



# Oconee County Connections Employee Newsletter

Volume 4, No. 12

December 2022

## Employee Holiday Luncheon

It's that time of year! The annual Employee Holiday Luncheon is scheduled for Wednesday, December 7, from noon to 2 p.m.

Bring canned goods to donate to ACTS when you come and take advantage of the opportunity to brighten someone's holiday!

We are looking forward to seeing you there, and we hope you have a very merry and bright holiday season!!

A flyer for the County Holiday Luncheon. The background is a blue and white polka-dot pattern with a snowflake border. At the bottom, there are two snowmen in a snowy landscape with evergreen trees. The text is as follows:

*Save the Date!*

## COUNTY HOLIDAY LUNCHEON

*Catered meal by White Tiger*

*Employee Service Awards*  
*Retiree Presentation*  
*Fellowship, Fun and More!*

*Oconee County Civic Center*  
*Wednesday*  
*December 7th*  
*Noon - 2:00pm*

**DONATE CANS TO ACTS**

# Parks & Rec Honored at Annual Banquet

## Congrats RaMad Hunter & Tyler Hartzog

The Georgia Recreation and Parks Association District 7 recognized two dedicated Parks & Rec team members at its annual banquet on Wednesday, October 26, in Forsyth County.

RaMad Hunter was named the Facilities and Grounds Professional of the Year for his outstanding and ongoing contributions to the field of recreation, parks, and leisure services.

Tyler Hartzog was named the Programmer of the Year for providing outstanding program delivery and exhibiting a commitment to excellence in the field of parks and recreation.



Congratulations RaMad and Tyler on these well-deserved awards!

Thank you for everything that you do for Oconee County Parks & Rec and for the residents of Oconee County!

# Notes from HR

## Upcoming Holiday Schedule

Oconee County Government offices will be closed the following days and times:

- December 7 from noon to 2 p.m. for the Employee Holiday Luncheon
- December 23 & 26 in observance of Christmas Eve and Christmas Day
- January 2 in observance of New Year's Day



## Meet Brittney Turner



Brittney Turner is the new Event Coordinator at the Oconee County Civic Center.

Brittney grew up in Oconee County and attended Oconee County High School. She is a graduate of Oglethorpe University where she majored in Business Administration.

Brittney joined Oconee County in September of this year, and she enjoys the constantly changing challenges of her position at the Civic Center. Every week brings new events and new people to work with, and the opportunity to let her skills shine.

Be sure to stop by the Civic Center and say “hi” to Brittney!

# Employment Anniversaries

Congratulations to everyone on our team celebrating another year of service to the residents of Oconee County! Thank you for making our organization an outstanding place to work and for your dedication to our community! We appreciate all that you do!

## Finance

Susan Tidwell 12/30/2019

## Jail

Julio Soto 12/20/2004

## Law Enforcement

Paul Maxey 12/11/1989  
Dylan Pulliam 12/18/2016  
Collin Worsham 12/17/2018

## Operations-Facilities/Maintenance

Tim Dutton 12/10/2007  
Alexus Hopkins 12/13/2021

## Public Safety

Shawn Corbin 12/05/2005

## Tax Commissioner

Carol McGrath 12/28/2020

## Parks & Recreation

Hunter Rainey 12/09/2021

## Water Resources

Adam Layfield 12/08/2014

# Welcome!

We want to extend a warm welcome to our newest colleagues - we are so glad you have joined us!

## Jail

William Shields

## Public Works

John Green

## Parks & Recreation

Ethan Barnhart  
Caitlin McCain

# Notes from IT

## Shop Smart and Stay Safe This Holiday Season

‘Tis the season for holiday gifts and shopping! To avoid waiting in lines and traffic, many people opt out of going to malls and choose to shop online.

Cyber threat actors (CTAs) are aware of that fact, and it is their time to be active and develop new methods of tricking people. Be vigilant and avoid falling into their traps. Act and protect your personal and financial information.

