

# The Bright Side™

Volume 34 No 1

SERVING ACWORTH, KENNESAW, MARIETTA SINCE 1992

JANUARY 2025



## BILL DUNAWAY HONORED WITH LIFETIME

### ACHIEVEMENT AWARD AT MARIETTA AREA COUNCIL

The Cobb Chamber's Marietta Area Council awarded Bill Dunaway with the Lifetime Achievement Award. The Lifetime Achievement Award honors an individual whose significant contributions over a span of many years will positively impact their community for years to come. The Lifetime Achievement Award was presented at the Marietta Area Council luncheon at the Hilton Atlanta/Marietta Hotel & Conference Center.

More than 14 years since retiring, former Mayor Bill Dunaway has consistently exemplified what it means to be a dedicated, selfless, and visionary community leader, making invaluable contributions to the betterment of Marietta and its residents. His tireless efforts, strong work ethic, and passion for civic work have set a remarkable example for others to follow. Through his involvement in various civic projects and initiatives, Dunaway has been instrumental in fostering positive change and bringing the community closer together.

During his tenure as Mayor of the City of Marietta, he worked diligently to address critical issues facing the city, promoting economic development, and enhancing the quality of life for all residents. In addition to his public service, Bill has a rich history as an entrepreneur and community builder. Through his roles as the proprietor of The 1848 House Restaurant and President of Dunaway Drug Stores, Dunaway has demonstrated unwavering commitment to civic engagement and the improvement of the local economy.

Pictured above: Bill Dunaway (center) with his family l-r Claire Dunaway Cyr, Dot Dunaway, Bill's wife, Ann Dunaway Teh, Dawn Dunaway McEachern.

Editor's Note: Congratulations Bill - well deserved!.



## KENNESAW BUSINESS OF THE YEAR AWARDS

The Kennesaw Business Association ended the year with a bang, gifting \$20,000 to various community organizations and showering our members with festive delights! We proudly crowned two top notch companies: a thunderous applause for Teena Regan, owner of 22One Realty Co., received the Business of the Year award; and much love to Stormi Kenney, owner of Kennesaw Driving School, who was selected as our Member of the Year.

Both of these women play an active part in our community on a daily basis. Pictured above l-r: Stormi Kenney, owner of Kennesaw Driving School and Teena Regan, owner of 22One Realty Co.

**Kennesaw's Mayor, Derek Easterling, will present the State of the City on Tuesday, January 14 at the Kennesaw Business Association Luncheon at the Governor's Gun Club. To make a reservation, visit [www.kennesawbusiness.org](http://www.kennesawbusiness.org).**



## LEGACY AWARD AND PROCLAMATION FOR CLAUDIA AND HENRY CHANDLER

On Thursday, December 5 at the Acworth Business Association's monthly luncheon, Mayor Allegood was honored to present the ABA Acworth Legacy award alongside a proclamation in recognition of Henry and Claudia Chandler for their impact on the Acworth Community. In addition to the announcement at the ABA Luncheon, Mayor Allegood also formally recognized Mr. and Mrs. Chandler at the Thursday, December 5 regular city council meeting.

The Chandlers opened Henry's Louisiana Grill over two decades ago in Historic Downtown quickly establishing it as a cornerstone of the city's heart and landscape. This month marks the end of an era as the Chandlers settle into retirement and pass the torch to new owners of their beloved restaurant that has helped shape downtown Acworth. On behalf of the City of Acworth, we extend our gratitude for all the Chandlers have brought to the city and thank them from the bottom of our hearts for their years of exceptional service, generosity, and unwavering commitment to the City of Acworth. Pictured above l-r: Mayor Tommy Allegood, Claudia Chandler, Henry Chandler.

Ed Note: The Chandlers are staying right here in Acworth and will continue to be active members of this community. Follow Henry on Facebook as he plants his garden this year and shares his bounty.

## ACWORTH BUSINESS OF THE YEAR AWARDS



## FAIRWAY INSURANCE GROUP, INC, ACWORTH BUSINESS OF THE YEAR



**LORI TANNER, ACWORTH PERSON OF THE YEAR. FORMER PRESIDENT DALE HOEFLINGER**

As ABA wraps up the year, we'd like to take a moment to highlight the incredible individuals and businesses who received awards at our December Luncheon. (See story on page 2.)

ABA recognized Lori Tanner as their Person of the Year for her dedication to our community and for always being such a positive light. Pictured at left.

ABA recognized Fairway Insurance Group, Inc as our Business of the Year for playing such a vital role in not only our business association, but also the community. The company is pictured above.



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## THIS AND THAT



### THE ACWORTH BUSINESS ASSOCIATION PRESENTS GIFTS OF LOVE

Every year at the December luncheon the ABA presents checks to their  
community partners. This is their way of thanking these non-profits for  
backing our community a better place to live. Recipients are pictured above.  
Gifts of Love Presentation: (Note that monies are generated from sponsorships)

Acworth Baseball Association; Acworth Football and Cheerleading Association; Expanding  
Horizons Program; Horizon Field; American Legion/Ron Asby PTSD Dog Donation

Allatoona High School; Allatoona High School Shop with a Buc Program; North Cobb  
High School; North Cobb High School Shop with a Warrior Program; Kennesaw Mountain  
High School; Kennesaw Mountain Shop with a Mustang Program; Brookwood Christian  
School; Cornerstone Preparatory School; The Link School

Acworth Turkey Chase Donation; YMCA Summer Lunch Program; Acworth Birthday Bash

### CONGRATULATIONS - NCHS SIGNINGS IN 2024



PICTURED ABOVE L-R: Dominick Moody-Football at East Carolina University; Kamron  
Cullins-Football at Liberty University; Keira Beaumont-Track at University of Pennsylvania  
Sincere Cyrill- Football at Elon University; Jason Grier-Football at Austin Peay University



Pictured: BACK ROW: Playing Lacrosse: L-R Donte Wagner-Kline to Emmanuel,  
Andrew LaPierre to North Greenville, Zach Afalla to Hampton. Front Row: Volleyball: Sarah  
Boyle to Florida International (beach), Olivia Boyle to Florida International (beach), Carys  
Sanabria- Alabama A&M

## Bright Side page 2 NEW KSU EXHIBIT IS A “LIBRARY OF LIBRARIES”

ANDREW J.  
BRAMLETT

Kennesaw State  
University's Bentley  
Rare Book Museum  
opened its newest  
exhibit on October  
25. Titled “A Library  
of Libraries: Private  
Collections in the  
Bentley Rare Book  
Museum,” the exhibition focuses on the men  
and women whose collections helped shape  
the museum.



Curator JoyEllen Williams decided to  
focus on five individuals for this event. The  
first, Dr. Horace Sturgis, was the first president  
of KSU and a collector of fine bindings. Sturgis  
is also the namesake of the school's Kennesaw  
Campus library. Next is the collection of Robert  
de Treville Lawrence III, who donated his  
family's collection in 1996. Their collection  
highlights both family history and their deep  
Cobb County roots.

After her death in 2023, the family of  
Doris Preston Ramsay gave her library to  
the Bentley. It reflects well her tastes as an  
avid reader, her love of children's literature,  
and her husband's work as a doctor. Next  
is a selection of books by Dr. John Greider,  
the first chair of the humanities department  
at Kennesaw Junior College in 1966. Dr.  
Greider's collection shows the value of books  
in teaching and scholarship. Last but not  
least, there are three books owned by Martin  
Luther King Jr.'s family members, showing  
how books can offer connections to some of  
history's most influential individuals.

