

CHATHAM COUNTY CONNECTION



October 2009



Pete Liakakis
Chairman



Helen L. Stone
District 1



James J. Holmes
District 2



Patrick Shay
District 3



Patrick K. Farrell
District 4



Harris Odell, Jr.
District 5



David M. Gellatly
District 6



Dean Kicklighter
District 7
Chairman Pro Tem



Dr. Priscilla D. Thomas
District 8 Vice Chairman

Message from the Chairman

cane Season has been nonexistent, that doesn't mean that CEMA isn't working. Page 4 of this issue provides information on how to respond to Hazardous Materials Emergencies. Good planning and knowing what to do during emergency situations can make a difference in the safety of your home, and workplace. For further information on how to prepare your home or business for a hazardous materials emergency, always feel free to call CEMA at 201-4500.

Another county department that has been busy this summer is Mosquito Control. The threat of West Nile Virus along with various other diseases keeps this staff busy during the peak months. The article in this edition highlights all of their operation on both the ground and in the air. As a reminder, you

can help to keep down the mosquito population by changing or discarding the water every two weeks in any outdoor containers you may have. When mosquitos seem unbearable in your neighborhood, call them at 790-2540 so their staff can respond and resolve the problem.

I, along with my fellow commissioners, am proud of the work the staff of Chatham County provides to our citizens. Their dedication and commitment to doing a job well done inspire us to strive even harder to keep up the quality and courteous service you expect from local government. Also in this edition, is helpful information from Voters Registration.

I encourage all of our citizens to be registered voters. This is one way of ensuring that your voices are heard.
Chairman, Pete Liakakis

GIS Day 2009

GIS is an integral part of business and government in Chatham County and Coastal Georgia.

For example, on August 27, SAGIS, CEMA, Southside Fire, Savannah Fire, Bloomingdale Fire, Pooler Fire, Garden City Fire, Tybee Fire, Port Wentworth Fire, 165th Fire, Isle of Hope Fire and Thunderbolt Fire Departments and Chatham County GIS, all came together to iron out exact boundaries for fire service. Although most areas were agreed upon, areas of uncertainty became obvious when viewed through a highly accurate GIS map. These discrepancies are being resolved, and will be reflected in a new GIS map that will be the first truly precise and com-

prehensive fire district map. The advantages of this clarification for both CEMA and the individual fire departments are: reduced response time, decreased areas of double coverage (where two fire departments respond to the same call), and better cooperation during a mutual aid situation such as a disaster.

To acknowledge everyday occurrences such as this, and thus highlight the importance of GIS to the Savannah area, SAGIS and the GIS community of Southeast Georgia would like to announce GIS Day Savannah 2009, to be held at the 165th Airlift Wing at the Savannah Hilton Head International Airport on November 18. Eighth grade students

from Chatham County schools (both public and private) have been invited to both attend and participate. The general public, as always, is invited to attend the afternoon portion beginning at 1:30 p.m. and lasting until 3:00p.m. Please come and learn what GIS in Savannah is all about! For more information go to www.gisdaysavannah.org/



As we approach the end of another Hurricane Season, we can all be thankful for this year's lack of tropical disturbances. At the same time, Chatham County is beginning its fiscal year trying to navigate through the economic disturbance of a recession. With this in mind, I am pleased to report that we were able to pass our new budget without any tax increases, loss of employees, or reduction in the service you expect from your local government.

While this year's Hurri-

Early/Advance Voting and Voting by Mail for 2009

The Chatham County Board of Registrars wants all county electors to be aware of the procedures for absentee mail-out voting; absentee early voting; and absentee advance voting for the upcoming November 3, 2009 General Election/Special Election. Approximately 72,000 of the county's registered voters reside within the polling precincts involved in this election. In addition to the scheduled municipal elections, county voters will also decide who will fill the unexpired terms of State Senate District 1 and State House District 159. Municipal Elections will be conducted for Bloomingdale, Garden City, Pooler, Port Wentworth, Thunderbolt, and Tybee Island residents. If you would like to confirm your eligibility to vote in the upcoming election please contact the Voter Registration Office at 912-790-1520, 1117 Eisenhower Drive, Suite E, Savannah, Georgia 31406. Your district information and polling loca-

tion may also be reviewed on the website poll locator at www.sos.georgia.gov/elections/polllocator/. If you need to register or change your address, please do so prior to the October 5, 2009 registration deadline.