The security tips below will help reduce the likelihood of your information falling into the wrong hands and ensure that you have a more hassle-free shopping experience this holiday season.

### Avoid Using Public Wi-Fi

- While using public Wi-Fi is convenient, it is not secure.
- Public Wi-Fi does not protect your sensitive data, and CTAs may access your personal and financial information.
- Abstain from using public Wi-Fi at all costs while purchasing and placing orders.
- Confirm that you do not allow the “Connect automatically” Wi-Fi network preference on any of your devices.



### Shop Safely

While shopping and making payments, verify the following:

- The internet connection is secure. If you are required to provide a password to access a Wi-Fi network, this will indicate that the communication between your device and the wireless router is encrypted.
- Payment sites have SSL protection, i.e., the URL should begin with “HTTPS.” Avoid making any payments to sites that do not have the “s” after the “HTTP.”

# Notes from IT - Protect Yourself While Shopping

## Check Shopping Sites

Browse sites that are well-known, legitimate, and secure. Please check for the following:

- The site has a “lock” (padlock symbol) in the URL bar. This means the website is secure, i.e., the information between your browser and the server is encrypted.
- The URL starts with “HTTPS,” which indicates that the site uses encryption and will thus protect your data.

## Resist the Urge to Click

- Be cautious with offers that look too good to be true. These may be traps.
- Stop and think before you click and take any action.

## Use Credit Cards

Avoid using debit cards. It is safer not to use them since they are related to bank accounts. Use credit cards instead; they offer many protections to users:

- Credit card companies will stop payments that look fishy.
- They may call customers to check if transactions are valid.
- Users can dispute all invalid charges with credit card companies, and these providers will generally nullify all suspicious charges and send a replacement card in the mail.



## Be Wary of Emails

- Resist the urge to open emails right away. Check who the email is from.
- Be cautious when emails look too good to be true. They may be scams to get your information.

# Notes from IT - Be SmartPhone Safe

## Verify What You Are Buying

- Make sure you're clear about what you are buying and what you are paying for.
- If in doubt about the site, google the company name.

## Strengthen Passwords

- Have strong and secure passwords. This is one of the most secure ways to protect yourself.
- Change your passwords regularly.
- Use paraphrases that make sense to you and are only known to you.

## Monitor Your Credit Cards

- Keep track of your credit cards and accounts, especially during the holiday season.
- Monitor your transactions to check if they are valid and legit.
- If something looks suspicious, reach out to the customer service departments of the credit card companies and/or banks involved by contacting their toll-free number, email, or website chat services.

## Use Smartphones Wisely

- Avoid using your smartphones for any purchases.
- Refrain from clicking on links from unknown text messages.
- Protect your smartphones with a password and anti-malware software.

## Follow Safety Tips

- Close all browsers after using public Wi-Fi.
- Clean up your browser cache.
- Do not save credit cards, passwords, payments, or any other information on your site.
- Make sure to update your laptop software regularly.
- Install anti-malware software on your laptop. Some solutions are free, such as SUPERAntiSpyware
- Scan your computer for malware at least weekly.



# Employee Birthdays

Happy Birthday to everyone in the Oconee County Government Family celebrating a birthday this month! You have our best wishes for a wonderful day, and we hope it's the start of a fantastic year!

Lofton Tidwell	12/01
Ryan Osment	12/02
David Gueth	12/03
Sunny Wallace-Burchett	12/06
Tammy Gilstrap	12/08
Allen Skinner	12/08
Joan Postero	12/12
Gregory Harrison	12/13
Evelyn King	12/15
Pamela Morris	12/16
Scott Hollars	12/17
Lesia Weaber	12/19
Taylor Howell	12/19
Cheryl Newell	12/21
Shayne Stone	12/22
Merry Howard	12/24
Mike Hunsinger	12/27
Travis Wooster	12/29
Julio Soto	12/30
Mandi Ellis	12/31



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