In addition to the five main cases, there  
are a variety of panels on the history of private  
libraries and other local collectors, including  
Marietta lawyer Fred Bentley Sr. and Southern  
Polytechnic State University librarian John  
Patillo.

This exhibition will be open until  
September 2025. The Bentley Rare Book  
Museum is on the ground floor of the Sturgis  
Library at Kennesaw State University and is  
open Monday-Friday from 10 AM to 4 PM.

### BE A BRIGHT SIDE REPORTER

It's easy to be a Bright Side Reporter — if you  
have a positive, upbeat story about your family,  
your neighborhood, your civic group, school,  
church activities, community events, happening  
in Kennesaw or Acworth, send it to us.

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### TRAINS, TRAINS, TRAINS - JAN 25 & 26

The Southern Museum of Civil War & Locomotive History is thrilled to announce the return of its biggest, most popular event of the year—Trains, Trains, Trains! — on Saturday, January 25, and Sunday, January 26, 2025. This highly anticipated event will feature an impressive array of model train layouts, train-themed activities and historic trains, making it a must-see for train enthusiasts of all ages.

Visitors will be able to experience an array of model train layouts in different sizes and themes, many of which feature interactive buttons for young visitors to enjoy. The event will also include a selection of railroad artifacts on display for guests to hold, touch and learn about their history and use.

For those looking to take home a souvenir, the General Emporium—the Museum's gift shop—will double in size during the event, offering a range of train-themed items, including clothing, collectibles, toys and model trains, perfect for train enthusiasts, children and fans of history!

"Trains, Trains, Trains! has become the premier family model railroading event in the Atlanta Metropolitan area," said Dr. Richard Banz, Executive Director of the Museum. "Groups from across several states bring their exciting miniature trains to be operated and displayed. The vast variety of trains and scales, along with the chance for visitors to operate select layouts, makes this event a must-attend for families."

#### CABOOSE X372 GRAND OPENING & BOARDING EXPERIENCE

In conjunction with the Trains, Trains, Trains! event, the Southern Railway Caboose X372 will have its grand opening on January 25, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. The caboose, recently renovated and ready for visitors, will be a unique addition to the event, offering the first opportunity to step inside and experience what it was like for a railroad crew during the transition era of American railroading.

Museum operating hours for Trains, Trains, Trains! are from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on both January 25 and 26, 2025. Regular admission is \$10 for adults, \$8 for seniors (ages 65+), and \$5 for children (ages 3 to 17), active duty, reserves, guard and retired military personnel (with ID) and university students (with ID). Tickets are available online. Admission for Museum members is always free!

Parking for the event will be available at Swift-Cantrell Park, located at 3140 Old 41 Hwy NW, with a free shuttle service to the Museum. The Southern Museum is located at 2829 Cherokee Street in Downtown Kennesaw. For more information, visit [www.southernmuseum.org](http://www.southernmuseum.org) or call 770-427-2117. Purchase your ticket today. VISIT: <https://southernmuseum.ticketspice.com/trains-trains-trains-2025>

### KENNESAW'S ANNUAL BOOK SWAP

Kennesaw Parks & Recreation will host its annual Book Swap on Saturday, Jan. 25, from 8 to 11 a.m. at the Ben Robertson Community Center.

Area residents may drop off gently used hardcover or paperback books, music CDs, DVD movies and vinyl records on Jan. 23 and Jan. 24, from noon to 8 p.m., and receive a ticket redeemable for the same number of items during the "open swap" on Jan. 25.

Books must have their front and back covers intact and be in good condition. CDs, DVDs and vinyl records must be in their original cases and fully operable. Magazines, software, VHS or cassette tapes, adult content and unauthorized or illegal materials will not be accepted.

Items will be organized into the following categories: fiction, children, teen, nonfiction, DVDs and CDs/vinyl. Participants are limited to 75 books, 40 CDs, 40 DVDs and 40 vinyl records per person. The swap is free, and items cannot be purchased. Any remaining items at the end of the event will be donated.

Kennesaw Parks & Recreation is seeking volunteers to assist with setup, execution and breakdown of event activities. Volunteers are needed during drop-off and the event to help receive, sort, count and bag items. Volunteers must be able to bend, stoop, stand and lift up to 20 pounds.

For additional information or to sign up for a volunteer shift, visit the registration website, <https://secure.rec1.com/GA/kennesaw-ga/catalog>, and select "Volunteer Opportunities."



Kennesaw's Valentine's Dance Spend the evening enjoying music, food, and fun with family and friends at the Valentine's Dance Party, hosted by Kennesaw Parks & Recreation on Saturday, Feb. 1, 2025.

Dress your best for this special night out at the Ben Robertson Community Center's Banquet Hall, beautifully decorated for creating lasting memories. Guests will enjoy an "all-you-can-eat" dinner and dessert bar, along with plenty of photo opportunities. A professional DJ will spin favorite tunes for dancing the night away.

This family-friendly event requires all adults to be accompanied by a child and all children to be accompanied by an adult. Seating is reserved, and attendees can list all members of their party during registration.

Tickets are \$18 per person and must be purchased in advance online or at the Ben Robertson Community Center. Tickets are non-refundable after Jan. 17.

For tickets, visit [www.kennesaw-ga.gov](http://www.kennesaw-ga.gov) visit the registration website, <https://secure.rec1.com/GA/kennesaw-ga/catalog>, and select Special Events or call Kennesaw Parks & Recreation at (770) 422-9714.

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## THIS 'N THAT

### NOONDAY SHANTY 5 & 10 K

Takes place Saturday March 22, 2025 and begins at 7:45 am. Kick off your spring running season and enjoy the scenic views along Noonday Creek Trail while supporting future greenspace and trail projects in the Town Center area. This event features two USA Track & Field certified race lengths and a paved course on the trail and roadway. Runners, walkers, and families are all encouraged to participate.

Participants will experience scenic views, greenspaces, and attractions along Noonday Creek Trail and Town Center such as Noonday Creek, Aviation Park, Cobb International Airport, Fifth Third Bank Stadium, and wetlands and bird habitats including the Chimney Swift Tower.

**Walkers are encouraged to register for the 5k distance.**

#### 5K & 10K:

Includes shirt that can be picked up at packet pick-up. Eligible for awards.

#### Virtual 5K & 10K:

Not running on race day, but at your place of choice. Not eligible for awards. Includes shirt that can be picked up at packet pick-up location.

#### Ghost runner:

Not running, but supporting. Not eligible for awards. Includes shirt that can be picked up at packet pick-up location.

#### EARLY PACKET PICK-UP

Avoid the line the morning of the race and pick-up your shirt/bib early or register in person.

Thursday March 20, 2025 | 4:00pm-8:00pm

Location: Big Peach Running, 1625 Ridenour Boulevard, Kennesaw, GA 30152

For more information and to register, visit <https://www.towncentercid.com/noonday-shanty>.

### CLASS REGISTRATION

Kennesaw Parks & Recreation's Winter/Spring Class Registration is now open. Resident and non-residents can register online or in person at the Ben Robertson Community Center, located at 2753 Watts Drive in Kennesaw.

The Winter/Spring season runs through Saturday, April 25. All City of Kennesaw Parks & Recreation activities are open to the public. This season offers a wide array of activities for all ages including running, gymnastics, painting, dance, tai chi, photography, karate, pottery, tennis and more.

Register online 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at [kennesaw-ga.gov/parks-and-recreation/](http://kennesaw-ga.gov/parks-and-recreation/). For more information, visit [kennesaw-ga.gov](http://kennesaw-ga.gov) or call Kennesaw Parks & Recreation at (770) 422-9714.