Remember that for those electors who would prefer to avoid the Election Day lines or simply desire to vote early - Georgia offers absentee early voting, no reason required, 21 days prior to this year's election. This option may be utilized either by requesting a ballot by mail or by early in-person voting at the Chatham County Voter Registration Main Office. During the 2008 November General Election approximately 50% of the total votes cast were done via mail-out/early/advance voting.

Requests for mail out absentee ballots may be submitted now. Requests may be submitted either by mail or by fax. For detailed information on the application process for a mail out ballot call the Voter Registration Office at 912-790-1520 or visit the website at www.chathamcounty.org/voter.html. Please submit your

application early. The last day to submit an absentee mail out application is October 30, 2009. Application requests may be mailed to Voter Registration, P. O. Box 13757, Savannah, GA 31416 or fax to 912-790-1519. Since this is a new election cycle, electors who are 75 years old or older, or have a physical disability must complete a new application and should indicate the reason for the request as D - Disability or E - 75 years or older. Other electors will indicate the appropriate reason as shown on the application form (i.e. NR - No Reason; OP - Out of Precinct; EO - Election Official; MST - Military Stateside; MOS - Military Overseas; CG - Care Giver for disabled person; etc.)

Absentee early voting should be available for county electors on or about October 13, 2009 thru October 30, 2009. Any eligible registered voter desiring to early vote during this period may do so in person at the Voter Registration Office, 1117 Eisenhower Dr, Suite E, Savannah, GA 31406, Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Additional ex-

tended early voting hours will also be available on Saturday, October 24, 2009, 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

The week prior to the election, October 26 - 30, 2009, is referred to as advance voting. During this period, in addition to the Main Office, the Board of Registrars conducts voting at additional satellite locations. The Islands Branch Library is utilized for island area residents and the eastern area of the county. The Chatham County Mosquito Control Office is available for voters from the western portion of Chatham. Those who work or live in the downtown area may vote early at the Savannah Civic Center. The locations and hours of operations are shown below:

Locations	Address	Hours
Voter Reg Main Office	1117 Eisenhower Dr, Suite E	8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (M,W,F)
Voter Reg Main Office	1117 Eisenhower Dr, Suite E	8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. (T, Th)
Mosquito Control	Off Dean Forest Rd	9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (M-F)
Islands Branch Library	125 Wilmington Island Rd	10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (M-F)
Civic Center	301 W. Oglethorpe Ave	9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (M-F)

Again, as a reminder, prior to Election Day confirm your registration status and poll location by calling 912-790-1520 or check the poll locator website at www.sos.georgia.gov/elections/polllocator/. The Chatham County Voter Registration Office welcomes all inquiries on matters pertaining to voter registration and absentee mail-out/early/advance voting. Ballots should be available for in person early voting beginning on or about October 13, 2009 at the Voter Registration Office, 1117 Eisenhower Dr, Suite E. Voters are highly encouraged to take advantage of the convenience of absentee early voting for the upcoming General Election/Special Election.

The Chatham County Board of Registrars meets once a month on the second Friday, at 4:00 p.m. at Voter Registration, 1117 Eisenhower Drive, Suite E, Savannah, GA 31406. All meetings are open to the public.

Board Members
Colin McRae, *Chairman*
Sage Brown, *Board Member*
Gerald Pollack, *Board Member*

Safety Net Releases 2008 Evaluation Annual Report.

The Chatham County Safety Net Planning Council (CCSNPC) has released the results of their 2008 Evaluation and the first Annual Report for fiscal year 2008-2009. CCSNPC providers began collecting data in 2004 to track progress in their efforts to improve access to care for the uninsured in Chatham County. Five primary care providers (Curtis V. Cooper Prima-

ry Health Care, Community Health Mission, J.C. Lewis Health Care, Good Samaritan and St. Mary's Health Care), three support and/or specialty care providers (Community Cardiovascular Council, Chatham CARE clinic and MedBank) and the emergency departments of Memorial Health University Medical Center and St. Joseph's/Candler Health Systems contributed data to 2008 evaluation process.

