



Daylight saving time ends Sunday, Nov. 4 at 2 a.m.



Clocks are set back one hour.

THE WIREGRASS FARMER

Serving Turner County Since 1902

HR 900 worries officials

by Ben Baker
Editor

Local officials are expressing a lot of concern over House Resolution 900 (HR900), a bill which would replace property taxes with a state wide sales tax.

The plan is being promoted heavily across the state by Speaker of the House Glenn Richardson, a Republican lawyer from Paulding County.

A planned meeting last week to discuss HR900 with officials from 8 counties and legislators from those counties was canceled almost at the last minute because none of the invited legislators could attend, according to reports from City Hall.

Rep. Austin Scott called *The Wiregrass Farmer* to say he could not attend the meeting because of meetings he'd already scheduled well in advance of the multi-county meeting.

With the General Assembly to begin meeting January, local officials said it is unlikely they will try to have another multi-county meeting to discuss HR 900.

Mr. Richardson's proposal, according to numerous officials, has been long on promises and short on details. The speaker has yet to announce a sales tax funding formula, how the money will be divided, how often money will be sent to communities from Atlanta and what if anything will be done if a community sees a shortfall.

Another problem the Speaker has so far not been willing to address is the number of entities which would receive funding through the sales tax initiative.

Georgia has 159 Counties, 180 School Systems and 535 cities. School Systems in particular know the vagaries of state funding. Several years ago the General Assembly cut school system funding "temporarily." With better economic conditions, the state coffers now have the money to cover those "temporary" cuts, but so far the General Assembly has refused to reinstate the money.

Another issue with sales tax funding is the economy, said School Superintendent Ray Jordan. Sales taxes are heavily dependent on spending. When the economy slows down, spending slows down and sales tax income slows down.

Mr. Jordan has also questioned the ability of the state to properly administer such a massive program. Earlier this year, the state revamped its sales tax

(See 900 Page 2)

In short, anything you spend money on will have an attached sales tax. That includes, according to the limited information from Speaker Richardson, tips left for waitresses, hair cuts, utility bills like water and power, medicine and more. Whether or not insurance companies will pick up the sales tax tab on doctor's visits, medicines and hospital stays remains to be seen.

SEEIN' RED



MISTI BASS, Christi Stone, Joyce Webb really, really got into Red Ribbon Week by wearing red last week at Turner County Elementary School. Photo Trish

Around Town Ashburn Council

The Nov. 1 Ashburn City Council meeting will be held at Fire Station #2 at the Eureka Campus at 7 p.m. The meeting is open to the public.

4-H Fruit Sale

Place your order now the 4-H fruit sale. Deadline for placing your order is Nov. 5. Whole boxes \$22, half box \$12. Details inside.

Boiled Peanuts

The Turner County Young Farmers once again have their fresh boiled peanuts ready for sale. Each case has 24 qt. size cans and sells for \$40 per case. Also, for each 10 cases purchased you will be given a free one. Pick up will be available at the Canning Plant in Sycamore from 11 am-12:30 pm on Wednesdays only. Remember these peanut crates make great Christmas gifts. Supplies are limited and the Young Farmers wish to thank the Community for their continued support.

Open House

Open House at Calhoun Produce, 5075 Haw Pond Rd., Ashburn, Thurs. Nov. 1 from 10 am - 7 pm. Come by and sample our products and see what items we have for Christmas.

Christmas Parade

The Annual Christmas Parade will be Saturday, Dec. 8 at 6 p.m. Lineup will be at 5 p.m. at the Civic Center. Anyone interested in having a float in the parade should call the Chamber of Commerce at 567-9696. Immediately after the parade, Merchants' Open House will be held until 9 p.m. SNOW returns to Heritage Park and Santa will be at the Chamber of Commerce for pictures.

November Fest

Don't forget "November Fest"! Nov. 3. Details inside.

Food distribution

Greater Saint Luke Interfaith Resource Center Inc. food distribution will be Saturday, November 3, at 11:00 AM until supply is exhausted. Bring with you proof of income for all household members.

Volunteers Needed

Volunteer receptionists needed at Turner County Department of Family and Children Services. Contact Mark Wright at 229-222-1188.

MORE BRIEFS, Page 5

Obituaries

Cedric Laster, 44, Douglasville
Curtis Benjamin Nelson, 63, Coverdale

Complete obituary information is on Page 5

**What will be taxed?
Everything.
A short and incomplete list, Page 2.**

Wiregrass Farmer to say he could not attend the meeting because of meetings he'd already scheduled well in advance of the multi-county meeting.

'CHIP'ing away at the lack of home ownership

by Ben Baker
Editor

With \$600,000 in grant money in Turner County to both repair homes and help make homeowners of residents here, the County and Ashburn are finding different ends of the same problem.

CHIP - the Community Housing Investment Program - is a state grant. The County Commission and Ashburn City Council each received \$300,000 under CHIP. The County's program has been underway for a while now. The City Council is expected to wrap up paperwork and officially begin its CHIP in November.

"There is a difference between good credit and bad credit. They (mortgage companies) want to see your ability to pay and willingness to pay."

Ashburn Mayor Jim Hedges

The problem is credit, or rather the lack thereof.

Under the County program, people applying for CHIP money must apply the money toward repairing their home. County Clerk Mary Wynn said a number of people have applied for the money, but wind up not being able to

qualify for the grant. Under the County's CHIP, a homeowner must match 25 percent of the CHIP money.

In other words, if a homeowner has needed repairs of \$10,000, CHIP will contribute \$7,500 and the homeowner must kick in \$2,500. However, the needed repairs requested under CHIP so far are running \$25,000 to \$35,000, County Manager Charles Kinney said. Matching 25 percent of that, \$5,000 to \$7,000 is proving beyond the means of the homeowners the CHIP is supposed to help.

(See CHIP Page 3)

Men at Work



If you've ever scraped the front end of your vehicle on the second block of E. Washington, you'll be glad to know a new curb is in place there. The new curb should prevent the "bumper scrape" so common there for years. Photo Linda Sellars

'The beaver man' finding he is welcome in Turner County

by Ben Baker, editor

When it comes to getting rid of beavers, Kirk DeKalb said everyone has been extremely nice so far.

A Doerun resident Mr. DeKalb is setting traps across Turner County in hopes of making a sizeable dent in the beaver population here. He was hired by the County Commission to trap and kill North America's largest rodent from Turner County at \$40 per beaver.

Road Superintendent J.B. Newell said the annual beaver damage repair

costs in Turner County are as much as four times what the County has budgeted to pay Mr. DeKalb.

County Extension Director Scott Utley rode around with Mr. DeKalb Friday.

"It was pretty interesting," he said. "He caught 4 in pone pond."

"Until you go and ride with him, you don't really realize (how damaging the beavers are). You really don't realize it until you see some of the subtle things, road damage, field damage,

pond dam damage, and how populated they are in certain areas. If you've got beavers you definitely know. If you don't, you don't realize it."

Mr. Utley said the County's expense for Mr. DeKalb is "most definitely" worth the money.

An article in last week's newspaper generated one call to the County seeking Mr. DeKalb's help. He's also been meeting with property owners and Mr. Utley has introduced him around.

(See BEAVER Page 3)

A government of, for and by the people, requires much from the people.

Ernie Fletcher