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Ray City Community News

Vol. 1 No. 2

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Ray City Community News



Vol. 1 No. 2

July August September
Published by Ray City Community Development Council

Quarterly

A Ray City Fourth Of July

"We hold these truths to be self evident..." So began the remarkable document that became the bedrock of a new nation. The date was July 4, 1776.

Everyone loves the 4th of July. Its a mini-vacation--a freedom from the daily business of living. A long hot day, it's the high point of summer.

In Ray City, the 4th means a day in the park; and this year, the annual celebration is taking on a whole new look. The Homecoming Committee, working closely with town officials, plan to make it an unforgettable day.

It all begins at 10:00 A.M. with a huge auction of such donated items as furniture, lawn mowers, bicycles, even a golf cart. Everything will go onto the auction block, and go home with the highest bidders.

At noon, lunch will be served in the brand new Senior Citizens Center. Local chefs will keep the charcoal glowing as they serve up spicy barbequed chicken. Each serving of half a chicken will be accompanied by potato salad, baked beans, bread, a slice of cake and

iced tea or homemade lemonade. The cost: just \$4.00 a plate. Hamburgers and chips for \$1.00 also will be available.

After lunch, for those still able to move, the games will begin, ranging in variety from a greased pig contest for the little ones to horse-shoes for those who would rather not enter the frog jumping contest. A dunking booth also will be prominently featured.

At 2:00, a change of pace would seem prudent, so it's back into the cool Senior Citizen Center to listen to some great gospel and bluegrass music....true Southern music at its finest. At intervals throughout the performances, door prizes will be awarded to lucky members of the audience.

Then, when twilight deepens into the dark of night, and the last orange finger of the setting sun fames to a sliver, suddenly a million dazzling lights shoot into the sky. Rockets and pinwheels exploding into showers of glistening color that hang suspended for just a moment, then cascade to the waiting earth below. The fireworks have started-

-delighting the child in each of us.

Immediately afterward, as a grand finale, the scene shifts to the square beside Wood's Soda Shop, where a band will be ready to cut loose and play for an old fashioned street dance. Dancing outdoors on a warm summer night--the perfect way to end a perfect holiday.

The 4th celebration is a community event, for every member of the community. It is also a fund-raiser for the Homecoming Committee. All money made from the activities will be used to finance the Ray City Fall Festival in October.



Ray City VFD

Every Monday evening, at about 7:00, the sound begins. Starting as a low moan, it slides up the scale until the crescendo assaults the ears like the wail of a banshee. Yet there is no panic in the street, because everyone in Ray City knows its the fire whistle, signaling another VFD meeting. If people give the whistle any conscious thought at all, its just that the guys are gathering down at the fire hall.

But what if.....What if there were no Monday evening whistle? What if the fire station were empty and we had no volunteer fire department? Think about it. The next nearest fire station is at least ten miles away...a long distance when a fire is burning fireceley. Think about insurance rates, already costly. Without the presence of the fire department, premiums would shoot higher than a three-alarm fire. That fire whistle is like a security blanket wrapped around each of us, as it broadcasts the message that all is well in Ray City.

The fire department has many members on the books, but less than a dozen members who remain

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active. It has three fire trucks and modern equipment. The firemen can receive training and be certified at the state Fire Academy. They are called on to fight structure fires,



brush fires, and sometimes to assist in fighting forest fires. They are paid very little for their endeavors; yet their pride and feeling of achievement is beyond price. These are the people in whose hands we literally place our lives....and our lives are in good hands. But no organization can survive without the infusion of new, enthusiastic members. More than funding--more than new equipment--the VFD needs volunteers. So next Monday evening, when you hear that piercing whistle, drop by the fire station. You may learn something. You may even catch that spirit of pride and join the VFD yourself.

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**Welcome To The
Ray City Business
Community**

Gene, Vivian and Billy Molisee,
owners of Molisee Hardware.

"Skeeter" Cooper, new owner of
Ray City Service Center.

Community Development Council Update

It has been said that small town America is going the way of the dinosaur; extinction seems inevitable. Caught between governmental budget deficits and demands of hungry urban areas, small towns are increasingly ignored when tax monies are distributed. The outlook seemed bleak until small towns like Ray City, Georgia began to fight back. With a firm belief that God helps those who help themselves, citizen groups have begun to organize to take up the slack left by budget-slashed government agencies.

Such a group is what is now known as the Ray City Community Development Council. It did not start out with this name. In fact, it did not start out as a group at all. It began in the late months of 1988, when a few people, in informal gatherings, talked frequently about the plight of the town. As time passed, the general conversation became more specific. It was easy to see where many of the problems lay; it was not so easy to visualize solutions for them.