The Chatham County Safety Net Planning Council serves as a countywide planning group for health care for the un- and underinsured citizens of Chatham County. Created in 2004 to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the local health care delivery system and to assist the County Commissioners in better meeting the health care needs of uninsured and underinsured constituents, the Chatham County Safety Net

Planning Council's goals are to strengthen the health care infrastructure, build capacity within the community, improve access to health care for the uninsured and underinsured, and improve health outcomes. In 2004, Safety Net primary care providers reported serving a total of 18,081 patients and providing 69,880 patient visits. In 2008, the number of patients increased to 25,927 and the patient visits to

92,202. The 43% increase in patients served and the 32% increase in visits represents a substantial improvement in access to primary care for the uninsured in our county over the four year period. To read the complete reports, visit the Chatham County Safety Net Planning Council website, www.chatham-safetynet.org. As additional health services are added and clinic hours are extended, www.chathamsafetynet.org

is updated with latest information. The website also features an up-to-date printable brochure which serves as a handy pocket guide. Visit the site often to learn about health care, health services, recent news and the activities of the Council providers.

2009-2010 CHATHAM COUNTY YOUTH COMMISSION SWORN IN!



SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION	CLASS	TERM
CHAIR: Ms. Tilly Isaacson*	Savannah Arts Academy SR	3rd
VICE CHAIR: Ms. Samantha Schikowski	Johnson High School JR	2nd
SECRETARY: Ms. Meredith Stone*	Johnson High School SR	3rd
PARLIAMENTARIAN: Ms. Jazmine Ellis	Groves High School JR	2nd
EXECUTIVE MEMBERS: Ms. Kristen Palmares	Calvary Baptist JR	2nd
Ms. Alexis Slay*	Johnson High School SR	3rd
Ms. AnnMarie Wakely	Savannah Christian JR	2nd

MEMBER SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION	CLASS	TERM
Ms. Brittany Bell*	Jenkins SR	1st
Ms. Portia Bosco	Windsor Forest SO	1st
Ms. Briyona Brack	Savannah Arts SO	1st
Mr. Eric Brantley	Jenkins High SO	1st
Ms. Alexis Brisbon	St. Vincent's SO	1st
Mr. Chris Cooley	Savannah Christian SO	1st
Ms. Carley Dawson	Savannah Arts JR	2nd
Mr. Joseph Drought	Benedictine SO	1st
Ms. Shanee' Ferguson*	Jenkins SR	2nd
Mr. Lester Foster*	Groves SR	2nd
Ms. Khadijah Green	Savannah Arts SO	1st
Ms. Taknejah Green*	Bible Baptist SR	1st
Mr. Desmond Griffith*	Bethesda Home for Boys SR	3rd
Ms. Kenjahte' Harrison	Johnson SR	3rd
Mr. Richard Jackson	Beach SO	1st
Mr. Jomell Johnson	Early College JR	1st
Mr. Kenneth Johnson	Jenkins SO	1st
Ms. Robin Laguerre	Beach SO	1st
Ms. Cindy Lee*	Calvary SR	1st
Ms. Brittany Miller	Savannah Arts SO	1st
Ms. Korbyn Mingledorf*	Early College SR	3rd
Ms. Emani Mitchell	Early College SO	1st
Ms. Malika Mobley*	Jenkins SR	1st
Ms. Jazmine Paige*	Windsor Forest SR	2nd
Mr. Brandon Sanders	Windsor Forest SO	1st
Mr. Harry Scott	Savannah Arts SO	1st
Ms. Ericka Sharpe*	Bible Baptist SR	2nd
Ms. Aigner Smith	Jenkins SO	1st
Mr. Bryan Smith	Jenkins SO	1st
Mr. Neal Stevenson	Savannah Christian JR	1st
Mr. William Stewart*	Savannah Country Day SR	3rd

* Graduating Seniors

For more information on the Chatham County Youth Commission, please check out www.ChathamYouth.com

On September 11, 2009, Van R. Johnson, II, Youth Commission Director. Area Transit and attendance at the Chatham County Commission, Savannah-Chatham School Board and Savannah City Council meetings. Since its inception, over 300 Chatham County youth have graduated from the program and are all over the country doing positive things and are active in the communities in which they live. This program has been replicated in Fulton County (Atlanta), GA, Alachua County (Gainesville), FL, Savannah, GA (Savannah Youth Council), Prince George's County, MD, Cass County (Fargo), ND and Dougherty County, (Albany), GA, Riverdale, GA and Newnan, GA with Youth Commissions soon to be started in DeKalb County, GA, Peachtree City, GA and Athens-Clarke County, GA.