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### JANUARY EVENTS AT KENNESAW MOUNTAIN BATTLEFIELD

Museum Tours, Monday/Wednesday/ Friday @ 2:00 pm

All programs below begin at 11:00 am unless otherwise noted

- Jan. 4 - Atlanta Campaign Map Talk
- Jan. 5 - Pigeon Hill Hike

This program will start from the parking lot for Pigeon Hill/tour stop 4 on the brochure.

- Jan. 12 - 24 - Battery Hike
- Jan. 18 - 13th Amendment Lecture
- Jan. 19 - Sherman's Special Field Orders No. 15 Lecture

- Jan. 25 - Ranger Led Museum Tour
- Jan. 26 - Mountain Top Hike

Thank you all. We'll see you at the mountain!

\*All programs will be held at the Visitor Center unless otherwise noted

\*\*All guided hikes/outdoor programs may be cancelled or moved due to weather

\*\*\*To check the status of programs/ or for any other questions, please call 770-427-4686.

### GOLF TOURNAMENT KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS COUNCIL 9923

2025 Knights of Columbus Council 9923, Saint Catherine's Parish annual Golf Tournament. Will be held on Monday, March 31 2025 at the Pine Tree Country Club, Kennesaw, GA

Registration begins at 0900hrs with a Shot Gun Start at 1000hrs. The fee is \$520.00 for a 4 person team; A Single Golfer \$130.00. We have numerous Sponsorship Opportunities: Including Hole Sponsorships: Tee Box Signs \$100.00 each; (Company Provided Signs). Ask about other available Sponsorships. Please contact Chuck Guta [cgeagle6@bellsouth.net](mailto:cgeagle6@bellsouth.net) at 404 805-3218 or

Tim Nord [tnord@comcast.net](mailto:tnord@comcast.net) - 678 986-4555.

Proceeds go directly to support our local Charities which include Habitat for Humanity, Homeless Veterans, Georgia Special Olympics, and several others in and around Kennesaw and Acworth.

### TECH TIPS

Forgot why you walked into the kitchen?: I love this trick to use with a smartphone assistant. Say, "Hey, Siri/Google, remind me to do [task] when I get to [location]." This is perfect for when you need to do something specific when you arrive at a place, like, "Remind me to defrost the chicken when I get home."

### PARKING ON THE SQUARE

The City of Marietta is pleased to announce that it has made it easier to locate both free and paid parking lots on and around the Marietta Square.

This parking map information will benefit everyone and make parking hassle-free. Please visit [mariettaga.gov](http://mariettaga.gov), type downtown parking in the search box as you head to the Square to find the best parking spot for your visit.





### CAMERON CLAY, A KENNESAW, GA SERVICE MEMBER REUNITED WITH DOG FOR FIRST TIME AT FOX NATION'S PATRIOT AWARDS

At FOX Nation's sixth annual Patriot Awards in November on Long Island, the non-profit organization Paws of War was awarded FOX Nation's Award for Service for their "War-Torn Pups and Cats" program, which has reunited service members with more than 600 dogs and cats they bonded with on deployment and had to leave behind. Each animal is rescued, flown to the U.S. and trained at no cost to the service member. Unbeknownst to the audience, Paws of War brought home Feyre from Kosovo who was then reunited with Clay on stage for the first time in 2 months.

See below for the acceptance speech from Robert Misseri, the co-founder of Paws of War, as well as the touching moment Clay and Feyre met again.

MISSERI: Thank you. Unfortunately, I have to have a little cheat sheet here. But this award is very special to us, obviously. And it's something that we want to share with not just Paws of War, but our veterans that are here, our service, our military members like Cameron (ph), our donors, our volunteers, our passionate volunteers and staff that make all this work. So, this is more about them than us. I think that what people don't realize is when a military member is serving overseas. They are not sure -- they're trained for a lot. They're not trained to find this little puppy or a kitten that they fall in love with. And then, they have to come back, and there's very little options for them to bring that animal back. And that's what we do. We have -- 10 years, we have been rescuing animals from shelters in Baltimore to bases in Baghdad. And we fortunately have placed many, many dogs with veterans as service dogs.

HANNITY: Robert, in addition to the dogs on the stage with us tonight, there were kind of a handful, you have a surprise for Specialist Clay.

MISSERI: We do. So, when Cameron reached out to us months ago, and he told us about a dog that he rescued while overseas that appeared at his gate, he was watching the gate, and his little puppy, malnourished, hungry, starving, cold, he started caring for this dog. Feyre (ph) is what he named her. And he reached out to us, and again, he cannot play any role in getting that dog here. And tonight, Cameron, she's with us. She's here.

CAMERON CLAY: Hi, baby... I don't even know how to feel. I'm so thankful to everyone involved, Paws of War, and, you know, everyone on base who helped me through this whole process. It's just amazing. I don't even know what to think right now. It's just so great. Thank you, everyone, everyone involved.

### SMITH-GILBERT GARDENS EVENTS INSTANT BONSAI: PRUNING & WIRING WORKSHOP

Smith-Gilbert Gardens will host the "Instant Bonsai: Pruning & Wiring" workshop on Jan. 18, from 10 a.m. to noon at the Ben Robertson Community Center.

Participants will receive hands-on practice in pruning and wiring bonsai trees, along with discussions on future care and maintenance. Attendees are welcome to bring their existing bonsai for wiring and to receive maintenance tips.

The class serves as an extension of the Bonsai for Beginners workshop, though attendance at the introductory class is not required. All materials will be provided. The workshop will be led by Smith-Gilbert Gardens Horticulture Technician Zack Aulbach.

Registration is required. The workshop costs \$25 for non-members and \$15 for members.

#### COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER DAYS

Smith-Gilbert Gardens will host Community Volunteer Days throughout 2025, starting on Jan. 20, in honor of the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service. Volunteers will help clean up the front entryway off Pine Mountain Road and plant new annuals. The next Community Volunteer Day is scheduled for Feb. 17.

Registration is free and required to participate. Children are welcome to join with a parent or guardian, and a consent form will be available at check-in. Each volunteer day begins at 9 a.m. and concludes by 11 a.m. Tools and gloves will be provided, but volunteers are encouraged to bring their own equipment, dress in layers, and bring a water bottle.

#### MONTHLY HOMESCHOOL WORKSHOPS

Smith-Gilbert Gardens invites homeschoolers to interactive workshops held on the third Wednesday of each month from 12:30 to 1:45 p.m. Designed for children ages 5 to 12, each session features a brief lesson and engaging indoor and outdoor activities, weather permitting.

The Jan. 15 session, Nature Explorers for Homeschoolers, will focus on how nature transforms during the winter. The workshop will take place at the Ben Robertson Community Center.

Pre-registration is required for all three of these events. For more information or to register, visit [www.smithgilbertgardens.com](http://www.smithgilbertgardens.com).

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Bright Side page 6

## THE ACWORTH'S MAYOR'S DESK

### MAYOR TOMMY ALLEGOOD

Happy New Year Acworth! We are excited for a wonderful 2025. We are grateful for the many blessings in our city last year and appreciate the hard work from our community, partners, and City Team that help cultivate our great quality of life here in Acworth. Looking ahead, we are excited to welcome another prosperous year and more opportunities that continue making Acworth the best place to call home.

Last month, at the 2024 Northwest Area Council December Luncheon, Corporal Tamara Severtson was recognized by the Cobb Chamber as 2024 Acworth Citizen of the Year. Cpl. Severtson serves with the Acworth Police Department and is an incredibly brave and heroic individual who is a great asset to our City Team. Severtson never turns down the opportunity to help someone in need and her quick thinking and actions have saved multiple lives while serving our city. We are so thankful for Cpl. Severtson, her impact on our community, and her outstanding commitment to the safety of our city. We thank the Cobb Chamber for recognizing her important service to Acworth.