Eventually, the group decided they needed some input from people with more problem solving experience. So it came about that, on January 17, 1989, a few Ray City residents and three officials of the Berrien County Chamber of Commerce sat down together in City Hall to discuss the state of present day Ray City and the future of the community. With the encouragement of the Chamber of Commerce and of the Ray City mayor and council, this small group began a series of ongoing meetings. At each meeting, the size of the original

group steadily increased as more people became interested in the organization. For professional assistance, the group asked for help from Georgia Power Company's Industry and Trade Department; the Governor's Community of Pride program; Moody Air Force Base Wing Commander Col. Joe Prater; South Georgia Area Planning and Development Council and others.

The group learned that the first step to take was to pinpoint the major areas of community need. This was accomplished by mailing out over 1200 copies of a survey. The survey results indicated five definite areas of need: 1. Housing, 2. Expanded retail trade, 3. Industrial development, 4. Beautification and Clean up, and 5. Communication. The group appointed five standing committees to address these priority areas of need.

The fledgling citizens group also participated in the Governor's Community of Pride program, and thus became officially named the Ray City Community Development Council. One of the first projects of

the C.D.C., in cooperation with the city government, was to apply for a grant to landscape the areas adjacent to the two highways running through town, and to place park benches and litter containers in appropriate landscaped areas. This spring, the \$5,000 grant in state funds was awarded the city for the first phase of the project. The South Georgia Area Planning and Development Council is in the process of developing landscaping plans, and when these plans are received and approved by city council, a date will be set for a community landscaping work day.

Another major event for the community occurred on April 27th, when a delegation from Ray City attended the Governor's Awards Banquet at the World Congress Center in Atlanta. During the evening, they accepted the Governor's Community of Pride designation on behalf of the citizens of Ray City.

The work of the C.D.C. is continuing. The organization, with the help and support of city officials is



continued on page 4

BECKY'S CLAY COTTAGE

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HOURS	
Monday:	9 am - 5 pm
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Tuesday:	9 am - 1 pm
Wednesday:	9 am - 5 pm
Thursday:	9 am - 5 pm
Friday:	CLOSED
Saturday:	9 am - 1 pm
Sunday:	CLOSED

proving that small town America is alive and well. Doomsday statistics do not reflect the reality of people with determination and spirit; people who will work together to preserve and pass on to their children a way of life that has been a part of our nation since its inception.

You Are Needed

The Community Development Council is an organization of people whose goal is to improve the community. It needs the support of every resident in the community. It also needs the active participation of people who understand that a community does not stand still. It either grows or shrinks; stays healthy or sickens and dies. The members of C.D.C. are determined that Ray City will grow and be healthy. If you would like to join C.D.C. and help continue the work that has been started, the following is a list of committee chairpersons:

RAY CITY C.D.C. CHAIRMAN,
George Skinner
HOUSING, Fred Carter
RETAIL TRADE, E. W. Wilkerson
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT,
Ray Register
**BEAUTIFICATION AND CLEAN
UP,** Della Purvis, Diane Herring,
Jean Camp
COMMUNICATIONS, Becky
Hoagland
The members welcome your interest and participation.

Call them partners: birds called egrets feed on insects stirred up by grazing cattle. In return, the egret warns the cattle of danger by flying away.

A REMINDER....

We live in a beautiful area of the country, blessed with a wonderful climate. The lush green of the trees and grass are a perfect backdrop for the flowers that bloom so abundantly. When nature has been this good to us, how could we ask for anything more? Well, we could ask that the beauty of the scene be retained. We could ask those who litter every street, sidewalk, roadside, lawn and parking lot to cease

and desist! Stash that trash in a container. Enjoy the flowers instead of polluting the landscape. Remember, every styrofoam cup, every fast food container, every candy wrapper that is tossed carelessly aside destroys a place where a flower might grow.

Every litter bit does hurt, and every little bit you do for your part of caring for the earth does help.

Lemon juice and ground lemon peel help tenderize chicken. Before cooking, rub the juice onto inside and outside and disperse the peels throughout the cavity.

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Complete Automotive Service

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455-5231

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Ray City, GA.

Housing Renovation

If you have been near the Project Street area lately, you no doubt have noticed that the low income public housing development is undergoing extensive renovation. Kay West, Executive Director of the Nashville Housing Authority, has stated that all twelve units are receiving comprehensive improvements. One unit is being remodeled as a handicapped unit; another as a unit for a blind or hearing impaired tenant. Both units will be equipped with such special features as lowered cabinets and easily reached light switches. Total cost of the improvements is \$316,200.

According to contractor, Hoyt English, all units soon will be available for occupancy. He has tentatively projected an August completion date.