The Youth Commission was founded by Dr. Priscilla D. Thomas in 1992. 2009 summer activities included tours of the Savannah History Museum, Savannah College of Art and Design, Chatham County Youth Commission Director. Area Transit and attendance at the Chatham County Commission, Savannah-Chatham School Board and Savannah City Council meetings. Since its inception, over 300 Chatham County youth have graduated from the program and are all over the country doing positive things and are active in the communities in which they live. This program has been replicated in Fulton County (Atlanta), GA, Alachua County (Gainesville), FL, Savannah, GA (Savannah Youth Council), Prince George's County, MD, Cass County (Fargo), ND and Dougherty County, (Albany), GA, Riverdale, GA and Newnan, GA with Youth Commissions soon to be started in DeKalb County, GA, Peachtree City, GA and Athens-Clarke County, GA.

“These are among the youth Chatham County has to offer,” said

No Health Insurance? Need Care?

Visit:

www.chathamsafetynet.org

The gateway to your medical home



Child Support Services Learn CPR

Saving Lives in Chatham County (SLICC) conducted a training session on October 8 for the 42 employees of Child Support Services. The session included training in the following areas:

- How to perform CPR
 - How to use an AED
 - an Automated External Defibrillator
 - How to safely perform the Heimlich maneuver
 - How to recognize when a person is having a stroke and how to respond
- According to Bob Trenkamp, President of SLICC, there

are more than 300,000 cardiac Arrests annually in the U.S. In Chatham County alone, there are two needless deaths per week because not enough of us know how to perform CPR. Immediate CPR is an important factor, but prompt defibrillation is a vital link in the chain that can spell the difference between survival and death. Calling 911 and waiting yields survival rates in the area of 5%. Call 911 immediately, Starting CPR and defibrillating within three minutes increases survival rates to over 500/0.



Child Support employees service more than 1,000 walk-in customers per month. The addition of a defibrillator and the training of the office staff have taken the office to a new level of heart safety.



2009 Faith Leaders Seminar Offers Clergy More Effective Ways to Respond to Crime Victims and Create Safer Congregations

Real life crime victimization stories. Misconduct by church officials. Legal situations that congregations can avoid. Steps that churches can take to protect their assets. And strategies and tactics that faith leaders should consider taking to protect their congregations.

These and other topics were the focus of discussion by nearly 100 local faith leaders who attended the annual 2009 Faith Leaders Seminar on Thursday, September 17, 2009, at the Coastal Georgia Center in Savannah, GA.

Faith leaders, crime victims, asset management

and liability experts and local community organizations came together for the half-day seminar to collaborate on ways to provide stronger outreach and support to victims of crime and to make congregations safer.

Chatham County district attorney Larry Chisolm began the seminar with a welcome message, followed by an opening prayer. Well-known Atlanta attorney Ed Buckley led a discussion on managing and preventing church and congregational liabilities and legal action. Buckley is a founding partner of Buckley & Klein, LLP, one of the oldest and largest law firms in Atlanta that focuses on civil rights and employment discrimination.

Savannah-based insurance agent James Wilson, who specializes in working with churches, shared helpful information on the importance of protecting church assets. Mr. Wilson is a certified financial planner and leads Wilson Insurance and Financial Planning, Inc.

Attendees were deeply touched by real life stories of crime victimization shared during the Victim Impact Panel which included:

- David Brown: a resident of Tennessee, and an outspoken victim of sexual abuse by a Catholic priest;
- Pam Abraham: a local resident whose son was murdered in 2004.
- Nicole Bush: a local resi-

dent and survivor of domestic violence.

Rev. Dr. Marie M. Fortune, author, educator and founder of the nationally known FaithTrust Institute closed out the half-day seminar with an in-depth discussion on practical support that faith leaders should consider when responding to crime victims and how faith leaders can work to create more safe and healthy congregations. Dr. Fortune is an ordained pastor and has served on the National Advisory Council on Violence Against Women for the U.S. Department of Justice and currently serves on the Defense Task Force on Domestic Violence for the U.S. Defense Department. She is also editor of the Jour-

nal on Religion and Abuse.

Members of the Savannah Chatham Family Violence Council, from law enforcement to social service agencies, offered attendees resource literature and information on local support services by Chatham County agencies. The seminar also included a book fair and continental breakfast.

