part of their original art works.

The FAR Gallery is managed by Chatham County's Resource Conservation and Education Center. This facility exists to empower the community to conserve natural resources through the promotion and support of the visual arts via displays of mixed media designs and crafts. The FAR Gallery serves and responds to

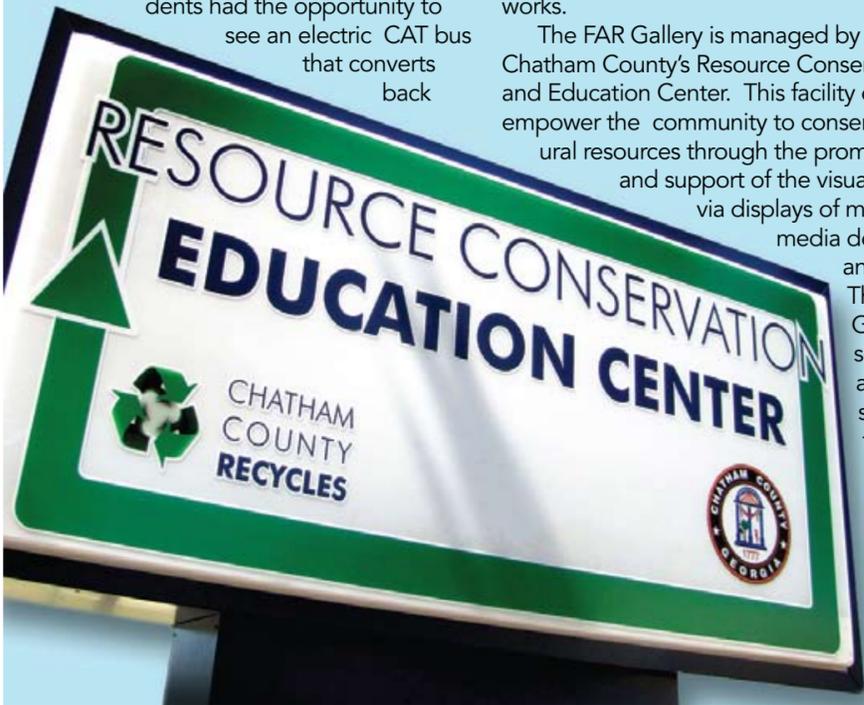
Chatham County's community with exhibitions and educational programs that strengthen awareness and stimulates dialogue through artistic expression.

Planned for later this year, a Chili Cook-off, summer camps including specific environmental related subject areas such as landfill camp, water, energy and recycling camps and art camp. Also in the planning stages are workshops and shows that include: xeriscaping, vermiculture, horticulture, mopeds and bikes.

If you've already visited the Eisenhower Conservation Education Center located at 1321 Eisenhower Drive to do your recycling, there's a lot more going on inside the Center itself. The public is encouraged to stop by and come into the Center to take a tour. Drop-ins can be handled. If you'd like a guided tour with an explanation of all the "goodies" that the Center has to offer, please call 912-790-1647. Once you've visited the Center, taken part in an event, or even brought your recycling in and been helped by the great staff that promise to have you in and out of the site within two minutes, consider becoming a volunteer.

The Center is looking for volunteers and event coordinators. The Center will also be the focal point for the County's new venture having its own Keep America Beautiful Program. Volunteers for KAB events and for the KAB Board are also needed.

Please contact David Nash at 912-652-6856 or Bill Cowan at 912-790-1647 for details.



IDENTIFY SAFE DATA Destruction Day!

April 30 9am-2pm 1321 Eisenhower Dr.

WSAV, Shredex and Chatham County are partnering to help protect residents from identity theft by providing on-site shredders for sensitive documents. All paper shredded will be recycled. We will also be collecting electronics. The Shredding is a one day event and electronics are collected regularly at the center

3 WSAV **CHATHAM COUNTY RECYCLES**

Get Ready FOR THE Hurricane SEASON!

It's that time of year again; time to start thinking about hurricanes. When you read this, the 2011 Hurricane Season will be knocking at your door. The season runs from June 1 to November 30 and while some may moan at that thought, the time to start preparing is now.

