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ABIGAIL HUTCHINSON/STAFF
Vendors from Freeman Farm.

Moncks Corner Farmers Market kicks off season

BY ABIGAIL HUTCHINSON
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The first farmers market of the year kicked off at the Regional Recreation Complex in Moncks Corner on April 1. From 3 p.m.-6 p.m. vendors filled the market pavilion, located at 418 East Main Street.

Casey Tharp, market manager, says that she expects this year to be much bigger than last year. With significantly more vendors selling at the market, last year the market averaged 5 to 8 vendors and this year there is about 26, Tharp is optimistic about the season ahead.

“We just ask that you keep your distance, masks are not required but they are recommended and we have sanitizers out,” Tharp said.

The farmers markets will continue to be hosted every Thursday from 3 p.m.-6 p.m. at the same location until the last Thursday in October.

Of the vendors attending the market was Sandie Magoon of Sandie’s Custom Crafts. Magoon’s store features unique home decor and wreaths that accentuate vibrant spring colors. After moving from New England, where her business originated, Magoon found herself furloughed from her job in South Carolina last March due to the pandemic. That’s when, Magoon says, she began creating crafts once again.

“My husband said why don’t you go upstairs to your studio and do some crafts. My niece has been helping me out so it’s been wonderful...there’s no two things that are alike. So they are just, I don’t know, one of a kind,” Magoon said.

The market brought together vendors selling anything from soaps to tacos to produce. Rose Freeman, from Freeman’s Produce, brought a variety of their own farm’s veggies to sell. Although the family farm has been in business for over 50 years, yesterday was Freeman’s first time selling at the Moncks Corner farmers market.

The farm sells their produce at a stand off Betsy Kerrison parkway, but the farm itself, located on River Road, is where the magic happens.

“It’s [the farm is] passed down from the father to the sons. My husband’s father started it,” Freeman said.

Jessica Hamilton, from Sweets to Eat, says their business has been around for about two years now. Hamilton and her crew cater for holiday dinners and birthdays throughout the surrounding community.

Despite being a fairly new business, Hamilton says that the stand sold out several times when they sold at the farmers market. Since then, business has only continued to grow for them.

“Just by the grace of God, we just went out and said let’s just try something different. We started off something small and now we are just moving,” Hamilton said. “We literally sold out the first couple of times we came here last year. We are about to sell out again.”

Some of the most popular picks from their stand, Hamilton says, is the banana pudding, strawberry shortcake, and chewies, which are brownies that are just a little bit more sweet.

Magoon, like other vendors, is a bit hesitant about the start of the season amidst the still high numbers of confirmed COVID-19 cases.

“I’m a little anxious but it’s looking like it’s going to be good,” Magoon said.

Still, after a year of limited opportunities for vendors to sell their products, the beginning of a long season for selling is a much desired step towards normalcy for many businesses.

Updated guidelines for long-term care facilities

BY ABIGAIL HUTCHINSON
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An updated set of guidelines was recently released that allow for nursing care facilities to loosen policies a bit. For Magnolias of Summerville, a long-term care facility based here, residents and caregivers have seen dramatic changes as these procedures take effect first hand.

A little over a year away from the date that restrictions were first implemented in long-term care facilities and nursing homes last year, new guidelines released by DHEC on March 19 established updated visitation instructions for assisted living facilities, nursing homes and community residential care facilities. As part of new guidelines, DHEC reported that all facilities

were required to allow visitation.

In accordance with the federal guidance that was released March 10, 2021, the new protocol allows for a much needed breath of fresh air.

Sean Davis, executive director of Magnolias, has watched the benefits for their 60 residents.

“It was about two weeks ago we received guidance from the states which makes things far more accommodating for residents to enjoy time with family and friends both inside and outside the community,” said Davis.

Magnolias was forced to comply with federal guidelines in March of 2020, that placed long-term care facilities in a strict quarantine environment leaving residents nearly disconnected

Please see **CARE**, A2



ABIGAIL HUTCHINSON/STAFF
Magnolias of Summerville is one of many assisted living centers across the state and nation that are now able to function under newly updated COVID-19 guidelines.



PHOTO PROVIDED
Expansion plans are in the works for the Dorchester County Library system that will serve growing areas of the county.

Future library plans presented to the public

BY ABIGAIL HUTCHINSON
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Proposed plans to build sites for new libraries throughout Summerville have been presented to the County Council and to the Dorchester County Library Board over the past few days.

Future Ridgeville, Oakbrook and downtown Summerville library locations were presented by Michelle Smyth of McMillan Pzdan Smith Architecture at recent board meetings.

Both the St. George and Summerville libraries were originally constructed in 1979 with some renovations taking place as long ago as 1996 for the Summerville library and 2012 for the St George library. Now, Jennifer Gleber, Branch and

Public Relations Manager for the Dorchester County library, and other members of the Dorchester County Library leadership are working to revamp the local libraries.

Gleber says that library leadership saw that there was a need to expand in order to accommodate the increase in population growth and diverse needs of the community. The project plans to strategically link together communities throughout Dorchester County and better serve its residents’ needs.

“The library recognized the need to move to a more community centric, 21st-century model that includes quiet study areas, public meeting rooms, and family-friendly spaces,” Gleber says.

The library is also aiming to find ways that would provide more opportunities for early lit-

eracy, test preparation, and workforce development for all ages. Proposed plans for the new libraries incorporate space outdoors, where Gleber says they hope to host storytimes, educational nature presentations, movie nights, outdoor concerts and gardening clubs.

Current location proposal for the future Ridgeville library would be along highway 78 and would be an approximately 10,000 square foot building on a 4-acre property, which will be purchased from the Dorchester Heritage Center.

An additional five acres is currently under consideration to be purchased from the Commissioners of Public Works. This land is where the 20,000-square-foot Oakbrook library,

Please see **LIBRARY**, A2

Bond with a military dog crucial to mission



PROVIDED/USAF PHOTO
USAF working dogs train daily.

BY AIRMAN 1ST CLASS
SARA JENKINS
Joint Base Charleston Public Affairs

Military working dogs and their handlers are important members of the military and there are many jobs that would be much harder to accomplish without them.

Joint Base Charleston 628th Security Forces Squadron has military working dogs and handlers that help guard the base.

Staff Sgt. Joseph Schembri, a military working dog handler assigned to the 628th Security Forces Squadron, explained what working dogs are trained to do and why they are important.

“The primary job of military working dogs is explosive and narcotic detection,” he said. “Most of them are dual purpose certified for patrol as well. This means we can send them as

a less than lethal means of force. This helps with base security and is a deterrent for a suspect that is being hostile.”

Staff Sgt. Ashlee Pollard, a military working dog handler assigned to the 628th Security Forces Squadron, described the month long bonding process MWD go through with a new handler.

“When you initially get paired with a dog, you have to have a month where you just let the dog be a dog,” she said. “You take it on walks, give it love and overall just build the bond. Within the first month if you aren’t bonding ... and the dog doesn’t respect you, you need to do a dog swap because that is a very crucial thing in our job — he’s trusting me and I’m trusting him and if there is no trust then the job isn’t going to matter at all.”

Please see **DOG**, A2