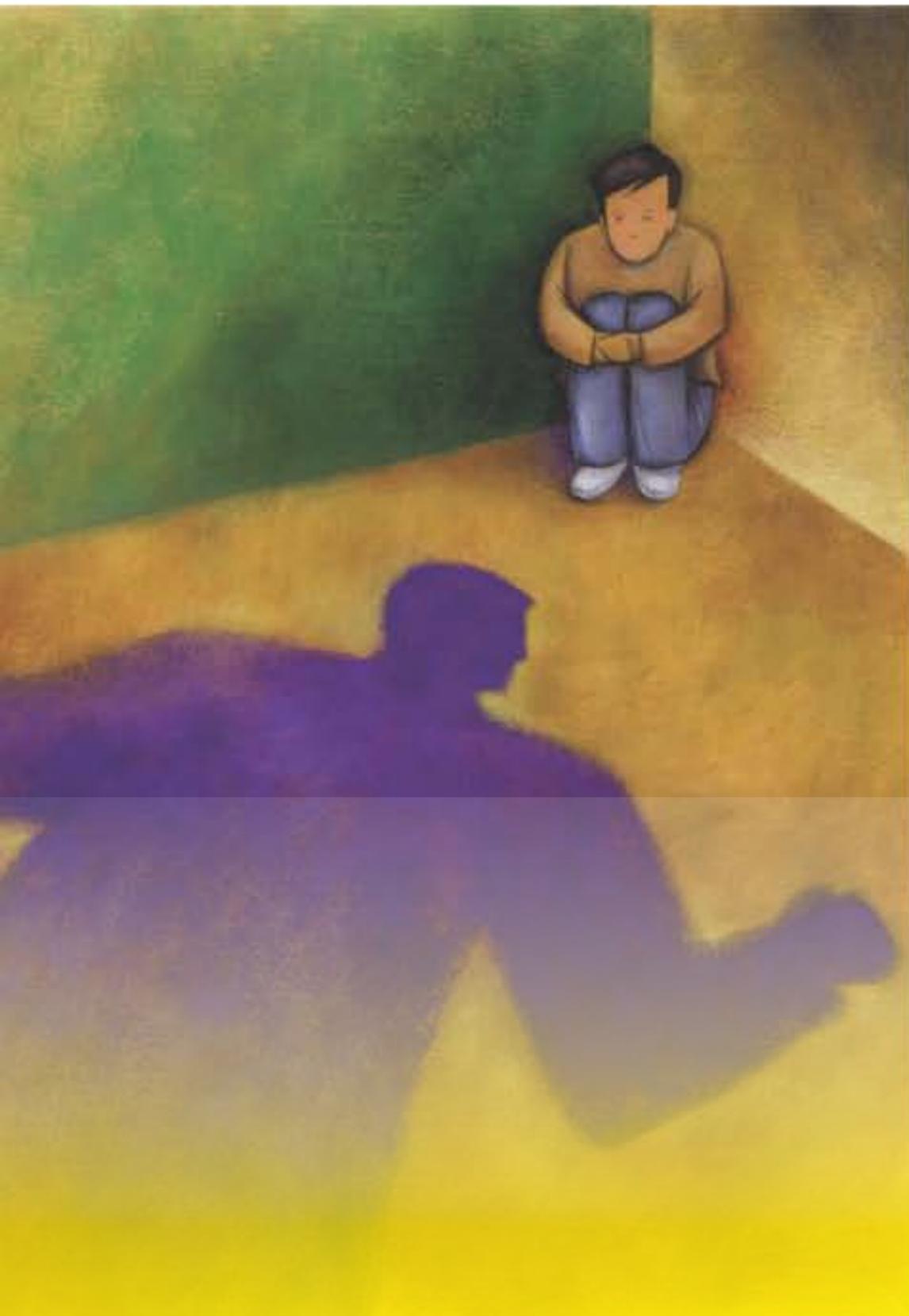
“Many individuals and families are affected by crime each year, and research reveals that during a trauma, victims are five times more likely to seek the aid of a clergy person since faith leaders are the people they know and trust,” says Chatham County district attorney Larry Chisolm. “We’re pleased

to be at the forefront of bringing together leaders in the faith community and victim advocates to collaborate on ways to increase support to crime victims and to make their congregations safer.”

The seminar is sponsored by the Chatham County Victim-Witness Assistance Program, the Chatham County District Attorney’s Office and the Savannah-Chatham Family Violence Council. For more information on the Council visit: www.familyviolencecouncil.org.