Applicants for Unit Rental are available at the Housing Authority office, 409 Hull Avenue, in Nashville. West said that individuals and families who need housing and who meet Housing Authority criteria are encouraged to apply.

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TOMMY RICE - VIRGIL PARR

Ray City Caboose

A bit of Americana will soon go on permanent display in Ray City. The Norfolk and Southern Railroad has donated to the city a caboose, complete with cross ties and rails.

Anyone who has ever been stopped at a crossing, waiting for a long, slow-moving freight train, remembers the welcome sight of the caboose. Used by the railroad company as an office and sleeping quarters for the crew, it was placed at the end of the train so crewmen could check the track as they moved

along. Use of the caboose is now being phased out by Norfolk and Southern.

The Ray City caboose will be located on Main Street between the bank and the railroad tracks. Plans are being made to use it as a Welcome/Information Center and as a meeting room for local civic organizations.

Award Plaque

City Hall has an award plaque all of us can view with pride. It reads: The Governors Community of Pride Program Awarded to Ray City in honor of designation as a Governors Community of Pride. Presented this 27th day of April 1990. Signed by: Governor Joe Frank Harris and Jim Higdon, Commissioner Ga. Dept. of Community Affairs.

The most popular form of the card game bridge was thought up by the yachtsman and railroad financier Harold Stirling Vanderbilt on a cruise (probably on the bridge) from Los Angeles to Havana in the mid-1920s.

The "Leather Look" Looks Better With Real Leather.

Jack Respass

Ray City
455-2181

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For hand-tooled custom-designed
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(See them on display at Becky's Clay Cottage)

Landmark Restoration

Ray City has the distinction of having, as an historic landmark, one of the area's smallest police stations. The tiny structure, measuring about 8x 10 feet, was built in the 1940's for Ray City by local contractor, R.P. Swindle, it fronted the then-existing City Hall. Lois Carter, who was City Clerk at the time, remembers that the police station had the only telephone in use for the city government. When she made city business calls, she had to go to the police station to place them. She says it was a cozy little place, containing a desk, a chair, the telephone and a real, working fireplace. Over the years, it was used by the numerous policemen employed by the town; but it finally was allowed to fall into a state of dis-repair.

It has now been declared a city landmark and is being restored. Materials have been purchased by the city, and local volunteers, led by Bobby Wood, are doing the actual work. When it is completed, it will stand as a memorial to the many police officers who have so well served Ray City over the years.

Dog-Gone Trouble

Ray City has a leash ordinance, which means it is illegal to let your dog run loose. The city also maintains a pound in which stray or lost dogs are kept for five days. So, if your dog hasn't been home lately, check with City Hall. Chances are, its in Doggie Jail. By the way, unclaimed pets can be adopted, so you have the opportunity to get a nice pet free of charge. The city has a \$2.00 per day fee to pet owners for feeding and caring for the animals, but charge nothing for the adoption of strays.

CITY OFFICIALS

MAYOR

Frank Studstill

COUNCIL

Johnny Wood

J.D. Cone

Carroll Exum

Grady Green

CITY CLERK

Betty Shearl

City Hall Telephone

Number: 455-2501

POLICE CHIEF

Buford Hancock

Telephone: 455-4921

New Senior Citizens Center

A long awaited event has become a reality in Ray City. The Senior Citizens Center in the city park is ready to be used. The Center, which cost \$238,538, was funded with a grant from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. The fabricated metal building contains a vestibule; an assembly room with a seating capacity of 200; a fully equipped kitchen; a storage area; closets and restrooms designed for handicapped accessibility. While its primary function is to serve the senior citizens of the area, the building can be used for community events when senior citizens activities are not scheduled.

GTE SOUTH

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(If billing information number on your bill is different from above dial number shown on bill)

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Toll Free-Dial "1" & Then.....800-331-3636

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Toll Free-Dial "1" & Then.....800-342-1289

REPAIR SERVICE

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Toll Free-Dial "1" & Then.....800-221-5131

Multi-Line Business

Toll Free-Dial "1" & Then.....800-543-3019

Directory Assistance for Numbers Not Listed in the

Directory.....1 + 411

Customer Service Manager

Toll Free-Dial "1" & Then.....800-342-5192

Buried Cable Information

Toll Free-Dial "1" & Then.....800-342-5192

Nights, Sat., Sun. & Holidays

Toll Free-Dial "1" & Then.....800-221-5131

South Georgia Div. Office

Toll Free-Dial "1" & Then.....800-342-5192

Telecommunications Device For The Deaf (TDD)

See Information Pages



Postholder
Ray City, Ga
31645

Community
Development
Council

P.O. BOX 261
Ray City, Georgia 31645
(912) 455-2181

Delores Respass, Editor

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED