

The Oconee Enterprise Business

Editor: Michael Prochaska • editor@oconeeenterprise.com • 706-769-5175 ext. 101
Reporter: Nathalee Simoneau • news@oconeeenterprise.com • 706-769-5175 ext. 106

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BUSINESS ROUNDUP

St. Mary's family practice to relocate

by Michael Prochaska

St. Mary's Family Medicine will be relocating in spring 2025 to The Village at Malcom Bridge off Malcom Bridge Road to better accommodate current and future growth.

At 4,500 square feet, the new location will be significantly larger than the current office at 1181 Langford Dr., Building 300, Suite 103.

This is inside the medical complex Three Sixteen Professional Quarter.

"In addition to Devin Stephens, MD, and Jennifer Sutherland, NP, we have added two new providers to the practice: Alex Duggan, MD, and Christine Harr, NP," said Brandt Halbach, vice president of operations at St. Mary's Medical Group.

"The new practice space at The Village at Malcom Bridge allows us to accommodate this growth and expanded access in an easily accessible and convenient location for our patients."

Patients of the practice will receive a letter with full details in the coming months.

For more information about The Village at Malcom Bridge, visit thevillageatmalcombridge.com.

Ag workshop upcoming

An agriculture workshop entitled, "Women, Livestock and the Land" will be held on Oct. 19 from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 365 Anthony Lane, Bishop. Admission is free.

Hosted by Margo Candelario of the Young Female Farmers Project in partnership with the National Center for Appropriate Technology, workshop topics are as follows: value-added products, cottage food laws, GDA compliance, marketing on a budget, mushroom cultivation, composing, tractor demonstration and USDA programs.

To register, visit bit.ly/WLL-GeorgiaWorkshop. For more information, contact Felicia Bell at feliciab@ncat.org.

Support OARC

The annual Oconee County Backyard BBQ Brawl is Oct. 26 at 1410 Old Salem Road, Watkinsville. Barbecue dinner will be at 6 p.m. and a live auction at 7:30 p.m. There will also be a gun raffle. All proceeds raised go to the Oconee Area Resource Council. For more information, contact Carlton Hale at (706) 540-2810.

Citizens needed for governing boards

BY STAFF REPORTS

The Oconee County Board of Commissioners is seeking citizen applicants for appointments to the following boards:

■ Oconee County Library Advisory Board: Five appointments, four to start Jan. 1, 2025, and expire Dec. 31, 2029, and the other to complete a vacated term to begin Dec. 3, 2024, and expire Dec. 31, 2026. Members review and approve budgets, establish policies governing library programs, and present financial and progress reports. In recent history, members have also reviewed requests to relocate books based on content. Meetings held quarterly on the second Monday at 4:30 p.m. Location varies between Oconee Library, 1925 Electric Avenue, Watkinsville and Bogart Library, 200 South Burson Avenue, Bogart.

■ Oconee County Board of Health: Two appointments, one to start Jan. 1, 2025, and expire Dec. 31, 2030, and the other to complete a vacated term from Dec. 3, 2024, and expire Dec. 31, 2026. Members aid in making citizens aware of ways to prevent and suppress disease and harmful health conditions. Meetings held quarterly on the second Wednesday at 3:30 p.m. at the Oconee County Health Department, 1060 Experiment Station Road, Watkinsville.

Those who are interested can apply at oconeecounty.com, receive an application at the Oconee County Administration Building or call (706) 769-5120. The admin building is located at 7635 Macon Hwy, Watkinsville.

The deadline for applications is Friday, Oct. 11 at 12 p.m.

Anticonvulsant drugs ineffective for low back pain, can cause harm,

Anticonvulsant drugs are increasingly being used to treat low back pain, but a study in CMAJ (Canadian Medical Association Journal) finds they are ineffective and can have adverse effects. Clinically, the prescription of anticonvulsants for back and neck pain, including radicular pain in primary care, has increased by 535% in the last 10 years. Low back pain affects millions of people and is the number one cause of disability.

Clinical practice guidelines usually recommend nonpharmacologic treatments and nonopioid pain relievers rather than stronger analgesics such as anticonvulsants. The study findings are based on high- and moderate-quality evidence from nine placebo-controlled randomized trials that found a lack of evidence of benefit from anticonvulsants and more negative results from some of these drugs.

"We have shown, with mostly high- and moderate-quality evi-



Dr. Jeff Davenport
Healthy Living

dence, that common anticonvulsants are ineffective for chronic low back pain and lumbar radicular pain, and are accompanied by increased risk of adverse events," write the authors.

These findings support recent guidelines from the United States and the United Kingdom that do not recommend the use of anticonvulsants.

A most promising solution to low back pain: hands-on care by a chiropractor, a Doctor of Chiropractic, an expert in diagnosing and relieving lower back pain.