First Juvenile Mental Health Court in Georgia puts community safety first

Chatham County Juvenile Court Staff, Lacy D. Hicks



The reasons crimes are committed are not always black and white. They can be entangled with abuse, drugs, alcohol, or mental health concerns. To help address the specific mental health concerns of Chatham County juvenile Offenders, Judge John Beam, Jr. and a seven person team at Chatham County Juvenile Court started the first juvenile mental health court in Georgia in April, 2009.

It is designed to be a process of indentifying children who have been adjudicated delinquent and whose mental health needs make it unlikely that they will be successful on regular probation. “Mental health court is not just for delinquent children, but for their families, and the Chatham County Community,” said Specialized Probation Officer Kenneth Williams, who is assigned seven children in the mental health court.

“To make the mental health court a success, it takes not only the court’s team, but also cooperation and participation from the child, their family, school and other community partners and agencies the child is receiving assistance from,” explains Mental Health Clinician Mary Jo Gajewski, with KIDSNET of Georgia.

All children who are formally charged by a delinquency petition are screened for mental health issues. While only the more severe mental health diagnoses will qualify a child for Mental Health Court, the screening and assessment process will assist in linking all families to appropriate mental health services. A key part of the screening process is the multi-disciplinary team staffing involving many community agencies in developing a treatment plan for the child and family and in determining if the child qualifies for Mental Health Court.

Children who are accepted into Mental Health Court receive more intensive mental health services, are supervised more intensely by the specialized probation officer and have frequent review hearings before a judge. “This probation is intensive and even sometimes intrusive,” said Ms. Gajewski. “We show up all the time, and everywhere just to check on the child.”

“Safety for our community is the main goal”, Judge Beam said. “By ensuring the children and their families have the tools they need to be successful; we believe these children will reoffend less and will mature into law-abiding citizens.”



RESPONSE TO HAZARDOUS MATERIALS EMERGENCIES

Hazardous materials are chemical substances, which if released or misused, can pose a threat to people or the environment. These chemicals are used in industry, agriculture, medicine, research, and consumer goods. As many as 500,000 products pose physical or health hazards and can be defined as “hazardous chemicals.” Each year, over 1,000 new synthetic chemicals are introduced.

Hazardous materials (HAZMAT) come in the form of explosives, flammable, corrosive and combustible substances, poisons and radioactive materials. A HAZMAT emergency is an accident that releases a hazardous amount of a material into the environment. Hazardous substances are most often released as a result of transportation accidents or because of handling or processing accidents in manufacturing plants. These accidents sometimes result in a fire or explosion, but many times you cannot see or smell anything unusual. There are only two possible responses to HAZMAT emergencies. One is to evacuate and the other is to shelter-in-place.

EVACUATION

“Evacuation” simply means to leave the area by motor vehicle as quickly as possible.

- Listen to your radio to make sure the evacuation order applies to you and to understand if you are to evacuate immediately or if you have time to pack some essentials.
- Stay tuned to a radio or television for information on evacuation routes, shelters and procedures. Following the advice of local authorities is your safest choice.
- Avoid using the telephone except in life-threatening emergencies and then call 9-1-1 immediately. Telephone lines are frequently overwhelmed in disasters and need to be clear for emergency calls.
- If you are told to evacuate, take your Disaster Supply Kit. Local officials may call for evacuation in specific areas at greatest risk in your community. Following the advice of local authorities is your safest protection. Leave your home quickly.
- Follow the route authorities recommend. Don’t take shortcuts on the way to the shelter, they may be blocked or expose you to dangerous chemicals.
- It is important to stay calm, listen carefully and follow all instructions. Authorities will decide if evacuation is necessary based on the type and amount of chemical released and how long it is expected to affect an area. Other considerations are the length of time to evacuate the area, weather conditions and the time of day.
- If you are told to evacuate, do so immediately. Only if you have time, seal your house so contaminants cannot enter:
- Shut off all vents and close fireplace dampers.
- You don’t need to turn off your refrigerator or freezer, but do turn off other appliances and lights as you leave.
- Close and lock your windows and doors.
- Leaving the area as quickly as possible will reduce your chance of exposure to hazardous materials. Staying calm and rational will help you move safely and avoid delays or accidents caused by irrational behavior.
- Do not assume that a shelter will have everything you need. While shelters provide food and a safe place to stay, specialty items for infants and individuals on restricted diets may not be available. In most chemical emergencies, shelters will provide only emergency items such as meals, cots, and blankets.
- If you need a ride, ask a neighbor. If no neighbor is available to help you, listen to local radio or television stations for further instructions.
- Check on neighbors to make sure they have been notified, and offer help to those with disabilities or other special needs. Elderly people and people with disabilities may require additional assistance, and people who care for them or who have large families may need assistance in emergency situations.
- Take only one vehicle to the evacuation site. Traffic may be very heavy and parking at a shelter may be limited. Reduce further congestion and keep your family together by eliminating additional vehicles.
- Close your car windows and air vents, and turn off the heater or air conditioner. Many chemicals can cause damage to breathing passages.

