



RECEIVES AWARDS

Neal Lester received two special awards in January for his work in Arizona. Photo by Isabel Han

Lester receives 2 MLK awards

Jefferson native Neal Lester recently received two special awards named in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Lester was awarded the MLK "Living the Dream" Award by the City of Phoenix, Ariz., and the Paradise Valley (Ariz.) MLK 2019 Diversity Award. Lester had also received an award named after MLK in 2017 from the City of Tempe, Ariz.

Lester grew up in Jefferson and graduated from Jefferson High School in 1977.

Lester has been a professor at Arizona State University since 1997. He is a foundation professor of English and is the founding director of Project Humanities.

"I try to practice the principles that he (MLK) forwarded about peace and justice and humility," Lester told *The State Press* newspaper. "I'm always challenged also by trying to be better and doing better."

According to an article about Lester from ASU, he formed the Project Humanities in 2010 in an effort to make humanities studies more enticing.

Lester also coordinates volunteers in downtown Phoenix to distribute items to the homeless.

Chamber aims for 'best growth ever' with membership goal

By Ron Bridgeman

Jim Shaw, president and CEO of the Jackson County Area Chamber of Commerce, said last week the group will have its "best growth year ever" if it hits its goal of 60 net new members.

He also said the chamber had four net new members in January.

Shaw reported on the chamber's goals for the year. He said the group has three main goals: The net new members; becoming a certified chamber by the state association of chambers; and revamping its website.

He said John Scott, director for economic development, will be able to help with the website revamp and that may save some money for the chamber.

The certified chamber application has to be turned in by June, Shaw said, and a committee will be formed to work on that.

FINANCES

Dylan Wilbanks, chamber treasurer, said the group has \$190,000 cash. He said that is more than three months operating expenses.

The chamber had about \$76,000 in revenue for January, including dues for 2019 that were paid in 2018.

The 2019 chamber budget is a bit more than \$608,000.

NEW PEOPLE

Chad Bingham, Bingham Insurance Group, was announced as the new Jackson County Area Chamber of Commerce secretary at the board meeting last week. Bingham replaces Trey Leslie of Georgia Power, who was promoted recently.

The new office also puts Bingham on the ladder of succession to be the chairman of the board of directors.

Linda Strickland, TD Automotive Compressor of Georgia, was named to Leslie's spot on the board.

Natalie Thomas, Commerce Downtown Development Authority director, also was announced as the new chairwoman for the chamber tourism committee

Thomas said the committee was taking "baby, baby steps" toward developing a five-year plan.

OTHER BUSINESS

In other business, the chamber:

- heard a report from Scott on the SK Battery America project in Commerce. "An awful lot of folks (are) interested in economic development all of a sudden" after the SK announcement, Shaw said. He noted the chamber has had an increase in inquiries about development in the county since the SK project was announced in early December.

- heard an announcement from Scott that the Industry Roundtable plans a meeting Feb. 27 and that the county has two planned expansions from existing companies.

- heard a report from Shaw that the chamber is active in supporting the county's plans for a bond sale that would pay for a new high school on the west side of the county. Shaw explained that also would allow the conversion of the current Jackson County Comprehensive High School to the Empower College & Career Academy, which he said would have a curriculum aimed at educating students for work. The chamber, Shaw said, "is all about workforce development."

Veterans Drive

Cabin Creek Baptist Church would like to invite you to join us in collecting dry goods for our veterans. This would be an opportunity for all of us who appreciate the sacrifices made by our veterans to give back to those who made such a great or ultimate sacrifice. John 15:13 says, "Greater love hath no man more than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." These soldiers have given so much; we're thankful we are able to support our Armed Forces.

We will be accepting donations Saturday, March 16, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 892 Cabin Creek Church Road, Nicholson.

New household/non-perishable/personal care items include: Toilet paper, paper towels, toothpaste, tooth brush, deodorant, bar soap, dish soap, laundry detergent, Kleenex, etc.

For more information, call 706-202-5518.

Water authority to work on database

BY CINDY EDGE

The Jackson County Water and Sewerage Authority will soon begin work on a master plan of the county's water system. The authority approved a \$120,000 contract with Freese and Nichols Inc. last week to update recent water system infrastructure improvements to the county's GIS database and assess future water needs.

Using the collected data along with SCADA information, a model will be calibrated for extended period simulations. Once this is completed, an existing system evaluation will be conducted to assess performance. In addition, a projection of water demand into the future will be completed.

"Upper Oconee Basin Water Authority is requiring us to project our water demand out 50 years and so we added that to this and we were still able to stay under budget," authority engineer Joey Leslie said.

