

The Catoosa County News

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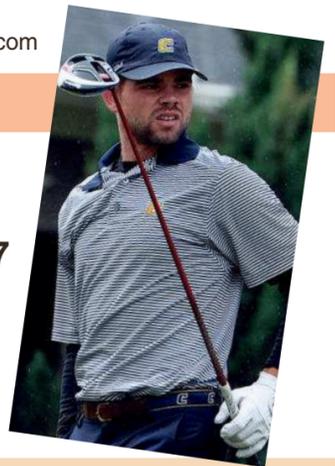
Hometown star to headline first annual US101 CountryFest in September.

Story on page A12



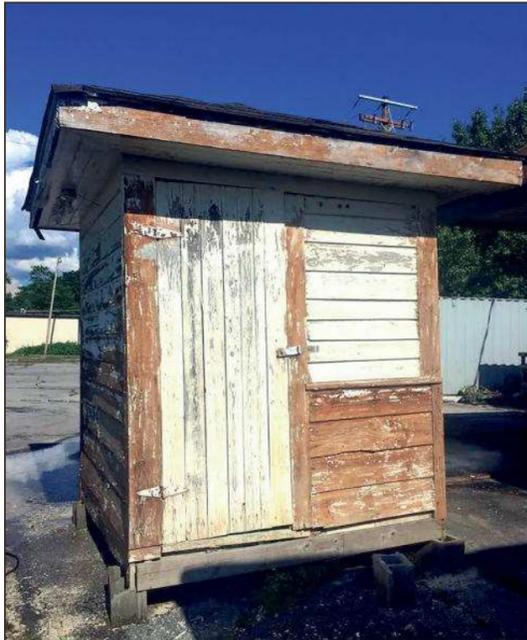
Ringgold High alum Brooks Thomas qualifies for the 2017 U.S. Amateur.

Sports, page B1



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The only remaining guard shack from Fort Oglethorpe's days as a military post now resides at The History Company on Lafayette Road, just north of Chickamauga Battlefield. (Photo courtesy of The History Company)



Ft. O's last guard shack

By Tamara Wolk
Correspondent

In its heyday, the fort that was Fort Oglethorpe boasted 1,600 buildings. Except for the barracks on Barnhardt Circle and a handful of buildings on Lafayette Road, most of the structures were torn down and their materials auctioned off when the fort was decommissioned for the last time in the late 1940s.

Among the structures that once dotted the military training grounds were small wood guard shacks. Just one of them remains. It now lives at The History Company on Lafayette Road in Fort Oglethorpe.

The History Company owner, Louis Varnell, tells the story of how he came

to own Fort Oglethorpe's last guard shack:

"This particular shack was at the gate to the POW compound. When the post closed after the war, the civilian employees were told if they wanted anything to take it. Well, one of them wanted the guard shack. He cut it in two, moved it across what is modern Battlefield Parkway and placed it behind his house as a shed. There it remained until a few years back when an insurance company said they wanted it torn down. Luckily, the family knew they had a unique piece of local history. We were able to get it moved, thanks to a contractor who

Last, page A3



In addition to its Southeast Veterans Museum, The History Company carries a large array of military paraphernalia and clothing, Civil War souvenirs, and re-enacting equipment. (Photo courtesy of The History Company)

Ringgold council approves metal siding for Farm to Fork restaurant

By Adam Cook
acook@npco.com

A little more than three months after denying a variance request for a local restaurant, the Ringgold City Council voted Monday night, July 10, to reconsider and approve the request with stipulations.

In a March 27 public hearing, local businessman Emerson Russell requested two variances from the council: the first to allow for metal siding on the building of a new restaurant he's having built, and the second asking for permission to erect a sign larger than what the city ordinance allows.

Following a long back-and-forth with the mayor and council, Russell wound up one for two in his requests.

The requests were related to a new Farm to Fork restaurant planned next to the Hampton Inn hotel off Battlefield Parkway, which was also a Emerson Properties project.

The existing Farm to Fork at 118 Remco Shops Lane is one of the city's most popular eateries, and Russell stated he's been working with the owners of the restaurant to build a newer version right off the 350 exit.

After approving the sign variance request, the council denied allowing Russell and the restaurant

to leave portions of the building as metal without some sort of siding present, which would have violated the city's building ordinance.

Russell threatened to de-annex his properties but never pursued that options.

On Monday night attorney Chad Young addressed the council

representing Russell, and presented an alternative plan that includes specific landscaping to cover up the back of the building visible from Battlefield Parkway.

"The proposal now for the facade is to plant approximately 25 Leyland cypress trees in the location as shown on the attached drawing," Young said. "It'll help soften the

appearance of the metal facade of that building. Those will be planted and in place before the owner would be eligible for his certificate of occupancy. There's also a binding

commitment that should any of those trees die or be damaged, they would be timely replaced with a new tree of similar quality."

This time around, the council unanimously approved the variance request.

Councilman Larry Black says the council members voted differently this time because they were offered more

Approves, page A5



Chad Young



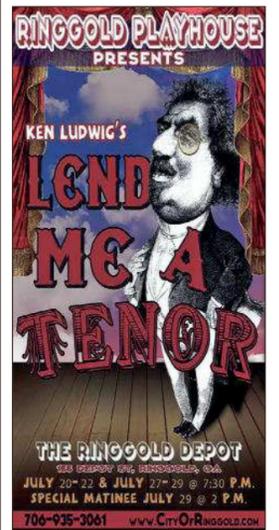
Larry Black

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Ringgold Playhouse opens "Lend Me a Tenor" Thursday, July 20. Story on page A6.



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Fort Oglethorpe says goodbye to local historian, introduces new building inspector

By Adam Cook
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The city of Fort Oglethorpe said goodbye to long-time friend and local historian Gerry Depken Monday night, July 10, while also welcoming Rick Quarles as its new building and planning-zoning director.

During the City Council meeting, Mayor Earl Gray read a proclamation for historian Gerry Depken, who is moving out of state.

"Depken has served our community as a historian, dedicated volunteer, and friend of the local government, and has been a vital part of preserving our rich history for present and future generations," Gray said. "I, Earl Gray,



Long-time Catoosa County Building Inspector Rick Quarles was introduced as the building, planning and zoning development director Monday, July 10. (Catoosa News photo/Adam Cook)

do hereby proclaim Monday, July 10, 2017, as Gerry Depken Day and express the appreciation of myself and the citizens of



Fort Oglethorpe's mayor and City Council approved a proclamation Monday, July 10, for long-time local historian Gerry Depken, who is moving. (Catoosa News photo/Adam Cook)

our fine city to Gerry for her winning contributions."

During her time in Fort Oglethorpe, Depken co-authored a book about the city's historic military post and dedicated a lot of her time to city in a volunteer effort.

"She's going to be missed," Gray said.

While city officials are sad to see Depken

go, there was also excitement regarding the hiring of Rick Quarles as the new building and planning-zoning director.

"We are very excited to welcome Rick Quarles to our team," said City Manager Jennifer Payne-Simpkins. "He has extensive certifications and over 13 years experience as

a building inspector in Catoosa County. In addition to being in charge of building inspection, Rick will also oversee our storm-water management program, GIS businesses licensing, solid waste contract internal building maintenance."

I appreciate the opportunity," Quarles said. "Thank you all."

"Deathtrap" brings twists, thrills, laughs and surprises to the Mars Theatre. Story on page A7.