Chatham County hasn't been hit in a long time, so why worry? Well, did you know Chatham County is prone to the worst storm surge along the East Coast and that storm surge is the most deadly threat from hurricanes? In 2005 Hurricane Katrina produced the highest storm surge ever recorded on the US coast and Pass Christian, Mississippi saw a 27.8 foot surge. At least 1,500 people lost their lives during Katrina and many of the deaths resulted directly, or indirectly, from storm surge.

This year Chatham County released an updated storm surge map and thanks to more accurate technology we can far better predict how hurricane storm surge will impact us. Water levels during a Category 5 storm now go as far as West Chatham County, past Interstate 95. Even during a Category 1 storm, water levels ranging anywhere from 4 to 11 feet will affect a great majority of the county. Now would be a good time to take a look at the latest Chatham County storm surge map, find your house and evaluate how serious storm surge is.

Along with the new storm surge map,

you will find everything you need to know about hurricane planning on ChathamEmergency.org. We've reorganized the site and made it easier to find information pertaining to residents, businesses, volunteer opportunities, a calendar of events and much more. We welcome you to visit the site and look up information regarding a disaster supply kit. You'll find a complete list of items you may need should you find yourself in an emergency. You'll also find evacuation information at ChathamEmergency.org. CEMA identifies evacuation routes and even a timeline of when evacuations will begin depending on the strength of the storm. We encourage residents to become familiar with what to take with them if an evacuation is ordered. Do you know where your marriage license or your social security card is? We have a list on our site of important documents you don't want to leave behind.

CEMA will also be participating in various events around the county during the months of April and May. On April 23rd CEMA will have an information booth set up at the Earth Day celebration in Forsyth Park, as well as at Hometown Heroes Day at Grayson Stadium on April 23rd. On May 7th, CEMA will be at the Taste of Thunderbolt. If you have any questions regarding hurricane safety or preparedness measures, please come by and talk to some of our staff.

If anyone is interested training in disas-

ter safety, please consider the upcoming Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training. Training is free and you'll learn basic first aid skills, how to extinguish a small fire, hazardous material awareness and other important safety techniques. CERTs are valuable to the community and learn ways to support their neighborhoods during emergencies. Classes begin in May, sign up at ChathamEmergency.org or call the CEMA office at 912-201-4500.

Again, now is the time to start thinking about the upcoming hurricane season. The saying, "it's better safe than sorry" may be overused, but when it comes to keeping you and your loved ones safe, you can never hear it too often.



So What Shade of Green Are You?

UGAGreenWay



One of the most popular New Years resolutions is What changes are you willing to make to become more environmentally conscious? What prompts you to make those decisions - concern for the environment, health, money or a combination of those factors? Chatham County Cooperative Extension encourages you to welcome spring with these questions. To get started or to advance your learning, view the UGA Georgia Greenway website at www.fcs.uga.edu/green. There you will find a variety of resources to answer your questions. With an abundance of resources for the entire family you will learn more about Living Healthy & Green, Resource Conservation, Saving & Investing Green, Generation Green and Green Washing. Tips and links on how to create a closed loop system for materials in your life will be found on this site. Chatham County Extension encourages you to participate in local environmental events throughout the year. Contact the County Extension office at 912-652-7981 or email jogden@uga.edu to schedule a Family and Consumer Sciences educational program on this topic or other topics for your community group.

"Learn the Secrets of a Beautiful Lawn" with UGA Turf Specialist, Dr. Clint Waltz at the Bamboo Farm and Coastal Gardens on Thursday, May 12 by contacting the Chatham County Extension office at 652-7981 or email ugd3051@uga.edu. Visit our website at www.ugaextension.com/chatham for additional information and costs. Save money by registering early!

Spring is calling all of us to garden and if you are not a subscriber to the "Coastal Homeowner Landscape and Turf Monthly Newsletter" Dave Linvill, County Horticultural Agent, invites you to email him at dlinvill@uga.edu to add your email address to receive this free publication each month. Soil samples can be dropped off daily at the County Extension office and cost \$8.00 per sample analysis.



Strawberries are ready for picking at the Bamboo Farm and Coastal Gardens and sell for \$2.00 per pound. Call 912-921-5460 for more information and remember that blackberries will be available in early June. When you visit the farm take a look at the fruit, vegetable and herb gardens and get ideas for your own victory garden in your own backyard. Thanks to Master Gardener volunteers, who have planted and maintained these demonstration areas to showcase best practices.

"So Easy to Preserve Your Harvest from Your Garden" sessions are planned this spring and contact the County Extension office at 912-652-7981 or www.ugaextension.com/chatham for more information.



A Spring Culinary Cooking Series is being offered to benefit the Bamboo Farm and Coastal Gardens. Cooking sessions will feature Martha Nesbit (Lamb & Springtime Favorites), Damon Fowler (Savannah Favorites), Pat Hackney (Southwest Cooking) and Jackie Ogden (Cooking with Herbs) during April and May for more information visit www.bamboo.caes.uga.edu or 912-652-7981. Contact jogden@uga.edu for future culinary programs.

Mark the calendar for the 17th annual Sunday Supper in the Strawberry Patch set for Sunday afternoon, May 1st at the Bamboo Farm and Coastal Gardens. Arrive at 4:00PM to visit the demonstration gardens and participate in the silent auction. Dinner will be served between 5:00 -7:00 PM and will be a traditional Sunday dinner of fried chicken, rice/gravy, squash, black eyed peas, sliced tomatoes with Vidalia onions, cornbread, tea and topped off with a strawberry shortcake! Mail your reservations to PO Box 8935; Savannah, GA 31412 with checks payable to Friends of Coastal Gardens @ \$20.00 per person by April 28th or call 912-921-5460 for more information.

The Chatham County Collaborative will hold their "Super Saturday" training for childcare providers on Saturday, May 14th. Save money by registering by April 29th. For more information visit www.ugaextension.com/chatham or contact Lisa Jordan, EFNEP Agent at 912-652-7981.



Summer is around the corner and it is time for 4-H Summer Camp registration. Chatham County 4-H has the perfect summer vacation planned for Chatham County youth, with all the fun and adventure you can imagine. Chatham County 4-H will spend July 4 - 8, 2011 at Rock Eagle 4-H Center located in Eatonton, Georgia. For more information about Chatham County 4-H and summer camp visit www.ugaextension.com/chatham or contact Trish West, 4-H Agent at twest@uga.edu.

The Chatham County Cooperative Extension is located at 124 Bull Street; Suite 120 in the Old Chatham County Courthouse on Wright Square. Office hours are 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM Monday through Friday. You can email our office for questions, programs and services to uge3051@uga.edu or visit our website at www.ugaextension.com/Chatham.

Jackie Ogden, County Coordinator
UGA Cooperative Extension-Chatham County

Learning for Life

2nd Annual 37th
Seafood Festival
Saturday, May 7th
Tybee Island Pier and Pavilion
MORE INFORMATION,
CALL (912) 652-6780
11:00am - 7:00pm
Free admission for the whole family!
Showcasing Tybee Island's Award
Winning
Restaurants
Sponsored by Chatham County Park Services, Tybee Island, & Sweet Dreams



By fall 2012, two miles of trails will be created on the Blue Sky Preserve, a 640 acre property owned by Chatham County and jointly managed by the CCRPC and Chatham County Public Works and Park Services.

Chatham County Resource
Protection Commission
By: Joanna Bounds

Numerous studies highlight the benefits we gain from a walk in the woods or an afternoon spent enjoying the marsh. Experiencing nature relieves our stress and can even lessen the effects of Attention Deficit Disorder in children. One organization which is making it easier to get outside and enjoy these benefits is the Chatham County Resource Protection Commission (CCRPC).

Established in 2008 and staffed by the MPC, the CCRPC consists of a nine member County appointed board and a 35+ member Technical Advisory Committee that work to identify, evaluate, and protect important natural areas. In just two years, the organization has won two awards for its innovative efforts in land conservation, including Georgia Planning Association's Outstanding Initiative for a Large Community Award and Conserve Georgia's Land Conservation Award. As part of this award-winning program, the organization creates trails for hiking and biking whenever possible within their protected sites.

The CCRPC was recently awarded a \$100,000 grant from the Georgia Recreational Trails Program to create two miles of trails on the Blue Sky Preserve, a property purchased by the County in 2008 through the

efforts of the CCRPC. These trails will provide the public with the opportunity to experience five different habitat types, including Canebreaks, Forested Depressional Wetlands, Bottomland Hardwood Forest, Pine Flatwoods, and Live Oak Sandhills. Visitors will be allowed to hike, bike, and pursue other forms of passive recreation.