This month, we look forward to coming together at our annual MLK Celebration and Day of Service at the Acworth Community Center on Monday, January 20, at 10:00a.m. We invite you and your family to join us for this special tradition beginning with a light welcome breakfast at 8:30a.m. hosted by the Acworth Achievers at the Roberts School Community and Education Center. Shortly after breakfast, the symbolic unity walk will depart from the Roberts School and conclude at the Acworth Community Center. There, we will honor the important legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. during the MLK Celebration and Day of Service program in the Tanyard Creek Overlook. Following the program, we will support an organization in our community through a collective service project. For more information on how to get involved, please visit [www.acworthexpandinghorizons.org](http://www.acworthexpandinghorizons.org).

As always, for the latest information on any of our events and projects, you can visit [www.acworth-ga.gov](http://www.acworth-ga.gov), sign up for our e-news blasts on our home page, "like" City of Acworth, Georgia on Facebook, or follow us on Instagram at @cityofacworthga.

## ACWORTH'S CHANGE IN POLICE DEPARTMENT

### Evans returns to District Attorney's Office, Cheatham appointed City of Acworth Chief



Chief Jesse Evans has announced his return to the Cobb County District Attorney's Office effective, Friday, January 3. Evans returns to his roots where he spent 20 years of his career in law enforcement.

Mayor Tommy Allegood said, "Chief Evans has served our community incredibly well. He has brought invaluable experience and significantly contributed to the continued professionalism of our Police Department. He will be missed tremendously, but we know that he will return to a position that makes the Cobb County law enforcement community better as a whole."

Mark Cheatham has been appointed and sworn in as interim Chief of Police. Interim Chief Cheatham has served the City of Acworth since 2001 where he began his career as an Officer. He worked his way through the ranks of Officer, Detective, to Sergeant, to Lieutenant, to Captain, and to his latest position as Major. "Mark loves and cares for the Acworth Police Department and our City

as a whole. He has committed his career to making us better. We have complete confidence in his leadership and skills to continue to move us forward as an organization," said Allegood.

The Mayor and Board of Aldermen held a special called meeting on Monday, January 6 at 10:00 a.m. to formally appoint and swear in Interim Chief Cheatham as the city's next Chief of Police.

## MLK DAY OF SERVICE AND CELEBRATION

The Acworth MLK Celebration and Day of Service will be held Monday, January 20, 2025. The community is welcome to join us for a light welcome breakfast at 8:30 a.m. at the Roberts School Community and Education Center. Following the welcome breakfast, the City of Acworth Unity Walk will begin at 9:15 a.m. and leave from the Roberts School and finish at the Acworth Community Center. The MLK Day of Service and Celebration honoring the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. will take place at 10:00 a.m. in the Tanyard Creek Overlook of the Acworth Community Center. After the program concludes, we will begin our service project helping an organization in our community. MLK Day of Service merchandise will be for sale at the Acworth Community Center leading up to and on the day of the event. All proceeds will go towards the Acworth Expanding Horizons and Acworth Achievers programs. For more information on the Acworth Expanding Horizons and Acworth Achievers programs, please visit [www.acworthexpandinghorizons.org](http://www.acworthexpandinghorizons.org).

## THERAPEUTIC PROGRAMS

### HORIZON YOGA

Date: Wednesday, January 15, 22, 29, February 5, 12, 19; Time: 1:30 PM; Cost: \$15; Age: 13 and up. AT Acworth Community Center. This 6-week class focuses on teaching modified yoga postures and breathing techniques

### BEYOND BOARD: BOARD GAME CLUB

Date: Tuesday, January 14, 21, 28, February 4; Time: 11:00 AM; Cost: \$5; Age: 13 and up; at Acworth Community Center

Do you like playing games? UNO, Skibo, Clue, Phase 10, Operation, The Game of LIFE! We will introduce old and new games to play. A fun time to hang out with friends and play some insanely fun games.

### ADAPTIVE CORNHOLE LEAGUE

Date: Thursday, January 16, 23, 30, February 6, 13, 20; Cost: \$15; Time: 6:00 pm or 7:00 pm (two times to chose from. Age: 13 and up; at the Acworth Community Center.

Join us for a Cornhole League this winter! Athletes will be paired up with a partner and play a weekly game. We will start with drills to learn the basics and progress into gameplay.

View the full list of Acworth's classes and activities at:  
<https://secure.rec1.com/GA/acworth-parks-recreation/catalog>



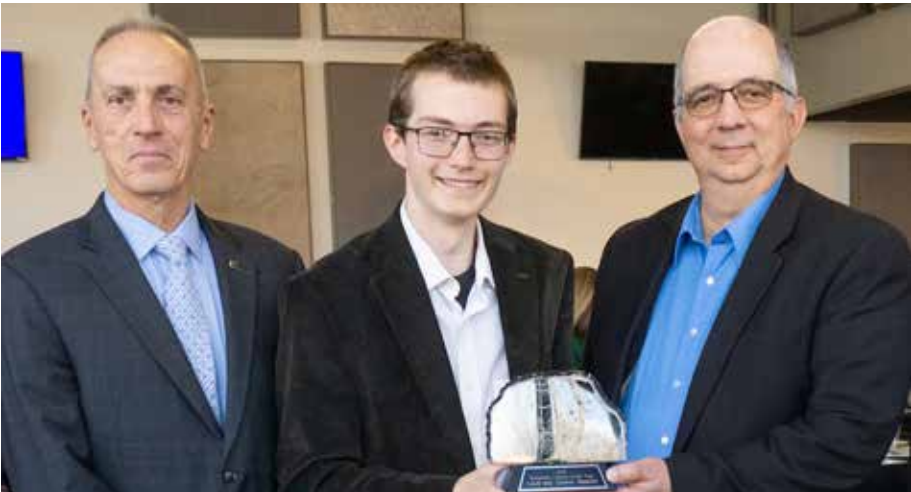


2024 ACWORTH CITIZEN OF THE YEAR  
Corporal Tamara Severtson, Acworth Police Department

Corporal Severtson’s journey with the Acworth Police Department (APD) began while serving as an intern while completing her bachelor’s degree at Kennesaw State University. Upon completing her internship, she was offered a position as a Detention Officer in the Acworth City Jail, where she served from 2013 to 2015. In 2020, she took on the additional responsibility of becoming a certified Field Training Officer (FTO), where she has been instrumental in mentoring and shaping the next generation of police officers at the Acworth Police Department. Recently, she was promoted to the rank of Corporal, a well-deserved position that will enable her to further demonstrate her leadership abilities and help shape the department for years to come.

Throughout her years of service, Corporal Severtson has been responsible for numerous lifesaving actions, a testament to her quick thinking and dedication to public safety. These actions have not only saved lives but have also had a lasting impact on the community, ultimately earning her the Acworth Police Department Officer of the Year award in both 2017 and 2021. Additionally, in 2018, she was recognized with the Award of Merit by the Cobb Chamber. This year, she received the Lifesaving Award after two significant lifesaving incidents, one involving the successful administration of CPR and another in which she saved a choking victim using a rescue device that she had personally purchased. Her initiative led to the department purchasing these devices for all officers.

Former Acworth Police Chief Jesse Evans, Corporal Tamara Severtson, the 2024 Acworth Citizen of the Year, Acworth Mayor Tommy Allegood



2024 KENNESAW CITIZENS OF THE YEAR  
Lewis and Andrew Bramlett - Community volunteers

Lewis and Andrew Bramlett are a father son duo who have dedicated themselves to making a profound impact on Kennesaw by embodying a spirit of service, leadership, and generosity. The two have been pillars of support and volunteerism for Kennesaw for many years, dedicating countless hours to improving the lives of their fellow residents. Whether they are coordinating logistics, assisting with set up and break down, or helping serve food, Lewis and Andrew are there helping to ensure that each event runs smoothly and benefits the community in meaningful ways.

Lewis and Andrew’s leadership extends beyond volunteerism to include active involvement on various advisory boards and commissions helping to preserve the history of Kennesaw. As advocates for preserving local history, they have worked closely with city staff and officials, lending their expertise and insights to help preserve historic sites and local history for future generations. Lewis serves on the Kennesaw Cemetery Commission and Andrew serves on the Kennesaw Historic Preservation Commission and the Kennesaw Cemetery Foundation. Both are key forces behind helping to preserve the historic Kennesaw Cemetery by participating in annual maintenance events, cleaning gravestones and organizing the annual “Life in the Cemetery” tours.

Lewis and Andrew exemplify the core values of Kennesaw: being engaged and connected and having a deep commitment to the well-being of others. Their genuine care for the people of the community is evident in everything they do. Whether working behind the scenes to make an event a success or offering a helping hand to a neighbor in need, they consistently demonstrate what it means to be good citizens. Lewis and Andrew Bramlett are extraordinary individuals who have made Kennesaw a better place through their selfless dedication to others.

Pictured above l-r Mayor Derek Easterling of the City of Kennesaw, Andrew Bramlett and Lewis Bramlett, the 2024 Kennesaw Citizens of the Year.

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## WHEN GOD CHANGES YOUR PLANS, IT ALSO MEANS GOD HAS A BETTER PLAN.

BY MARLON LONGACRE, ASSOCIATE PASTOR, PIEDMONT CHURCH

*"You can make many plans, but the Lord's purpose will prevail." Prov.19:21*

Has God ever changed your plans? How many of you had your plans changed in 2024? When God changes your plans, it also means God has a better plan.

As we start making plans for 2025, we do not know what is going to happen. But God says I have plans for you and they are good plans and plans for hope and plans for a future. Jeremiah 29:11 tells us that. God gives us a choice. He is not going to force His plans on us. We can keep on going with our little plan and get all the difficulties, the stress, and all the things that happen when we try to go our way. God says His plan is better.

What do we know about God's plan? When He says I am going to change your plan. We know it is a bigger plan. We know it is a better plan. We know it is rewarding and by the way it is likely to be a more difficult plan.

Mary and Joseph's plan was to get married, have babies, settle down in the suburbs, support the community and raise their children in church. God said, no, I am going to use you as a couple to bless the entire world. God's plan was bigger than they could have ever imagined. If we go with our plan instead of God's plan, then we are going to limit our lives.

We have no idea what God wants to do in our life? We cannot even fathom it. It is more rewarding, and it is the key to significance. But it is harder. I will not try to sugar coat that. Sometimes it is confusing and painful.

God's plan for Mary to bless the world was not easy. She had to face constant criticism and gossip for nine months. Days before delivery she must take a donkey ride. She has to deliver the baby Jesus by herself in a barn.

There are some things that are going to happen in our lives, and we are going to say, "Why God?" Jesus tells us in John 13:7 "You do not understand now what I am doing but you will understand later."

When you plans fall through and God changes your plans, you need to remember, He is trying to get your attention, and He has a better plan. It is bigger, it is better, it is more rewarding. It may be more difficult. Which leads us to the third thing to remember.

When God changes your plan, he wants you to learn to trust Him.

## A MESSAGE FROM MUST MINISTRIES

DR. DWIGHT "IKE" REIGHARD, PRESIDENT & CEO

As 2024 comes to a close, I want to take a moment to celebrate the incredible strides we've made together in the life of MUST Ministries this year.

*Here are just a few highlights from 2024:*

•**Neighborhood Pantry:** We partner with schools by providing food and toiletries to at-risk students and families through our campus-based food pantry program. Once a month, students' families can come to the pantry and choose the items that fit their needs and tastes.

•**ACE Program:** Forty-three individuals successfully graduated from the ACE program. The objective of the ACE Program is to empower individuals in metro Atlanta who face significant economic, social and physical barriers to employment. By equipping them with the essential skills, knowledge and resources to launch sustainable businesses, we strive to make a difference in their lives through entrepreneurship.

•**MUST Ministries Summer Lunch:** The meals packed this year included breakfast and lunch for more than 7,500 children. This program can be a lifeline to some families that are struggling to provide meals during the 9 weeks when their children are not in school.

•**Winter Weather Shelter and Cooling Center:** More than 6,000 safe nights of rest were provided from inclement weather to members of our community who do not have shelter for such circumstances. The MUST Hope House is open to men, women and children when outside temperatures reach dangerous levels.

These are just a few of the amazing things that happened at MUST in 2024 but none of this would be possible without you. Your kindness, generosity, and commitment to our mission have been inspiring. Together, we've touched countless lives, reminding our neighbors in need that they are seen, valued and supported.

As we prepare for another impactful year, I invite you to help us finish strong. A year-end, tax-deductible donation will allow us to continue providing critical services to those who need it most. To donate visit <https://www.mustministries.org> and click on on the Donate button in the upper right hand corner.

While you are on the website please read the list of current items that are needed. Click on the menu item DONATION CENTER in the upper right hand corner for more information of location, times the center is open and what the needs are. They always need nonperishable food items.

From all of us at MUST, thank you for making 2024 a year to remember. Here's to continuing this vital work in 2025. *In the Master's Service*

## FCU14 BOYS SUPPORT LOVING ARMS CANCER OUTREACH

NASA Lakepoint/Jackson FC U14 boys wanted a holiday project and provided 40 cancer care packages plus gift cards to Loving Arms Cancer Outreach based in Marietta. LACO assists patients and caregivers during the cancer journey.



The team plays futsal in the off-season, coached by Shane Jackson. They won back-to-back pre-season tournaments and finished their fall SCCL season with 15 wins, 1 loss, and 3 ties which earned them a promotion. NASA coach, Manny Gomez, also participated in their project. Sallie Bentley is an executive board member of LACO and her son plays on the teams. The boys plan to make this a tradition and continue giving back to their community!

Follow them and Loving Arms: Facebook/IG: @NTH\_NASA registrar@nasatophat.com and @lovingarmscanceroutreach janet@lovingarms.support



**LOOKING FOR A NEW SCHOOL IN THE NEW YEAR?**

Is your child struggling to read or having difficulty sounding out words? Do they frequently reverse letters (e.g., “dog” becomes “bog”), write words backwards (e.g., “tip” for “pit”), or transpose letters (e.g., “felt” becomes “left”)? These may be signs of dyslexia—a learning disability characterized by challenges with accurate and fluent word recognition, as well as poor spelling and decoding skills.

Perhaps your child received a frustrating report card or is still struggling in math or reading despite their best efforts. If so, Brookwood Christian School can help.

We are currently accepting students mid-year, with one or two openings available in each grade, from 1st through 12th. Brookwood Christian School is a private nonprofit school specializing in teaching students with dyslexia and similar learning differences. Our school employs specialized programs, including the Wilson Reading System, tailored to meet the unique learning needs of our students. With small class sizes across our two buildings, we provide a supportive environment where students can progress at their own pace.

Many students join Brookwood Christian School feeling frustrated and defeated by traditional educational systems. Our mission is to provide a nurturing environment where learning becomes accessible, and students rediscover their passion for education.

*Interested in Learning More?*

Schedule a tour by emailing us at [Office@brookwoodchristian.com](mailto:Office@brookwoodchristian.com) or calling (678) 401-5855. Contact us soon, as space is limited.

Explore scholarship opportunities by visiting our website at [BrookwoodChristian.com](http://BrookwoodChristian.com). Under the “Admissions” tab on the homepage, click on “Scholarships” for more information. Let us help your child turn their school year around and achieve academic success!



**BROOKWOOD CHRISTMAS CAROLING AT THE HOLBROOK**  
By Mellie Finkle, Intern

This December 2024 marks the fourth year that Brookwood Christian School’s 100 building students have gone Christmas caroling at the Holbrook in downtown Acworth. Christmas caroling at the Holbrook has turned from a one off field trip, organized by the 100 building Director of Student Services, Danielle Anderson, to a beloved, annual tradition for our younger students. Brookwood Christian School’s 100 building consists of students from 1st grade to 7th grade, who spend months leading up to December practicing their singing to delight and entertain the residents and guests at the Holbrook. This field trip, however, does so much more than just help spread Christmas cheer; it helps our students practice their socialization skills and build up their confidence in front of an audience. Christmas caroling at the Holbrook also provides an opportunity for Brookwood Christian School to get out into Acworth and foster long lasting connections in our local community.

Brookwood Christian School would like to thank the Holbrook for allowing our students this opportunity for fun, growth, and community connection. We hope residents at the Holbrook enjoy the festivities as our students deliver their best performances. Brookwood Christian School is wishing everyone in Acworth and our surrounding community a Happy Holiday Season

**CENTER FOR FAMILY RESOURCES HELP GRANDPARENTS FIND RESOURCES AND A STABLE HOME**

Kyle and Nicole Daniels are typical, loving grandparents. According to Kyle, the couple will do anything to ensure that their granddaughter with special needs grows up safe and happy, even if that means losing their senior housing.

While the Daniels qualified for federally funded senior housing, Kyle says the program does not allow children. So, when the Daniels obtained full custody of their granddaughter, they were forced to scramble for housing.

“I believe these restrictions single out thousands of grandmothers and grandfathers, who—out of necessity and the best interests of a child—are raising grandchildren,” says Kyle. “This forced us to live in a hotel as we had nowhere to turn. That is until we found The Center for Family Resources.”

The Daniels first reached out to The CFR looking for resources. Initially, the Cobb County-based not-for-profit was able to provide food for the family through the organization’s choice pantry, The Family Cupboard and then heard of an opening with the Marietta Housing Authority (MHA). The CFR case managers helped the family through the application process, assisted in getting new furniture and supplies, and helped the family move in last year. The team also coached the Daniels through some financial situations and still provide on-going food resources.

The Daniels say they are pleased with the services provided by The CFR. “Working with this organization allows a family to take care of their child and not [have her enter] the DFACs (Georgia Department of Children & Families) system,” says Nicole. “We did not want our own granddaughter to have to endure the trauma of living with a stranger. She is our family, and we are trying to take care of our responsibility. The CFR gives you hand-up and not a hand-out, which is all we need to properly care for our grandchild.”

To learn more about or to donate to The CFR, visit [the CFR.org](http://the CFR.org).

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## 2024 TOWN CENTER CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

### DAN BUYERS, PARTNER AT MCWHIRTER REALTY PARTNERS

Dan Buyers, Partner at McWhirter Realty Partners, is consistently generous with his time, talents and treasures, serving with humility and devotion. For more than 30 years, Buyers has worked throughout Cobb County to ensure that economic development and growth is strategic, thoughtful, and mutually beneficial to investors, individuals, and the county. An active member of the commercial real estate industry, Buyers is a past recipient of the Phoenix Award, numerous Top Ten Land Sales Producer Awards, Young Realtor of the Year and a Life Member of the Million Dollar Club as recognized by the Atlanta Commercial Board of Realtors (ACBR).

His impact can be seen throughout the metro region through commercial and residential developments, as well as his civic and philanthropic endeavors. He is credited for his involvement in the South Barrett Reliever and Skip Spann Connector, projects designed to decrease traffic congestion around Town Center during peak hours. Buyers helped to organize and implement the first ever CID bikeshare program in the state, providing 24/7 rental access to the community. He was also involved in the CID's Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI) Study for Town Center to develop strategic direction for the area.

He is an active community member and serves on the Boards of the Cobb Chamber, the Council for Quality Growth, the Cobb County-Marietta Water Authority, the Town Center Area Community Improvement District, the Atlanta Commercial Board of REALTORS® and the Wellstar Foundation. Throughout his many years in Cobb, Buyers has continuously contributed to the wellbeing of the Town Center community through his servitude and dedication.

Pictured above l-r: Dana Johnson of the Cobb Chamber, Dan Buyers the 2024 Town Center Citizen of the Year, and Tracy Styf of the Town Center Community Improvement District

## TOWN CENTER IN REVIEW

BY TRACY STYF, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF TOWN CENTER CID

This year has been one of meaningful collaboration and growth for the Town Center Community. We are grateful to our partners, who have dedicated their time, talent, and resources to advancing our shared vision for the district. Together, we've achieved significant milestones that strengthen our community and build on our mission to make Town Center a distinctive and welcoming destination.

In 2024, we made important strides in several strategic projects. New wayfinding signage now makes it easier for visitors and residents to explore all that Town Center has to offer. We celebrated key progress with South Barrett Reliever Phase III, finalizing a lighting contract that has been years in the making. The first phase of Lanier Park was fully funded and completed, bringing new green space to our community. Our expanded events calendar engaged nearly 1,300 community members through 20 events this year, achieving record-breaking sponsorships and attendance. Additionally, the Alliance launched a new membership program, creating even more opportunities for partnership and engagement.

This year, we completed our Strategic Plan—a shared roadmap that aligns our goals with meaningful, long-term projects. This plan will guide our work with focus and clarity as we continue to connect people, businesses, and resources. Throughout, we have adapted and strengthened our team's foundation of trust and collaboration, ensuring we're prepared to meet the needs of our community now and in the future.

Looking ahead, we are energized by the potential of our projects and partnerships. Together, we'll continue building a community that reflects our shared vision and inspires all. We welcome everyone to join us on this journey as we shape a vibrant future for Town Center.

## WHY TRAINING YOUR DOG IS IMPORTANT

BY KELLY LONG, MOSTLY MUTTS.

Many of us will be plotting how to be our best selves in 2025, with resolutions to eat better, exercise more and to be kinder to each other. While we applaud all efforts at self-improvement, may we suggest that you extend these efforts to your furry family members? Training is key to keeping your pets mentally stimulated and in great physical shape. Not only is it good for your dog, but it is also good for the humans in the family. When you (or your kids) participate in the training, it builds confidence and creates an amazing bond with your dog.

This is something that is so easy to do at home. Our website [mostlymutts.org](http://mostlymutts.org) has a training section filled with videos and articles that can guide you through everything from basic obedience to specialty skills.

Want to brag about your dog? Why not certify your dog as a canine good citizen? This AKC program requires that your dog learn these 10 simple skills:

1. Accepting a friendly stranger; 2. Sitting politely for petting; 3. Appearance and grooming; 4. Out for a walk; 5. Walking through a crowd; 6. Sit and down on cue/Staying; 7. Coming when called; 8. Reaction to another dog; 9. Reaction to distractions; 10. Supervised separation. Mostly Mutts can even help you with the certification process.

If you need more advanced training, Mostly Mutts offers low cost training to the public and free training if you adopt a dog from us. For more information visit our website [mostlymutts.org](http://mostlymutts.org). We wish you a happy and tail wagging 2025.

For more information email [adopt@mostlymutts](mailto:adopt@mostlymutts). Mostly Mutts is located in Kennesaw at the corner of Ben King Rd and Cherokee Street.



# MARIETTA NEWS



## 2024 WEST COBB CITIZEN OF THE YEAR JUSTIN O'DELL PARTNER AT O'DELL, O'NEAL, HUNGERFORD, & BLANCHARD

Justin O'Dell, a law partner at O'Dell, O'Neal, Hungerford, & Blanchard, has been actively involved in both the business side of Cobb County and the community itself for over 22 years. Under Justin's leadership, the law firm has supported multiple schools and charities around the county.

O'Dell is actively involved in Kiwanis and has served as president and on a dozen other committees throughout the years, including the Flag Committee - in which he and his children place American Flags around the community for various holidays during the year.

O'Dell and the firm also sponsor a breakfast free of charge every July 4 for the community to come and preview the Marietta July 4th parade. He has raised money and donations for various other groups such as the American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, Cobb County Diaper Day, Reconnecting Families, and the Boy Scouts, for which he serves as a mentor for boys and young men. O'Dell's many efforts to better the community are often done without any recognition, which he does not seek.

O'Dell is a Leadership Cobb Alumni and has continued to serve on various committees with the organization. He is a Sunday School Instructor, a Deacon, and sits on the Board of Trustee for his church. He, along with his wife and law firm, donate to various activities through the church including missionary trips. Anyone that knows O'Dell will agree, he is a successful businessman, husband, father, faithful servant, philanthropist, and strives to make West Cobb better every day.

Pictured above (l to r): Betsy Madrerothon of Capital City Bank, Justin O'Dell the 2024 West Cobb Citizen of the Year, Chris Martin the 2024 Northwest Cobb Area Council Director, Sharon Mason of the Cobb Chamber,

## CONGRATULATIONS CITY OF MARIETTA



The City of Marietta is proud to announce that it has been awarded first place in the prestigious 2024 Digital Cities Survey by the Center for Digital Government (CDG) for its innovative technology standards and services. To receive this honor, the City competed against other municipalities across the nation in the "Up to 75,000 Population" category. Marietta is the only city or county in Georgia to have ever received this recognition. This award highlights the City's commitment to leveraging modern technology and practices for civic solutions, solidifying Marietta's position as the leader in innovation.

"This recognition reflects the innovative ways we leverage technology to deliver services to our community," stated Bill Bruton Jr., Marietta City

Manager. "It represents years of dedication and collaboration across all departments within our city government. By integrating technology through a central unit, we have created a unified approach for a connected, efficient, and forward-thinking community."

The CDG evaluates municipalities for the Digital Cities Survey Awards, ranking their performance on a variety of technical fronts, such as strategic planning, constituent engagement, transparency, innovation, project management, network infrastructure, and network security. Among other projects, Marietta's Information Technology Department was recognized for implementing advanced technologies to protect the city's electric and water grids from cyberattacks, enhancing digital communication tools for improved citizen engagement, and ongoing network infrastructure upgrades that drive the development of new, progressive digital services for the Marietta community. These forward-thinking initiatives strengthen Marietta's service capabilities and set a benchmark for best practices in digital governance.

"Being ranked as the #1 Digital City in America is an amazing accomplishment," said Ronald Barrett, Director of Information Technology. "Finishing as the top city against tough competition demonstrates our City leadership's commitment to supporting technology and its use to creatively overcome obstacles and address challenges. It also recognizes our IT team's commitment to providing the best possible technology services and solutions for our community. It is their creativity and curiosity that keeps our City at the forefront of new technologies."

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## MARIETTA HISTORY CENTER TO CONTINUE MONTHLY POP-IN EVENTS IN 2025!



The Marietta History Center is excited to announce that its popular monthly Pop-In for Family Fun events will continue in 2025! These engaging and educational events will take place on the third Saturday of every month, from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Designed for children and their families, Pop-Ins feature fun and interactive activities and crafts, each centered around a unique theme.

“We want to make sure that museums are seen as exciting and educational spaces for everyone, especially children,” said a spokesperson for the Marietta History Center. “By hosting these events, we hope to ignite a lifelong love of museums in the next generation and create memorable experiences for families to enjoy together.”

Thanks to the generous sponsorship of Cauthorn, Nohr, and Sanders, Pop-In for Family Fun is free of charge to all attendees. The Marietta History Center is thrilled to be able to offer this fantastic opportunity to the community throughout 2025.

The first Pop-In of 2025 will be held on January 18th and will focus on Presidents of the Past, with themed crafts and activities for all ages.

### Event Details:

When: 3rd Saturday of every month, from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Where: Marietta History Center, 1 Depot Street, Marietta, GA 30060

Cost: FREE, thanks to the sponsorship of Cauthorn, Nohr, and Sanders

### FIRST QUARTER 2025 THEMES & DATES:

January 18 – Presidents of the Past

February 15 – Black History

March 15 – Women’s History

## THE STRAND’S 2025 SEASON PREVIEW CELEBRATION

Get a first look at the Earl and Rachel Smith Strand Theatre’s incredible upcoming lineup at our 2025 Season Preview Celebration!

Join us at this **FREE** event where we will unveil the exciting details of over 150 dates of performances set for 2025. Visit [www.earlsmithstrand.org](http://www.earlsmithstrand.org), scroll down and click on: 2025 Season Preview Celebration and then Click on the BUY button to save your seat. Visit

Discover what’s in store for the upcoming year, including:

- Live Musicals & Theatrical Productions;
- The Strand’s Comedy Series;
- Jazz Performances and a new Jazz Lecture Series;
- Tribute Bands from Rock Favorites to R&B and Pop Artists;
- Amazing Local and Southern Music Acts;
- Classic Film Screenings;
- Silent Films with Live Organ Accompaniment;
- And much, much more!

Don’t miss this evening of entertainment, anticipation, and community at The Strand!

### EVENT SCHEDULE:

5:45 PM – Doors open and live organ pre-show concert begins

6:15 PM – The 2025 Season Preview presentation begins

Presentation followed by a Celebratory Reception, with full concessions and bar open, and complimentary snacks provided. Guests are invited to find something they love and staff will be available to help with ticket purchases and more for the year.

## JUST THE FACTS: HIGHLIGHTS FROM A GREAT YEAR!

### Board Chair Randy Scamihorn

Wow. I can’t believe the end of 2024 is here! It seems like just yesterday that we started the school year, and now, here we are, preparing to ring in 2025.

It has been my honor to serve as chairman of the Cobb County School Board over the last year. The hard work you do as parents, educators, and community supporters is worth it.

We live in the best community in the state, and our entire Board and team are proud to play a role in leading one of the best school districts in the country.

### 2024 HAS SEEN SOME FANTASTIC MOMENTS.

- Cobb’s kids led the way on the SAT, ACT, and the Georgia Milestones in ELA, science, social studies, and Math scores! That’s basically a clean sweep!

- Our student-athletes dominated as well, as this past year saw Cobb athletes boast an average GPA of 3.60!

- 8,400 Cobb graduates earned a record-setting \$154 million in scholarships!

- We brought a new, modern approach to teaching math and science using virtual reality (VR) in classrooms across Cobb!

- We also announced that a second Cobb Innovation and Technology Academy (CITA) is coming to North Cobb! Now, more students will have access to career skills in high-paying industries straight out of high school!

- We’ve teamed up with security experts in the intelligence community to help keep our students and staff safe, bringing the very best safety resources and knowledge to your child’s school.

- The first group of Cobb teachers have graduated from Georgia’s Best, with advanced degrees from West Georgia, at no cost to them! Thanks to the program, we’ve been able to hire and keep more than 99% of our teachers in your child’s classroom.

