

# Madison County Journal

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SCHOOLS

## Required quarantine days reduced

Madison County students who must quarantine for COVID-19 exposure won't sit out of class for as many days following a federal policy change.

On Dec. 2, the national Center for Disease Control (CDC) announced a reduction in the number of days someone should quarantine if in close contact with a positive COVID-19 case.

"Under the new guidance, quarantine can end after day 10 without test-

See "Quarantine" on 2A

FESTIVITIES

## Christmas in D'ville set for Saturday

The third-annual "Christmas in Danielsville" will be held from 3 to 6 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 12 at Madison Memorial Park in Danielsville.

There will be music, free hot dogs, popcorn, hot chocolate and water. Children can visit with Santa. There will be live Nativity animals thanks to Michelle Kaye.

"All food, drinks and extras are while supplies last," said organizers.

The event is hosted by the City of Danielsville, the Danielsville Police Department and the Danielsville Volunteer Fire Department.

"Due to COVID, we ask all that come to wear a mask," organizers said. "We will have a limited supply for children and adults if needed."

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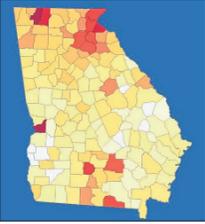
Contact:

Phone: 800-795-2581  
 Mail: P.O. Box 658,  
 Danielsville, Ga. 30633  
 Web:  
 MadisonJournalTODAY.com

CORONAVIRUS

## Cases on the rise

Madison Co. and NE Ga in a COVID-19 hotspot



GEORGIA COVID-19 MAP

By Zach Mitcham  
 zach@mainstreetnews.com

Madison County and Northeast Georgia are hotspots for COVID-19, with cases on the rise.

The Dec. 8 figures from the Georgia Department of Public Health show Madison County at 603 cases per 100,000

people. That's up from 249 per 100,000 on Nov. 8. There have been 302 new cases in the county in that time period, with the total Madison County cases since the pandemic began increasing from 853 to 1,155 over the past month.

Georgia has shown a sharp

See "COVID" on 3A

BUSINESS

## Ironwork

Comer welcomes blacksmith

Blount plans to open school at his business

By Zach Mitcham  
 zach@mainstreetnews.com

The first time Patrick Blount walked into the old metal building on Madison Street in Comer that is now his business, Greenhow Handmade Ironworks, the blacksmith had a thought: "Man, this place is a mess."

But then there was a second thought: "I can feel the spirit."

The place had character to it. And Blount ripped up the rotting floor and started working on a dream, a blacksmithing retail store and school, where he can sell his work and also pass knowledge on to others interested in blacksmithing.

Blount, who went to farrier school to learn to shoe horses, stood in front of his business Friday morning telling



Blacksmith Patrick Blount is pictured at his anvil at Greenhow Handmade Ironworks at 1939 Madison Street in Comer.

a crowd about his plans. He then held ceremonial oversized scissors and cut

See "Blacksmith" on 2A

## INSIDE



MCMS sixth grader doesn't let disability hold him back

— Page 1B

ELECTIONS

## Mailboxes are flooded with election materials ahead of Senate runoffs

By Zach Mitcham  
 zach@mainstreetnews.com

The eyes of the nation are on Georgia's two Senate runoffs set for Jan. 5. That means Madison County mailboxes and phones are getting flooded with election messaging.

Madison County Board of Elections and Registration Chair Tracy Dean said none of that is coming from her office unless the voter has contacted her office to request an absentee ballot. But her office has been getting messages from angry citizens who think it's her office that is bombarding them with mail and messages.

"They think it's us, but it's not," said Dean.

Within the deluge of advertising materials and messages are actual ballot applications, which can be sent by organizations seeking to boost their own can-

didate. Dean said she hopes the law will be changed to disallow this practice, which she said, creates confusion.

"I would like for applications to come directly from us," she said.

When Dean and her staff do receive a ballot application that doesn't originate from the elections office, they check the information against what is in their voter database to verify that it is an actual registered county voter. They do this with all applications. And if this is verified, a ballot is sent to the voter. If that voter then shows up to vote in person, then they can only cast a ballot after the elections office has voided the absentee ballot.

Dean said that as of Friday, 2,300 citizens had requested absentee ballots. The last day absentee bal-

See "Runoff" on 2A

## Madison County Fine Arts

## Gridiron to stage

Running back can act

Gresham is returning 'best actor' for Region 8-AAAA

By Zach Mitcham  
 zach@mainstreetnews.com

Madison County Red Raider running back/linebacker Dayton Gresham remembers his first acting role. He was a plant.

"I was a puppeteer my first show; I was just a big old plant for Little Shop of Horrors, because I was the only guy that could lift it up, because I play football," said Gresham with a smile.

The 17-year-old Madison County High School senior has earned a reputation on the football field as a hard-nosed runner, not easily taken down. He's also known for his acting chops.

"Dayton is certainly one of the most gifted actors we've had at MCHS in my 14 years here, but his work ethic, attitude and desire to always improve truly set Dayton apart," said Madison County drama teacher Brian Jones. "When he came in as a freshman, I knew that he was talented, but he hadn't developed a passion for acting yet. I knew once that happened, he would be something special."

Jones said the light switched on for Gresham in his sophomore year and that

### What's next?

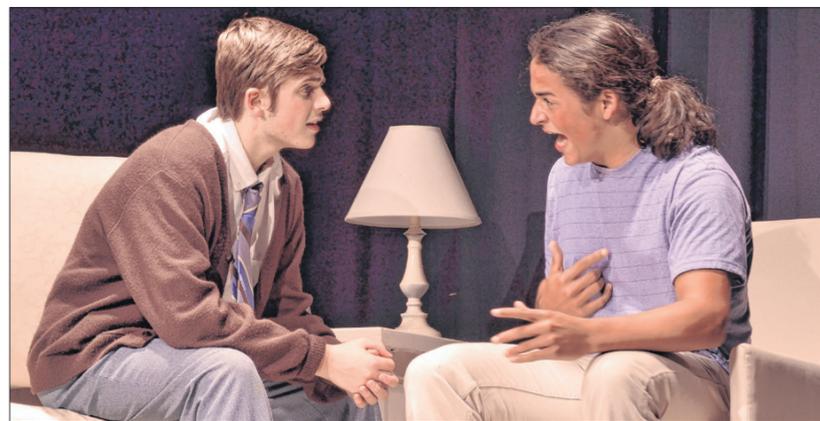
The Madison County Drama Department is rehearsing its one-act play, 110 Stories, a documentary-style play about 9/11, which it will perform in January. (The Georgia High School Association has moved the one-act competition from the usual October date to late January/early February.) MCHS is also planning a musical, "Guys and Dolls," in early May.

"since then, he's grown exponentially as an actor."

"In his first leading role, he tackled a very tough role and completely nailed it," said Jones. "I had parents from other schools come up to me at one act competition and rave about his performance. Since then, Dayton has continued to find ways to learn and grow as an actor."

Gresham is the second Red Raider football player to perform on stage in recent years, with MCHS graduate Christian Shupe also taking turns between shoulder

See "Gresham" on 2A



Wyatt Herndon (L) and Dayton Gresham (R) are pictured in the Madison County High School one-act play, "Ordinary People." Gresham won the Region 8-AAAA "best actor" award last year for his performance.



Dayton Gresham is pictured against East Hall in the Red Raiders' 38-6 home win over the Vikings. The senior led Madison County in that game with 18 carries for 129 yards and two touchdowns, while also picking off a pass on defense.