The CCRPC has also helped to transform the 150 acre Whitemarsh Preserve into a public natural park. In 2010, the organization hosted the first annual Go Green 5K on the site to officially open the Preserve, located on Johnny Mercer Boulevard and Bryan Woods Road. In preparation for the event, the CCRPC worked with Chatham County Public Works and Park Services to create a new natural trail within the property. In addition, the County recently completed a one mile paved trail along the perimeter of the Preserve that connects to the neighboring YMCA Islands Branch trail network. In total, the Whitemarsh Preserve now offers three miles of public trails. Happy hiking!

To find out more about the CCRPC and its trail efforts look for them on Facebook or visit www.thempc.org and click on the CCRPC link at the bottom. For questions, please contact Joanna Bounds, Resource Protection Planner at boundsj@thempc.org or (912) 651-1467.

ZUMBA CLASSES...NOW
AT FRANK MURRAY
COMMUNITY CENTER &
LAKE MAYER PARK
CALL (912) 898-3320 FOR
MORE INFORMATION

CHATHAM COUNTY - SAVANNAH'S TRICENTENNIAL PLAN

In 2002 the Savannah Mayor and Aldermen and Chatham County Commissioners launched an ambitious project known as the Tricentennial Plan. This plan includes an updated and unified comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance for the city of Savannah and unincorporated Chatham County. 2011 is an important year for the Tricentennial Plan as the Comprehensive Plan will be reevaluated and a revised zoning ordinance will be released for public comment.

implementation tool for the Comprehensive Plan. Because there are two separate zoning ordinances for Savannah and unincorporated Chatham County that are a half-century old and that do not entirely reflect the long-range vision for each jurisdiction, an updated and unified ordinance is under development. The ordinance is known as the Unified Zoning Ordinance (or UZO). Its most basic function is to identify the allowed land uses and development standards (e.g., building height and setbacks) by zoning district. But it can also assist with the protection of environmentally sensitive areas, preservation of the physical and architectural integrity of applicable historic neighborhoods and promotion of better site and building design. More information about the UZO is available at www.unifiedzoning.org.

**WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?**

The state-required Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2006 and provided a long-range community vision through 2033—the 300th anniversary of the founding of the city of Savannah. More specifically, the Comprehensive Plan identifies our community's goals for the following elements: Land Use; Economic Development; Housing; Historic and Cultural Resources; Natural Resources; Transportation; and, Community Facilities. Objectives have been identified for each goal and include strategies as to how each objective can be achieved.

A short-term work program is also included in the Comprehensive Plan. For each objective, the work program identifies the responsible agencies and/or departments, a time line for completion, anticipated cost and known sources of funding. The work program is updated every five years and is presently under evaluation.

As a formal policy document, the Comprehensive Plan serves as a master blueprint for guiding the community. Where there is a relationship, local government plans (including land use plans), ordinances and programs (e.g., Capital Improvement Programs) should be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan to ensure that the adopted vision will be attained.

WHAT IS THE UNIFIED ZONING ORDINANCE?

The zoning ordinance serves as an important

aahh... rain

STORMWATER 101

By: Jackie Jackson Teel
MPC Natural Resources
Administrator

Stormwater runoff, water that doesn't soak into the ground during a storm, causes most of the flooding in our low-lying coastal city. Polluted stormwater is also a threat to our drinking water and local waterways. Over the past number of years a lot of money has been invested into bettering the area's stormwater management systems. These systems protect our streets, structures and property by significantly reducing flooding throughout our region. But challenges remain. As our area grows, the demands on our system will also increase. Increasingly stringent guidelines from the State and Federal Environmental Protection agencies will also raise the costs of operating and maintaining the system.

As a homeowner, you can help support our stormwater management systems and protect your property, our local waterways and drinking water in several ways:

- Reduce impervious surfaces on your property. Use pavers, or replace concrete or asphalt slabs with porous asphalt or permeable concrete.
- Landscape with native plants. Native plants tend to have more extensive root systems that take in and hold water much better than lawns.
- Don't leave soil exposed. Bare soil can be nearly as impervious as concrete. Cover it with mulch, wood chips, or gravel.
- Never blow or rake leaves into the street, storm drains or ditches. Just a small pile of leaves can block storm drains and cause flooding on the street right outside your home.
- Never pour or dump paint, oil, chemicals or other pollutants into the street or storm drains. Those storm drains lead directly into our local waterways. Anything poured down them goes untreated into our beautiful surrounding environment.
- Add a rain barrel or cistern to your property. Runoff from your roof can be collected in these devices and used to irrigate landscaping.

