

CHATHAM COUNTY CONNECTION



October 30, 2016



Al Scott
Chairman



Helen Stone
District 1



James Holmes
District 2



Tony Center
District 3



Patrick Farrell
District 4



Yusuf Shabazz
District 5



Lori Brady
District 6



Dean Kicklighter
District 7



Priscilla Thomas
District 8

For more information on the current district lines visit:

<http://www.chathamcounty.org/Government/BoardofCommissioners/CommissionDistrictMaps.aspx>

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Al Scott, Chairman

In 2016, Chatham County has experienced several storms resulting from a very active tropical season. With Tropical Storm Hermine and Tropical Storm Julia, the effects were isolated and the damages were contained to primarily the eastern areas of the County. A few weeks later, Chatham County was faced, once again, with the third tropical system within a 30 day period. Hurri-

cane Matthew began impacting Chatham County on October 7th and officially produced Hurricane Category 1 sustained winds, and Category 2 gusts on Tybee Island. Hurricane Matthew became the first hurricane to significantly impact Chatham County since Hurricane David in 1979. Leading up to the actual impact of Hurricane Matthew, Chatham Emergency Management Agency (CEMA) began monitoring the storm as it formed in the Atlantic and moved toward the Caribbean becoming a tropical storm on September 28, 2016.

As Tropical Storm Matthew progressed northward, CEMA met with county and municipality leaders to discuss preparations and timelines leading up to the potential for Matthew to become a major hurricane. Communication

regarding Matthew began as early as September 28th with messages to emergency management partners and county staff announcing the need to monitor Matthew's development. Regular information was distributed on a routine basis to ensure partners and county staff members remained aware of the developing system. On Monday, CEMA began distributing tropical packages and issuing guidance on preparing for the storm and promoting their readiness.

Beginning Tuesday, October 4, 2016, conference calls occurred between municipal partners, emergency management team members, Chatham County officials, and the National Weather Service to discuss the changing predictions and path of Hurricane Matthew. Also, as information became available, the CEMA Director ensured the

most current information was distributed.

Shortly following the October 4th 11:00 AM advisory on Hurricane Matthew, I met with the CEMA Director Dennis Jones and County Manager Lee Smith to review the dynamics of the storm and discuss the various options available to me regarding an evacuation decision. Information was presented to discuss the evacuation process, communication methods and statistics of the storm. At the time of this initial discussion, the majority of the forecast models projected the storm to remain off-shore from Chatham County. Additionally, the estimated models from the Hurricane Center projected the storm to drop in intensity by the end of the week.

continued on p. 4

Orange Barrels will overtake Chatham County in 2017!

The calendar year of 2017 will see plenty of construction, and frustration, to the traveling public. The Georgia Department of Transportation is ramping up many of the projects that have been on the drawing board for many years. Most of this comes from the passage of HB 170 a couple of years ago. The much needed change in the transportation funding for the State of Georgia has solidified the amount of money that the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) sees on an annual basis. The GDOT is pushing many of the projects and maintenance programs forward in an attempt to catch up on the needs of the system. The following are just some of the improvements that will be seen and the construction that is ongoing in some areas.



Interstate 16. The GDOT has hired a consultant to do the preliminary plans for the project. Many commuters are already seeing surveyors on the route. This project will widen the current 4 lane section to 6 lanes. Much of the delay along the route is due to the lack of merge capacity at the various interchanges (I-516 / SR 307 / Chatham Parkway). The widening for the project will occur to the center of the corridor. With the widening there will also be modifications

to many of the ramps and a replacement of the bridge at State Route 307 (Dean Forest Road). Considerations for other improvements along the corridor are being studied at this time. The intent of the project at this time is to make it a Design / Build project. This method of construction allows the project to be fast tracked and work to begin earlier than traditional methods. Although this is a much needed improvement, work will make the commute even more laborious over the next couple of years. Work is expected to begin in calendar year 2017.

Another improvement along this corridor is the construction of two fly-over ramps at the I-95 / I-16 interchange. The clover design of the interchange creates many weave points that are not ideally suited for the demands placed on it. The two ramps being considered at this time would be for traffic that is south bound on

continued on p. 4

County Partnership Helps Stop Hunger

On Friday, September 23rd, the Chatham Emergency Management Agency (CEMA) and Occupational Safety and Risk Management (Safety) teams partnered with United Way HandsOn Savannah and America's Second Harvest of Coastal Georgia to pack boxes of food for the Mobile Food Pantry. The Mobile Food Pantry is one of Second Harvest's Hunger Relief Programs and distributes emergency food relief to rural residents who struggle with providing enough food for their family. Over the last year, Second Harvest transported approximately 15,000 pounds of food for distribution to families in over 21 counties across Southeast Georgia.

The Chatham County team spent two hours at the warehouse creating an assembly line to fill the boxes of food. Each member had a specific task and worked together to fill and package each box. "It's a great feeling to know two hours of work helped provide meals for over 300 families in our community," said CEMA employee Randall Mathews.

This is the first time CEMA and Safety have partnered together for a community service project and, due to the success of the event, will partner again for similar outings in the future.



It's Flu Season: Don't Wait to Vaccinate

It may still feel a little like summer outside but as we move into fall, something else may blow in with the change of seasons: the flu virus. Don't wait to get vaccinated against the flu. Several locations, including the Chatham County Health Department, physician offices, and pharmacies, now offer the flu vaccine.

Getting the flu vaccine is the best way to protect yourself, your family, and your community from the flu. Every flu season is different and we never know how bad a flu season is going to be or how long it's going to last which is why it is so important to get the flu vaccine every year.

Some things to know about this year's flu season:

- The vaccine has been updated for the 2016-2017 flu season so it should be a better match for flu viruses.
- Only the flu shot is recommended this year because there are questions about the effectiveness of the nasal spray form of the vaccine.
- The Chatham County Health Department, located at 1395 Eisenhower Drive, offers regular flu shots for \$29 and high dose flu shots, made especially for people 65 years and older, for \$50. No appointment is necessary for flu shots.

Stop the spread of germs that make you and others sick!

Cover your Cough

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.

Put your used tissue in the waste basket.

You may be asked to put on a surgical mask to protect others.

Wash with soap and water or clean with alcohol-based hand cleaner.

Clean your Hands after coughing or sneezing.



Getting vaccinated not only protects you, it also protects people around you - like babies, older people, and people with chronic health conditions - who may be at risk from getting seriously ill from the flu. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends everyone 6 months of age and older receive a yearly flu vaccine. People at high risk of serious flu complications include young children, pregnant women, people with chronic health conditions like asthma, heart disease, diabetes and lung disease and people 65 years of age and older.

It takes about two weeks after vaccination for the immune system to fully respond to the vaccine and provide the body protection. While getting the flu vaccine is the best way to prevent the flu, there are other things we can all do every day to prevent getting or spreading the flu viruses and other viruses:

- Avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you get sick with flu-like illness, stay home for at least 24 hours after the fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. The fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.
- While sick, limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them.



- Try to cough or sneeze into the corner of your elbow and not your hand or cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs like the flu.

Chatham County to Host Housing Forum

Housing is fundamental in all of our communities. Chatham County hosted its first-ever forum on this important topic on August 17. An adequate supply of quality affordable housing is critical to building a healthy and stable community. We encourage your participation as we explore options and challenge assumptions about what works to build safe neighborhoods and make housing affordable for our workforce, seniors and special needs populations.

Our featured speaker was Phillip Mangano, president and CEO at American Round Table to Abolish Homelessness, spoke of successes of the "housing first" strategy, as well as other tactics that are data-based and have been used by cities in Georgia and around the U.S. As former executive director of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, Mr. Mangano was recognized for his leadership in housing issues by *Governing* magazine in 2006.

Participants had the opportunity to learn about an array of services, resources and supports provided through the Georgia Department of Community Affairs as well as the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. Whether the community is dealing with

homelessness or working to ensure a broad range of housing options exist, Chatham County and its partners explored options and challenged assumptions about what works to build safe neighborhoods and make housing affordable for all residents.

Chatham County's recent score (125 out of a possible 200) is in part attributable to lack of affordable housing options for thousands of residents in our communities. As a result local elected officials met with Mr. Mangano to discuss strategies for addressing the scarcity of affordable housing in our community. In addition participants had the opportunity to hear about specific projects currently underway in Garden City as well as City of Savannah.

Recommendations from the forum that are being considered include: The creation of a county-wide housing task force which would then work to revise ordinances and policies specific housing and landlords, identify and address barriers to access existing housing, and explore creative financing tools. If you are interested in serving on the Chatham County Housing Taskforce please contact us at housing@chathamcounty.org

Sit and Be Fit



In the previous issues of Chatham County Connection we brought you stories of how Chatham County is meeting the needs of its citizens with disabilities and meeting the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act at the same time. We've talked about accommodations at the Aquatic Center and the Get Excited and Move program (GEM) at the Anderson/Cohen Weightlifting Center.

In this issue we want to highlight the Sit and Be Fit program at the Frank G. Murray Community Center on Whitmarsh Island.

The Sit and Be Fit program was designed for people with a disability or that are recovering from an injury or surgery and cannot stand for long periods of time. It is also great for those who have severe weight problems, or simply have not exercised in years and need to ease back into a routine of physical activity. The class is held on Fridays at 9 a.m. and is a well-rounded 45 minute class that takes place entirely in a seated position so it is wheelchair friendly.

The class was created in May of this year by

Jodi Moody, Recreation Supervisor at the Frank G Murray Community Center. Jodi has been a certified Pilates instructor for 10 years and has been at the FGM Center since 2007 teaching Pilates and other core conditioning classes and is dedicated to helping people regain physical activity and wellness in their lives.

Jodi customizes each Sit and Be Fit class based on the participants who are present that day. She can modify the class to the abilities of each person by using a variety of small apparatus "props," including Thera bands, mini exercise balls, hand weights, Pilates rings, plastic plates and more. Using the props, she creates routines that include cardiovascular, isometric, and flexibility exercises, along with strength training and core conditioning. And to top it all off, she makes exercising fun.

One regular had this to say; "[The] Sit & Be Fit Class at the community center has really helped me. Jodi is an outstanding instructor who gives consideration to the needs and physical limitations of her students. Her goal is to provide a

good workout while having fun. I leave the class feeling so much better physically and I continue many of the routines I've learned at home." – Jeanne C.

Perhaps best of all, the program is free, so people on a fixed income or who may have exhausted insurance coverage for Physical Therapy can participate without any financial burden.

In addition to the Sit and Be Fit class, the Frank G. Murray Community Center has a wide variety of programs for participants of all ages. They have Zumba, Line Dancing, Toddler Arts and Crafts, Yoga, even a Friday Night Kid's Movie that parents can drop the kids off at and come back to pick them up when it's over.

The Center also has a full kitchen, and is available for rent.

For more information contact:
Jodi L Moody, Recreation Supervisor
Frank G Murray Community Center, (912) 898-3320
160 Whitmarsh Island Road Savannah GA 31410
<https://parks.chathamcounty.org/Parks/Community-Centers/Frank-G-Murray>

Don't let the flu get the best of you. Protect yourself and your loved ones from flu by getting vaccinated early.



Chatham County complies with all aspects of the Americans with Disabilities Act but sometimes we miss something. If you or anyone you know needs help, because of a disability, accessing any service the county provides please contact James Aberson the Chatham County ADA Coordinator. He can be reached by phone at (912) 652-7937 or email at jeaberson@chathamcounty.org.



Get out and Walk: Walkie Talkies Returns

Chatham County Parks & Recreation... Bringing Quality to Life!

Featuring the Frank G Murray Community Center & Whitmarsh Preserve Trail

Cooler weather means we are ready to get out and walk together again! Beginning October 5th, Every WEDNESDAY & FRIDAY Morning at 10:30, we depart from the Community Center and take a walk thru the YMCA trail and over to the Whitmarsh Preserve Trail.

We will have a fast group and a not-so-fast group, led by recreation leaders here at the Frank G Murray Community Center.

Walk time is approx. 1 hour



Walkie Talkies is a WEATHER PERMITTING group activity.

Route varies

OPTIONAL: Bring your WALKING POLES, for burning more calories and additional core conditioning



12 Benefits of Walking

1. Lose Weight
2. Healthy Heart
3. Increase Self-Esteem
4. Tones Muscles
5. Increases Metabolism
6. Reduces Stress
7. Improves Mood
8. Increased Energy
9. Decrease chance of injuries
10. Low Impact
11. Reduce risk of High Blood Pressure
12. Strengthens Bones/Joints

Coastal Campaign for Healthy Kids Offers In-Person Medicaid and PeachCare Enrollment and Renewal Assistance



The Coastal Campaign for Healthy Kids offers enrollment and renewal assistance for Children's Health Insurance Programs, Medicaid and PeachCare for Kids to families who would like to work through the application process with the help of a personal enrollment assister. Most children and teens (Ages 0-19) in Chatham County qualify for one of these free or low-cost health insurance programs. Benefits include regular check-ups, shots, doctor and dentist visits, hospital care, mental health services, prescriptions and more.

Getting a child covered gives parents one less thing to worry about. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly one out of three children aged 5 to 17 years missed one or more school days due to illness or injury. Children who have health insurance are better prepared to learn in school and they are less likely to miss school because they are sick

Eligibility for Medicaid and PeachCare for Kids is based on family size and income. Children in a family of four earning up to \$59,904 a year may qualify.

Introducing Our New Team Members

The Campaign is pleased to introduce additions to the Campaign Team and welcome Vira Salzburn, Chloe Long and Yahira Heraldez. Vira serves as our program coordinator and Chloe and Yahira are "Mobile" Enrollment Assisters.

The Mobile Enrollers will offer Children's Health Insurance enrollment assistance at various locations, days and times throughout Chatham County and are available for individual appointments. Additionally, Yahira is bilingual and can assist helping Spanish-speaking parents/guardians. Please check with coastalcampaign.org for a list of upcoming enrollment events or call for an appointment.



Enrollment Specialist, Chloe Long helps families enroll and renew in Medicaid and PeachCare for Kids



Vira Salzburn is the new Program Coordinator for the Coastal Campaign for Healthy Kids



Yahira Heraldez is the Campaign's Bilingual (Spanish-English) Enrollment Specialist

To see if your child is eligible or to enroll now, call (912) 661-3040 or visit coastalcampaign.org

Our Enrollment Assistance Partners...

In Chatham County, in-person assistance for signing up or renewing coverage is available from the Campaign for Healthy Kids enrollment partners:

Locations Accepting Walk ins

Bull Street Public Library
2002 Bull Street, Savannah
Details: 2nd Tuesday of each month
Hours: 5pm-8pm
Next events: November 8 & December 13

Centro Hispano de Savannah
First Hispanic Baptist Church
(SE HABLA ESPAÑOL)
1 Gamble Road, Savannah
912-429-3803
Hours: Tuesday, 6pm-9pm and Thursday, 9am-4pm, 6pm-9pm

Locations Accepting Walk ins and Appointments

St. Mary's Community Center
812 W. 36th Street, Savannah
912-447-0578 •
Hours: Monday-Thursday, 9am-3pm

Centro Hispano de Savannah
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
(SE HABLA ESPAÑOL)
1802 Abercorn St, Savannah
912-232-0274
Hours: Mondays 6pm-9pm

Locations Accepting Appointments Only

Chatham County Safety Net Planning Council
Chatham County Health Department
1395 Eisenhower Drive, Savannah
912-356-2887
Hours: Monday-Friday 9am-4pm

Curtis V. Cooper Primary Health Center
(SE HABLA ESPAÑOL)
2 Roberts Street, Savannah
912-527-1000
Hours: Monday, Wednesday & Friday 8am-5pm, Tuesday & Thursday 8am-7pm, Saturday 9am-2pm

Moses Jackson Advancement Center
1410B Richard Street, Savannah
912-525-2166
Hours: Monday-Friday 9am-2pm

Step Up Savannah
428 Bull Street, Savannah
912-232-6747
Hours: Monday-Friday 9am-4pm

Coastal Campaign for Healthy Kids Mobile Enrollment

Call for locations.
912-661-1272
912-661-1290 (SE HABLA ESPAÑOL)
Hours: Monday 8:30am-4:30pm, Saturday 10am-12:00pm

Free In Personal Enrollment Help for Children's Health Coverage at the Bull Street Public Library November 8th



FREE in-person, enrollment and renewal assistance for children's health insurance programs, Medicaid and PeachCare for Kids, Pregnancy Medicaid and other public benefits (SNAP and CAPS) will be available at the Bull Street Public Library, 2002 Bull Street, Tuesday, November 9, 2016, from 5:00PM-8:00PM in the first floor board room (Please arrive by 7:30PM)

The Coastal Campaign for Healthy Kids will provide one-on-one enrollment assistance on a first come, first served basis. If you are unable to attend, please call Chloe Long at 912-661-1272 or Yahira Heraldez (se habla Español) at 912-661-1290.

For more information on the Campaign for Healthy Kids, call Campaign Manager, Eva Elmer at 912-661-3040 or visit coastalcampaign.org.

We ask everyone to bring a government-issued ID and proof of income.