SHELTER-IN-PLACE DURING A HAZMAT EMERGENCY

“Shelter-in-place” means to take immediate shelter where you are – at home, work, school or in between – usually for just a few hours. Local authorities may instruct you to “shelter-in-place” if HAZMAT contaminants are released into the environment.

Households should have in the room they have selected for this purpose:

- A roll of duct tape (10 millimeters thick) and scissors
- Plastic sheeting pre-cut to fit shelter-in-place room openings

Local officials are unlikely to recommend the public shelter in a sealed room for more than two or three hours because the effectiveness of such sheltering diminishes with time as the contaminated outside air gradually seeps into the shelter.

HOW WILL I KNOW WHEN I NEED TO SHELTER-IN-PLACE?

Warning Procedures Could Include:

- “All-Call” telephoning – an automated system for sending recorded messages, sometimes called “reverse 9-1-1.”
- Emergency Alert System (EAS) broadcasts on the radio or television.
- Outdoor warning sirens. Chatham County has an extensive outdoor emergency siren warning system.
- News media sources – radio, television and cable.
- NOAA Weather Radio alerts.
- Residential route alerting – messages announced to neighborhoods from vehicles equipped with public address systems.

HOW DO I SHELTER-IN-PLACE?

The appropriate steps depend on the emergency situation. If you hear a warning signal, listen to local radio or television stations for further information. You will be told what to do, including where to find the nearest shelter if you are away from your “shelter-in-place” location.

At Home

If you are told to “shelter-in-place,” act quickly. Follow the instructions of local authorities. In general, a shelter-in-place room should have ten square feet of floor space per person in order to provide sufficient air to prevent carbon dioxide buildup for five hours. In this room, you should store scissors, plastic sheeting pre-cut to fit over any windows or vents and rolls of duct tape to secure the plastic. Access to a water supply is desirable, as is a working hard-wired telephone. Don’t rely on cell phones because cellular telephone circuits may be overwhelmed or damaged during an emergency. Also, a power failure will render most cordless phones inoperable.

- Bring children and pets indoors immediately. If your children are at school, do not try to bring them home unless told to. The school will shelter them.
- Close and lock all outside doors and windows. Locking may provide a tighter seal.
- If you are told there is danger of explosion, close the window shades, blinds or curtains.
- Turn off the heating, ventilation or air conditioning system. Turn off all fans, including bathroom fans operated by the light switch.
- Close the fireplace or woodstove damper.
- Get your disaster supplies kit and make sure the radio is working.
- Take everyone, including pets, into an interior room with no or few windows and shut the door.
- If you have pets, prepare a place for them to relieve themselves where you are taking shelter. Pets should not go outside during a HAZMAT emergency because it is harmful to them and they may track contaminants into your shelter. The Humane Society suggests that you have plenty of plastic bags and newspapers, as well as containers and cleaning supplies, to help deal with pet waste.
- If you are instructed to seal the room, use duct tape and plastic sheeting, such as heavy-duty plastic garbage bags, to seal all cracks around the door into the room. Tape plastic over any windows. Tape over any vents and seal electrical outlets and other openings. As much as possible, reduce the flow of air into the room.
- Call your emergency contact and keep the phone handy in case you need to report a life-threatening condition. Otherwise stay off the phone, so that the lines will be available for use by emergency responders.
- Keep listening to your radio or television until you are told all is safe or you are told to evacuate. Do not evacuate unless instructed to do so.
- When you are told that the emergency is over, open windows and doors, turn on ventilation systems and go outside until the building’s air has been exchanged with the now clean outdoor air. Follow any special instructions of emergency authorities to avoid HAZMAT contaminants outdoors.

At Work

Check with your workplace to learn their plans for dealing with a hazardous materials emergency. Their “shelter-in-place” plans should include shelter room with adequate space for everyone to be able to sit, including an estimated number of visitors. Large storage closets, utility rooms, pantries, break rooms and copy and conference rooms without exterior windows would work well. Access to bathrooms is a plus. It is ideal to have hard-wired telephones in the rooms you select; use cordless phones (but not cell phones – the system may be overloaded in an emergency), if necessary. The rooms should be equipped with a disaster supplies kit.

- Employers should close the office, making any customers, clients or visitors in the building aware that they need to stay until the emergency is over. Close and lock all windows, exterior doors and any other openings to the outside.
- A knowledgeable person should use the building’s mechanical systems to turn off all heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems. The systems that automatically provide for exchange of inside air with outside air, in particular, need to be turned off, sealed or disabled.
- Unless there is an imminent threat, employers should ask employees, customers, clients and visitors to call their emergency contacts to let them know where they are and that they are safe.
- If time permits and it is not possible for a person to monitor the telephone, turn on call-forwarding or alternative telephone answering systems or services. If the business has voicemail or an automated attendant, it should be switched to a recording that indicates that the business is closed and that staff and visitors are remaining in the building until authorities advise it is safe to leave.
- If you are told there is danger of explosion, close any window shades, blinds or curtains near your workspace.
- Take your workplace disaster supplies kits and go to your pre-determined sheltering room(s); when everyone is in, shut and lock the doors. The rooms should have radios or TVs.
- Turn on the radios or TVs. If instructed to do so by officials, use duct tape and plastic sheeting, such as heavy-duty plastic garbage bags, to seal all cracks around the door(s) and any vents into the room. Seal any windows and/or vents with sheets of plastic and duct tape. As much as possible, reduce the flow of air into the room.
- One person per room should write down the names of everyone in the room. Call your business-designated emergency contact to report who is in the room with you and their affiliation with your business (employee, visitor, client, customer).
- Keep listening to the radio or watching TV for updates until you are told all is safe or you are told to evacuate.
- When you are told that all is safe, open windows and doors, turn on heating, ventilating and air conditioning systems and go outside until the building’s air has been exchanged with the now-clean outdoor air. Follow any special instructions given by emergency authorities to avoid HAZMAT contaminants outdoors.

At Day-Care Centers and Schools

Check with the school or day-care center to learn their plans for dealing with a hazardous materials emergency. Their “shelter-in-place” plans should include:

- Close the school. Activate the school’s emergency plan. Follow reverse evacuation procedures to bring students, faculty and staff indoors. One or two people to collect information on who is in the building when an emergency happens so that first responders can know everyone is accounted for, if necessary.
- Classrooms may be used as shelters if there are no windows or the windows are sealed and cannot be opened. Large storage closets, utility rooms and meeting rooms could be used. A gymnasium without exterior windows would also work well. Access to bathrooms is a plus.
- If visitors are in the building, provide for their safety by asking them to stay.
- Ideally, have access to the school-wide public address system in the room where the top school official takes shelter.
- Have at least one telephone line under the school’s listed telephone number in one of the shelter rooms available for answering calls from concerned parents. If time permits, it is not possible for a person to monitor the telephone and the school has voicemail or an automated attendant, change the recording to indicate that the school is closed and that students and staff are remaining in the building until authorities say it is safe to leave.
- Have all children, staff and visitors take shelter in pre-selected rooms that have phone access and stored disaster supplies kits and, preferably, access to a bathroom. Shut the doors.
- Have all shelter rooms closed. Lock all windows, exterior doors and any other openings to the outside.
- If told there is danger of explosion, make sure window shades, blinds or curtains are closed.
- Turn off heating, ventilating and air conditioning systems. Systems that automatically provide for exchange of inside air with outside air must be turned off, sealed or disabled.
- If instructed by officials, use duct tape and plastic sheeting to seal all cracks around the door(s), windows and vents into the room. As much as possible, reduce the flow of air into the room.
- If children have cell phones, allow them to use them to call a parent or guardian to let them know that they have been asked to remain in school until further notice and that they are safe. This may reduce the potential number of incoming calls.
- One teacher or staff member in each room should write down the names of everyone in the room and call the school’s designated emergency contact to report who is in that room.
- Everyone should stay in the room until school officials, via the public address system, announce that all is safe or say everyone must evacuate.
- Once the word has been given that all is safe, everyone should go outside when the building’s ventilation systems are turned back on. Follow any special instructions given by emergency authorities to avoid HAZMAT contaminants outdoors.