To learn more about stormwater please visit: www.MPCNaturalResources.org

**NEED TO GET OUT?
PLANT A RAIN GARDEN**

Looking for a warm spring activity to

get you active and gardening outdoors? Consider planting a rain garden to capture and filter rain that runs off your roof, sidewalks and driveway.

Studies have proven that capturing rain before it enters a storm drain not only replenishes groundwater supplies, but also allows nature to filter any harmful pollutants that may be carried through a storm drain directly into our coastal waterways. For more information on design and maintenance visit: http://www.low-impactdevelopment.org/raingarden_design/downloads/BuildRainGarden.pdf

TIPS ON OUTDOOR WATER CONSERVATION

1. Hold your garden hose close to the roots of plants so that there's little waste and evaporative loss (soaker hoses are even more efficient).
2. Water slowly so that the soil soaks up all the water you use. To avoid the possibility of disease (due to promotion of fungi growth), and minimize evaporation, the best time to water is very early morning hours (dawn to approximately 9 am). Avoid watering on windy days (which increases evaporation).
3. Use the principles of Xeriscape (pronounced ZERE-AH-SCAPE). This landscaping method uses native and drought-tolerant plants, mulch to hold in moisture, and grouping plants according to your water and light needs.
4. Never let water run unnecessarily. Installing a spray handle helps.
5. Allow your grass to grow to approximately 3 inches before cutting.
6. Install a timer and a rain sensor on outdoor irrigation systems.
7. Position sprinklers so that they do not water the pavement. Do not over water allowing water to run down the street. Note that turf grasses can survive on as little as a half inch of water per week.
8. When washing the car, place the car on the grass and use soap and water from a bucket. Use a hose with a shut-off nozzle for the final rinse so that the water runs only when you need it.
9. Don't use the hose to clean driveways and sidewalks; instead use a broom, which will provide more exercise.
10. Mulch plants to reduce evaporation and help retain moisture. Mulch is available from Chatham County at no charge.

For more information, please call 652-6858.

And of course: Recycle the Rain by building rain barrels or cisterns.

One World, Many Stories



LIVE OAK
Public Libraries

Reading Program Reaps Rewards

The 2011 Summer Reading Program will be held June 1 through Aug. 19 at all Live Oak Public Libraries branches in Chatham, Effingham and Liberty Counties. Last year nearly 13,000 children registered for the program, which is open to children and teens up to 18 years old. This year's theme is "One World, Many Stories".

To get started, stop by any Live Oak Public Libraries branch and pick up your "One World" Reading Log. Keep track of your reading and you'll receive rewards and be eligible for prize drawings.

This year's reading incentives include coupon sheets with valuable offers from cultural, recreational and dining outlets, as well as free books courtesy of Barnes & Noble. VIP readers will be eligible for golden tickets and swag bags at the 2011 Savannah Children's Book Festival.

In addition to library programs and storytimes, special guests will include Magical Educator Chad Crews, Fiddlin' Dan the Mountain Man, Pint Size Polkas, Music Alive, Hampstead Players, and Ronald McDonald.

"The program is a great way for our young readers to maintain and improve their reading skills during the summer months," said Live Oak Public Libraries Foundation Vice President George Hubbs, who has made the program his priority. "We want children not only to progress in their reading, but also think of books and libraries as a fun and great adventure." Hubbs recalls that, as a boy, he would

hide underneath his bed covers with a flashlight reading "Sherlock Holmes" when he was supposed to be sleeping. "The Summer Reading Program can change young lives forever," he said.

For more information on the 2011 Summer Reading Program, visit www.liveoakpl.org.

MAKE A SPLASH™

WATER SAFETY DAY '11

May 14th, 2011 From 1 - 5PM
Ages 6 - 12

Pre-Registration is required and limited spaces are available. To register, contact the Aquatic Center at 912-652-6793. Registration deadline will be April 30, 2011.

Enrollment is free!
Participants will need to bring: Swim bag with their name on it, proper swim wear, towel and change of clothes (if desired).

Logos for sponsors: Starfish Aquatics, Safe Kids Savannah, Chatham County Aquatic Center, GCAT, and FEA KAYAK GEORGIA.

Water Safety, Games, Lifeguard Demo, Kayaking, Snorkeling