Presented as a service to the community by Dr. Jeff Davenport is owner of Davenport Family Chiropractic. Opinions expressed are those of the writer.



The roaster that Publica uses sits inside the building, filled with old machinery and beans. [Photo by Nathalee Simoneau]

Publica to offer gathering place, third-wave coffee to community

BY NATHALEE SIMONEAU

The name for Publica Coffee Roasters in Watkinsville was created on a family road trip. It comes from the latin "publicus," meaning of the people or of the community. The name exemplifies what owner Troy Potts foresees the space providing.

If not for the smell of caramelizing coffee beans wafting over Watkinsville, its residents might not know that the roaster is nestled in downtown. There are no signs that clarify what lies inside the building. But Potts said the smell brings people in all day to inquire.

"We already have a steady flow of people," he said. "Luis, some days, can hardly roast because people keep coming."

Potts started roasting coffee in his backyard after becoming disillusioned with his successful career in sales. It was after smelling the coffee beans roasting that neighbor Luis Rodas introduced himself to Potts. Rodas, a former chemistry teacher, has since joined Publica as a roaster.

In 2019 Potts traveled to Italy, where he first experienced coffee that he loved, to study with Master Roaster Marco Crenonese. Potts supplemented this training with lots of reading and connecting with people through the Specialty Coffee Association. But Potts said he never stops learning.

"If a coffee roaster tells you they know everything, they don't," Potts said.



Troy Potts pours steamed milk into espresso to make a cappuccino the morning of Wednesday, Sept. 25. [Photo by Nathalee Simoneau]

Looking forward, Potts wants to open the roaster to become a space for community.

"Our goal is to have a place where people come together and share. They are not looking at their phones, their computers. They are hanging out, talking to each other," Potts said.

He hopes to open the space as a tasting room a few times a week before the end of the year. In this space, customers can try the coffees before they buy a bag. Potts said that if he can foster that environment, which he likens to a bar without alcohol, he would open the space up every day.

"Coffee is behind beer and

wine in terms of education, so that's one of our goals," Potts said. "It's going to be a little bit different model than we've seen around here."

Right now, Publica provides wholesale beans to places like Big City Bread, The Georgia Center and Hotel Indigo. They also ship their beans through a subscription service all over the country. In January, Publica provided coffee for the Classic City Marathon.

Potts hopes to be able to grow the business in a way that it is able to reach more people in a meaningful way.

"As we grow, I want to be able to offer those house coffees for a lot less money so

that more people can experience good coffee," he said.

As time goes on, Potts also wants to use profits and connections to create a nonprofit foundation.

With help from the University of Georgia's sustainability class, Potts is working to make Publica a certified B Corp, which considers social and environmental practices of the business.

"It's really important how you treat your employees; they have a lot of say within the business," Potts said.

"I wanted to do something that I was providing value to people," he concluded, reflecting on the origins of the shop.

Town of North High Shoals votes on the millage rate and sidewalks

BY SHWETA KRISHNAN

The North High Shoals town council voted unanimously Monday, Sept. 23, to approve the millage rate rollback. The rate decreased from 0.0854 to 0.0805.

Mayor Stephen Goad, council member Eric Carlson and council member Eric Wright attended the meeting and council member Meagan Cuidiff joined via Zoom.

No residents spoke during an opportunity for public comments regarding the millage rate.

The council did not have a discussion before the vote.

Earlier this fall, the town council placed an advertisement in The Oconee Enterprise about

the millage rate on a date too close to the first public hearing, according to state law.

"It's our responsibility to make sure that we get everything to the newspaper in a timely fashion, so that it meets all of the criteria," Sue Bishop, the town clerk, said in an interview after the meeting.

The council also approved construction of 5-foot-wide sidewalks from the town fire station on Hillsboro Road to State Route Ga. 186.

Goad discussed needing to place an advertisement for sidewalk construction companies in the paper for at least three weeks. Bishop clarified that the town needs to receive bids from construction companies.

"The town needs to get a minimum of three bids from different companies who will help with the construction of the sidewalks," she said during the meeting. "The advertisements for the bids will be in the paper for three weeks."

She said she sent the advertisement to be published in the newspaper on Wednesday, Sept. 27. It will be published for three consecutive weeks, inviting companies to submit a bid. All bids must be sealed and must be opened at once. They will be opened at 3 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 28, and the information will then be presented to the town council at 7 p.m. that day.

Based on Goad's research on

the old town hall, it was gifted to the town in the 1980s. One of the stipulations was that it be used by the fire department, the town or the county. If it is not used for any of these purposes, then it would have to go back to the person who gifted it.

The intent was to sell it, but that is not possible, Bishop said. The potential sale was brought into conversation at its July 22 meeting, where the council voted to investigate how the Town Hall would be sold.

Shweta Krishnan is a Fink Fellow in the Cox Institute's Journalism Writing Lab at the University of Georgia. Opinions expressed are those of the writer.