

# The Catoosa County News

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75 cents

**A fifth-level karate black belt at 86 years old**

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**Ringgold teams endure roller coaster week**

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## State flu statistics worrisome

By Andy Miller  
Georgia Health News

Public Health officials said Tuesday, Jan. 8, that they're concerned about flu trends in Georgia this year.

It's not clear whether the flu season could be as or even more severe as last year's, state epidemiologist Cherie Drenzek told the board of the Georgia Department of Public Health. "It's too early to know," she said, adding, "Some trends to date seem concerning."

Georgia is being hit harder than other states, she said, because the predominant strain circulating here is H3N2, while the main virus nationally is H1N1. (And H1N1 is far from harmless. In late December, fast-rising political journalist Bre Payton died at age 26 after being diagnosed with it in California.)

H3N2 was the main virus circulating nationally during the last flu season, which led to 154 reported deaths in Georgia and was considered the nation's worst flu outbreak in at least 40 years.

As of the end of December, Georgia had four flu deaths statewide and 440 hospitalizations related to the flu in the eight-county metro Atlanta area.

Those numbers are up from one death and 193 flu-related hospitalizations at the same point a year ago.

The percent of Georgia outpatient visits related to influenza-like illness is 7.4 percent, versus 4.1 percent nationally.

A month ago, Georgia had the most flu activity of any state. Now 19 states have high flu activity, according to the CDC.

Children under age 5, people who are 65 or older, and those with compromised immune systems or chronic medical conditions are most at risk for flu complications and are strongly encouraged to get a flu vaccination as soon as possible, if they have not already done so.

It's too early to say how effective the flu vaccine is this time, Drenzek said.

Last season's vaccine was a poor match to the virus that was circulating, which limited its effectiveness in the overall population. But experts note that even a limited vaccine can prevent many cases, make some people's flu less severe and reduce the extent of an outbreak.

SEE **FLU**, A8



Graysville Elementary School now has state-of-the-art facilities with their new two-story campus, thanks to ESPLOST funding. / Catoosa County Chamber of Commerce

## Graysville Elementary has a brand new school

By Tamara Wolk  
Correspondent

A huge crowd turned out Thursday evening, Jan. 10, for the official grand opening of the new Graysville Elementary School, including students and former students, the principal and former principals, parents, and all the officials one might expect. The Catoosa County Chamber of Commerce was on hand for a formal ribbon-cutting.

The school is truly new, said Princi-

pal Kerri Sholl, who was a student at Graysville, then a teacher, vice principal and finally principal. "We have a new building, new desks, equipment, televisions, phone system, everything."

Something else the school has that's new is a spiral slide going from the second floor to the first. "I knew of a school in Atlanta that had one," said Sholl, "and I wanted one here." Sholl mentioned the slide to Superintendent Denia Reese, who thought it was a great idea.

But when Sholl presented to idea to

the architects, they weren't so sure. We don't put slides inside schools, they told Sholl. Sholl told them Mrs. Reese liked the idea and the architect said, "It looks like we're going to put in a slide."

Shortly before the new school went into use, Sholl took teachers on a tour of it, one grade level at a time. "Each time, I asked the teachers if they wanted to go down the slide and almost every one of them did," she said.

SEE **SCHOOL**, A8



Above: The newer "Farm to Fork" location off Battlefield Parkway has flourished since opening in late 2017. Right: The old "Farm to Fork" restaurant in the Shops of Remco is opening as a new eatery called "Nanny's Country Kitchen." / Adam Cook



## New country-style restaurant planned for old 'Farm to Fork' location in Ringgold

By Adam Cook  
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The owner of Ringgold's popular restaurant "Farm to Fork" is opening a new eatery in an old location.

It's been a little over a year since the beloved "Farm to Fork" restaurant moved from the Remco Business Center to a brand new building off Battlefield Parkway, but owner Hugh Harris says he'll be opening a new restaurant in the old Remco location. "We're opening up 'Nanny's Country Kitchen' over there coming up," Harris

said. "It'll be great. It'll seat about 80 people or so, and it'll be good, fresh, old-fashioned country food everyday."

The location, 114 Remco, was extremely popular for a number of years when Farm to Fork was there before, which prompted Harris' interest in opening something new.

"The community trusts us with 'Farm to Fork,' and we want to bring them another great place to eat," Harris said.

Harris described the new eatery as a "country cafeteria style" similar to Piccadilly or Aunt Effie's.

"Aunt Effie's is gone and we need that

type place in town," Harris said. "We'll also have a salad bar similar to Ruby Tuesday. Everybody wants to have a big salad bar like that back in town."

Harris said he's also planning a soft-serve ice cream bar like some buffet-style restaurants offer, and that he's constantly gauging interest from customers on social media.

"We ask people what they think on Facebook and things like that," Harris said. "We get their opinions. We want to give people another option in town and we think they're really going to enjoy this."

## Fort Oglethorpe's Honor Park: From swamp to weeping trees



The Fort Oglethorpe Veteran and Citizen Committee chose to plant water-loving weeping trees to help with swampy conditions at the new Honor Park. / Paula Stinnett

Combining nature, veterans and serving citizens

By Tamara Wolk  
Correspondent

An area of Fort Oglethorpe that a year ago was a swampy breeding ground for mosquitoes is turning into a beautiful homage to those who work hard to protect citizens every day — the military and first responders, as well as to the citizens themselves.

"Honor Park: A Tribute to Those Who Serve" is situated two blocks from the fire department, just off Cleburn Street. It's a segment of ground, nestled behind

private homes and beside a creek, that borders part of the city's 10 miles of walking trails.

The idea for the park was that of Fort Oglethorpe Councilwoman Paula Stinnett. From her vision was born the Fort Oglethorpe Veteran and Citizen Committee (VCC), the non-profit organization that is building Honor Park.

"I wanted to do something different," says Stinnett, who led the city to becoming both a Tree City USA Community and a Purple Heart City.

"Combining three things I deeply care about and had already worked on — nature, veterans and serving citizens — seemed natural."

Stinnett asked Navy and Army veteran Jerry Haymons to head up the committee to establish the park. "The park is a way to bring everyone together," says Haymons. "It's not about just one segment of the population — the military and first responders. It's about all people working together."

SEE **PARK**, A3

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Local tourist hotspot Candlelight Forest unveils a new onsite event venue. Story on page A10.

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Cornerstone Community Church reaches out to the needy. Story on page C4.