- For the sixth year in a row, Cobb has been named one of the best places to work in the country.

- Cobb has been singled out as the best financially run school district in the nation. All three major credit rating agencies assigned our district a AAA Credit Rating, making Cobb the only district in the entire country to hold these three triple-A credit rating designations.

Finally, I wanted to save the “secret” to our success for last. It’s you—our community.

You’ve watched us at work and recognized that something special is happening in Cobb. You want us to continue giving what our community needs—world-class schools. We do not take your support lightly. Thank you for trusting us, and thank you for joining me here at Just the Facts this year.

Please continue to support the schools in your neighborhood. Educating students in 2024 isn’t easy, but it is worth it. For over 100,000 students and the future of our entire county, thank you.



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*Deercreek Gun Shop is celebrating their first anniversary at their new location in Kennesaw!*





## ACWORTH BUSINESS ASSOCIATION NEWS

by Kim Wigington, President

In 2025 the Acworth Business Association is focusing on Building Business and Connecting Community.

What a great time to do business in Acworth! New growth and potential is everywhere we look.

To help build your business this year, The ABA plans to offer a Small Business Advancement Series from the UGA Small Business Development Center. We will cover using AI, Digital Marketing, Financial Management, Loans, and Human Resources. This entire series will be free to ABA members.

In Acworth our businesses and our community go hand and hand. We plan to be more intentional in showing you how we work together and introducing you to the people who make it happen.

In addition to the Monthly Luncheon, Alive After Five, Morning Jolt, and Women's Network, The ABA has a new outreach program to help community members in need, and will be starting up a new Young Professionals program this year. Even if you can't do everything, you can pick your favorite event, and make it a priority each month.

Be sure to check the Events tab on [AcworthBusiness.org](http://AcworthBusiness.org) monthly and RSVP.

### The First of the Small Business Series will be:

**January 9 Luncheon at 11:30.** Using AI in small business by Drew Tonsmeire

The following are during Morning Jolt times but will be held at the Community Center:

**Tuesday, March 11, 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.** - PART I: The State of Digital Marketing: Insights and Trends will highlight innovative strategies to attract and retain clients online.

**Tuesday, May 13, 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.** - PART II: Know What Your Numbers Really Mean: Financial Management Overview for Small Business Owners and Managers will demystify financial management and cash flow, equipping owners with the tools to make informed financial decisions.

**Tuesday, July 8, 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.** - PART III: Financing Your Future: Business Loans and Financing Alternatives will provide insights into securing funding and exploring various financing options to fuel business expansion.

**Tuesday, September 9, 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.** - PART IV: Human Resource: Workforce Development and Management

## ABA OUTREACH

The Acworth Business Association has developed a new program called ABA Outreach. The outreach program is designed to help people in the community who may be struggling in some form or fashion. The ABA Outreach was founded by Bob Brooks, a native to the Acworth community. ABA Outreach is focused on giving back to the community - whether it is helping to repair a home, maintain yard work, or provide groceries or school supplies to a family - we are here to help the community where we live, work, and play.

Our goal this year is to complete four projects, in hopes of growing to twelve a year. This endeavor will be solely supported by donations. A link is provided below for donations. A special thank you to ABA Member, Hill Brothers Flooring, for funding our first ABA Outreach project. They generously donated their time and resources to replace the carpet in the home of a family who recently lost their son.

If you have questions, would like to donate goods or services, or nominate a deserving individual or family, please contact Bob Brooks by phone 770-572-4173 or email [bob.brooks@ccm.com](mailto:bob.brooks@ccm.com)

## WELCOME NEW BUSINESS

The City of Acworth has scheduled a ribbon cutting for City BBQ on Wednesday, January 15th at 11:30am. City BBQ is located at 3574 Cobb Parkway. Our contact for this ribbon cutting is Jennifer Satterfield, Market Leader, who can be reached at [jsatterfield@citybbq.com](mailto:jsatterfield@citybbq.com) (770) 500-8236. Check out their menu at <https://www.citybbq.com/>. This restaurant serves Sandwiches, Tacos, Salads, Chili with a variety of meats including brisket, chicken pulled pork and ribs. They top it off with a whole triple chocolate cake.

## BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS UPCOMING CALENDERS

### ACWORTH BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

**THUR. JAN 9 - ABA LUNCHEON at the Acworth Community Center.** Join the ABA for the first luncheon of the year and the start of an exciting series in partnership with the KSU Business Development office: "AI for Small Businesses", presented by Drew Tonsmeire and Joe Zirkel **Sponsor: North Side Hospital Caterer: Henry's Louisiana Grill Events** Please RSVP at [acworthbusiness.org](http://acworthbusiness.org).

**THURS. JAN 9 ALIVE AFTER 5** Join the ABA for the first after hours of the year. This event is FREE for ABA Members, \$5 for Guests. This event will be held Broken Anchor Winery, 3335 Cobb Pkwy, Suite 930, Acworth. 5:30. RSVP at [www.acworthbusiness.org](http://www.acworthbusiness.org). This event is free for ABA members, \$5 for guests.

**THURS. JAN 16, WOMEN'S LUNCHEON 11:30 AM.** Speaker is Kristen Sagan, Edward Jones. The event will be held at Main Street Events, 4975 N. Main Street, Acworth. Please register by the Monday before this date by 5:00 pm RSVP at [www.acworthbusiness.org](http://www.acworthbusiness.org)

### KENNESAW BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

**TUES. JAN 14 LUNCHEON 11:00am @GOVERNOR'S GUN CLUB.** 1005 Cobb Place Blvd. Kennesaw, 30144. Kennesaw's Mayor Derek Easterling will present the State of the City address. RSVP [www.kennesawbusiness.org](http://www.kennesawbusiness.org). Please note: If you choose not to register in advance, you will pay an additional \$10 at the door. Sponsored by Citrus Magic and LOUD Security | Caterer: Catered Southern Events

**TUES. JAN 21 ALIVE AFTER FIVE 5:30 PM-** Join the KBA for after hours food, fun and networking. Sponsors: Governor's Gun Club | Up Up & Away Junk Hauling. RSVP [www.kennesawbusiness.org](http://www.kennesawbusiness.org). This event is free for KBA members, \$5 for guests.

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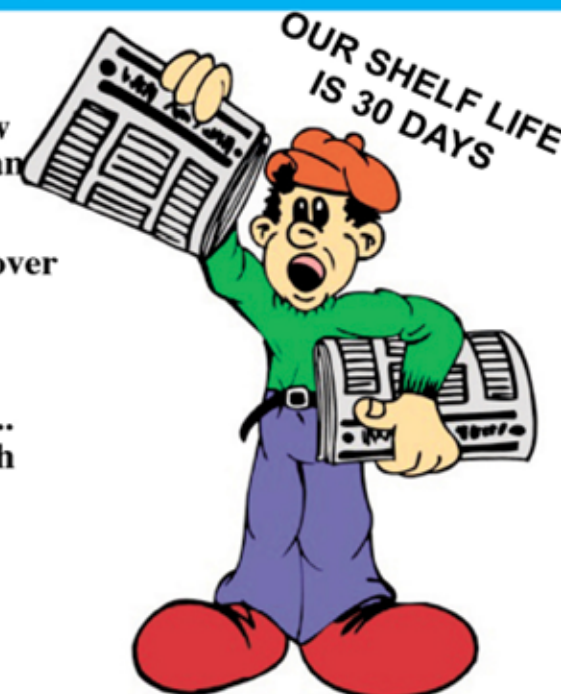
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