In other action last week, the authority:

- approved water service to a proposed one million square foot warehouse at the intersection of Horace Head Road and Dry Pond Road. The property is located on the boundary of service delivery between the county and the City of Jefferson. Jefferson will be providing wastewater service to the property.

- approved water and sewer service to a proposed subdivision located at the intersection of Wehunt Rd. and Old Pendergrass Rd. "This is where we put sewer in to complete an uncompleted sewer system for the Wehunt Rd. area," said authority manager Eric Klerk. "We partnered with the developers (John Buchanan and Mark Rudolph) and they reimbursed us for some of the cost of putting in the gravity sewer for that piece of property."

- met in closed session for one hour and returned to approve an extension of authority manager Eric Klerk's contract through 2022.



ROLL OFF SYSTEMS DONATES TO AG FACILITY

Roll Off Systems recently made a \$10,000 donation to the Jackson County Agricultural Facility. Pictured are Jackson County Board of Commissioners member Jim Hix, ag facility committee chair Marty Clark, BOC chairman Tom Crow and the Garrett family. "As we prepare to break ground on this facility, we cannot tell you how much we appreciate your support in making a difference," leaders state.

Jefferson plans water tank; IDA agrees to provide land

By Ron Bridgeman

The Jackson County Industrial Development Authority last week agreed "in principle" to give the City of Jefferson a parcel of land that is .63 acres for a new water tank in the Central Jackson Industrial Park.

Jeff Killip, public works director for Jefferson, said the 500,000-gallon tank and a loop in the water line would improve the water quality and water pressure in the area. He said the cost of the project would be about \$1 million.

He said growth of business and housing led to increase demand which affects the city's water system.

Killip asked that the tank property be at the intersection of MLK Jr. and the MLK Jr. Extension, but the IDA asked that it be moved to the lower corner of the property

Killip agreed with the change, saying it would require the city to pay for about 20 more feet in height of the tank to get proper water pressure.

Killip also said the city would extend a water line to reach the new tank from Galilee Church Rd.

The IDA agreed to provide a right-of-way so the city water department could do routine maintenance on the tank.

SK WORK

John Scott, director of economic development for Jackson County, said a tentative date of March 18 is set for the official groundbreaking on the SK Battery America site in Commerce.

He said temporary power has to be installed for the groundbreaking. Some debate occurred about that work.

Scott said the company would like the IDA to extend the power. IDA members said the power extension is between the company and the electric provider. Joe Hicks, district manager for Jackson EMC, said the land is in his company's service area.

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

The City of Commerce Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on Monday, February 25, 2019 at 6:00 P.M. in the Commerce Civic Center Cold Sassy Room, 110 State Street. The purpose for the hearing is to discuss 1) Noori Family Limited Partnership, Highway 441 and Highway 326, Map 009 Parcel 004B, 48.73 acres, rezoning for annexation from A-2 in County to C-2 and M-1 in City. 2) Scott Thomas, 2545 North Broad Street, Map C16 Parcel 002, 0.77 acres, Variance to the City of Commerce Zoning Code. 3) Rafkin Car Sales, 2025 Homer Road, Map 020 Parcel 031B4, 0.76 acres, Variance to the City of Commerce Zoning Code. 4) Jackson County Habitat for Humanity, Harmony Street, Map C02 Parcel 093A, 0.48 acres, Variance to the City of Commerce Zoning Code.

David Zellner
City Planner
February 11, 2019
8:00 A.M.

OTHER BUSINESS

In other business, the IDA:

- heard from Scott that the "industry roundtable" is being reconfigured. He said the group has a meeting set Feb. 27. He said it is expected to meet about once a quarter.

- heard that manufacturers' "appreciation week" is being planned for April 15-22.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR

The City of Hoschton will be accepting applications for the position of City Administrator.

Under general policy and executive guidance from the City Council, the City Administrator plans, organizes, integrates, fiscally administers, reviews and evaluates the activities, operations, programs and services of the City of Hoschton; serves as the top appointed executive in the City, responsible for carrying out the policies and programs determined by the elected City Council; ensures development and execution of the municipality's strategic plan and annual budget; ensures City government operations and functions effectively serve the needs of Hoschton residents and other stakeholders, while complying with applicable laws and regulations; and performs related duties assigned by the City Council from time to time.

Qualifications

- Bachelors or Masters in Business Administration required.
- At least 4-5 years experience.
- Experience in Municipal Government preferred.

For a more detailed job description and duties email tkenerly@cityofhoschton.com or visit our website at www.cityofhoschton.com

You may drop off or mail your resume to 79 City Square, Hoschton, Ga. 30548 or email it to tkenerly@cityofhoschton.com