This event is free and open to the public.



With the Cooler Weather Comes Fall Sports, Get Covered, Get in the Game!

As a parent, you want to do everything you can to be sure your child is prepared to play fall sports—including having the required physicals and emergency and specialist care for unexpected injuries. Call 912-661-3040 to talk to an enroller today!

Chairman's Message

continued from p. 1

On Wednesday, October 5th, after the 11:00 AM advisory, I met again with the CEMA Director, County Manager and County Attorney to review the evacuation decision making process, the timeline and other necessary information regarding Matthew. During this meeting, the forecast models still expected Matthew to stay off shore and decrease in intensity. In an evacuation decision, the Chairman has sole authority to issue a decision for the County under the Georgia Emergency Management Act and the Chatham County Emergency Management Ordinance. Based on the information presented, I decided to issue an evacuation order for the islands east of the Wilmington River and other low-lying areas. This evacuation order was to begin on Thursday, October 6, 2016.

In an evacuation decision, each jurisdiction has the authority to issue additional orders for their jurisdiction that are more stringent than the County's order. Tybee Island elected to issue a mandatory evacuation order for their community. As Chairman, I supported their decision. This same level of authority extends to the State as well. The Governor's office has the authority to issue more strict evacuation decisions if desired. I had several discussions with the Governor regarding the evacuation timing and decision. The Governor asked if a mandatory evacuation order would be reasonable, and I replied "Yes, I don't have a problem with that Governor." With this common understanding, the Governor issued a mandatory evacuation order for all coastal counties and we both issued orders to evacuate all areas east of I-95 in Chatham County. This trigger allowed for all eastbound lanes of I-16 to be turned to westbound lanes to facilitate the evacuation process.

Chatham County began feeling the impacts of Hurricane Matthew on Friday, October 7, 2016. Those residents who remained were urged to shelter in place until after the storm. Hurricane Matthew's full strength was evident in the early hours of Saturday, October 8, 2016, as he passed within 30 miles of Chatham County's coastline.

When it was safe to move around the county, Damage Assessment Teams and critical infrastructure workers began assessing the damage to Chatham County. Current estimates indicate the debris caused by Matthew is about 1,278,000 cubic yards, or roughly enough to fill the Martin Luther King, Jr. Arena in the Savannah Civic Center 11 times! Public Works crews began clearing main roads and highways so that Georgia Power teams could begin restoring power to the entire county.

On Sunday, October 9, 2016, Chatham County began the re-entry process for critical workforce employees throughout the County. This process allowed for critical workforce staff members to return and begin the important recovery and restoration steps necessary to ensuring the County's safety before allowing its citizens to return and assess their personal damage. On the full return of the County, citizens were cautioned they should expect no electricity, unknown damage and the possibility of water outages and contamination. Citizens were warned that these conditions could possibly continue for a week or longer depending on the damage to utility infrastructure. As part of the re-entry process, a county-wide curfew was put in place. The significant power outages, downed trees and other damages produced an environment too hazardous for citizens to move around the County during nighttime hours.

This Hurricane produced enough damage to qualify Chatham County for a Full Presidential Disaster Declaration. This allows FEMA programs to be available to Chatham County in the areas of Individual Assistance and Public Assistance. Shortly after the storm, FEMA teams arrived to assess damage to personal homes and property, historical sites, public buildings and schools. In order to assist as many citizens as possible, FEMA Disaster Survivor Assistance Teams are working in neighborhoods offering guidance in applying for FEMA assistance as well as working with CEMA to secure a site to serve as a Disaster Recovery Center.

Storm recovery is an ongoing process. Debris pickup is a time consuming job that will take many months to fully complete. The Public Works departments is working tirelessly to ensure that this process proceeds as expeditiously as possible. We ask that you exercise patience as our teams make their way through Chatham County collecting the debris and performing routine cleaning of areas damaged by the storm. Recovery can be a long and arduous process, especially in areas with such a large tree canopy as Chatham County.

While Chatham County does not see many hurricanes, these natural disasters remain our biggest threat. It is important to remain vigilant and prepared for the day if or when Chatham County is threatened by a direct impact from a powerful storm. Our citizens are our most important asset, and I am proud of their reaction to the evacuation process as well as in how they handled returning to damaged areas. Our strength is truly in how we pull together in times of a crisis, and Chatham County rose to the test.

PIECING TOGETHER THE TALENT PIPELINE

An Employer Networking Event



Connecting business leaders to education and training resources and understanding workforce issues to better meet employer needs.

November 3, 2016

8:00 AM - 10:00 AM

Savannah Technical College

EVENT REGISTRATION:

<http://www.eventbrite.com/e/piecing-together-the-talent-pipeline-tickets-28024128924>

Coastal Georgia Indicators Coalition, Chatham County and other local economic and workforce development partners are planning to host an Economic/Workforce networking event on Thursday November 3, 2016; called PIECING TOGETHER the TALENT PIPELINE.

The goal of the event is: To promote the community goal of building a prepared local workforce by connecting business leaders to education and training resources and understanding workforce issues to better meet employer needs. Proposed outcomes:

- Open the lines of communication between workforce development programs and businesses so that programs can better understand and meet the needs of the employer
- Gain knowledge to better refer job-seekers and job-providers to appropriate organizations
- Gain awareness of the services and access to the pipeline that stems from local workforce programs

The agenda outline includes panelist of workforce development providers, the second panel consist of employers who will share success stories. The event will include a resource center staff with a variety of agencies and departments who have an array of services and supports for employers seeking individuals that meet industry demands.

Finally, we hope this event will help providers and policy makers better understand the needs of employers and define ways to piece together the talent pool of individuals with the vacancies within our region for employment.

Event will be held at the Eckburg Auditorium at Savannah Technical College (5717 White Bluff Road).
Check-in and breakfast begin at 8:00 am
with program scheduled to begin at 8:30 am; wrap up by 10:00 am.

The event is free but online pre-registration is required:
<http://www.eventbrite.com/e/piecing-together-the-talent-pipeline-tickets-28024128924>

A CAREER OF OPPORTUNITY
APPLY ONLINE CHATHAMSHERRIFF.ORG
NEW STARTING SALARIES IN 2016!
Salaries start at \$34,518 and increase to \$35,208 after six months.

SIMPLY CHANGE UNIFORMS
ChathamSheriff.org
CHATHAM COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
NEW STARTING SALARIES IN 2016!
Salaries start at \$34,518 and increase to \$35,208 after six months.

CAREERS BEGIN HERE
ChathamSheriff.org
CHATHAM COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
NEW STARTING SALARIES IN 2016!
Salaries start at \$34,518 and increase to \$35,208 after six months.

Orange Barrels

continued from p. 1

I-95. Instead of using a clover to merge onto I-16 east bound, traffic would enter a fly-over that would bring them directly onto I-16 east bound and eliminate the clover and weave for this movement. The second fly-over would be for traffic heading west bound on I-16 that wants to get to Bryan County on south bound I-95. These two movements are the dominant ones on the interchange and will improve the safety of the interchange as a whole. Work is expected to begin in calendar year 2017.

Another project that will be very noticeable in the coming months is the maintenance of vegetation along these areas. The GDOT is planning a very aggressive campaign to clear the entire rights of way along I-16 and I-516. The most noticeable area will be that within the I-516 / I-16 interchange. The sight distance for these ramps is very limited. GDOT intends to clear cut the entire area and remove all trees. The goal is to provide better sight distance and increase safety. This work could begin before the end of the year.

Islands Expressway Bridge Replacement – The Chatham County Department of Engineering has been designing a replacement for the old Bascule Bridges for a couple of years. The age and reliability of the existing structure has deteriorated and many of the parts required to keep the bridge operational are not available. The design is to

build two high span bridges similar to the structure that crosses the Wilmington River on US 80 in Thunderbolt. Construction will be staged to keep traffic flowing but at a restricted rate during construction. The first phase of the project will be to construct the bridge to the north while traffic is maintained on the existing bridges. Once opened, all traffic will be swapped to the new bridge and the removal of the old bridges and the construction of the new one will occur. Obviously there will be delay once this swap occurs since there will only be one lane in each direction. The duration of this project is approximately 2 1/2 to 3 years. And prior to that Georgia Power will be relocating their facilities that are in conflict with the new bridge. This will be a frustrating project over this time period but once complete it will provide constant uninterrupted service over the river.

As always patience is requested when it comes to dealing with these construction projects over the coming years. Many workers will be in these corridors that are vulnerable to traffic in close proximity to their work areas. Please use caution when traveling through these areas and remember those individuals that are working to make your commute a safer and worry free one. If you have any additional questions on any of these projects you can contact the Department of Engineering at 912-652-7800.