

Oconee County Connections

Employee Newsletter



Volume 6, No. 12

December 2024

Holiday Luncheon

Come out December 19th for our annual Employee Holiday Luncheon

Diaper Bank Drive

Drop off diapers for donation or volunteer December 6th

From the IT Workroom

What to do during a cyber attack

Human Resources Scoop

Open Enrollment and Holiday Closures

Issue Index

1	Cover Page
2	Issue Index
3	Welcome to the Team and Our New Civic Center Director
4	Our Quarterly Superstars
5	From the IT Workroom What to do during a Cyber Attack
6	HR Scoop Holiday Luncheon and Reminders
7	Around the County Diaper Drive and more...
8	Thank You to Our Elections Office and Poll Workers
9	Employee Anniversaries
10	Employee Birthdays

Welcome to the Team



E-911

Jennifer Brudon

Parks and Recreation

Cole Gallagher
Jonathan Saunders
Marcus Youngblood



Our New Civic Center Director

We are excited to announce that Whitney Sperlik has accepted the role as the new Director of the Civic Center! Whitney brings twenty-one years of experience with Oconee County's Parks and Recreation Department. Her dedication and expertise make her the perfect fit to lead the Civic Center forward, and we look forward to all the great things she will accomplish in this next chapter!

Customer Service Superstars

Joan Postero has worked for the Parks & Recreation Department for 7 years, starting as an Office Assistant at HCM and now as our Administrative Assistant. Joan handles all the Parks and Rec's BS&A purchasing and budgeting processes, bank deposits contract labor and so much more!

She works with all Parks and Rec TEAM members weekly, other departments, vendors, and general park patrons. Joan manages multiple items, always takes care of tasks that have to be completed and does so with a great attitude.

She is truly an asset to the team and a joy to work with!

Debbie Smith has worked with the Road Department since February of 1999! She manages citizen inquiries, entering concerns into the work order system to ensure timely resolution. Debbie works closely with the Finance department to ensure purchases are correctly coded and assists in processing work orders, ordering supplies, and entering the Public Works budget. As one of the first points of contact for citizens, Debbie handles calls professionally, ensuring they are directed to the appropriate person.

Her reliability, dedication, and professionalism make her a valuable asset to both internal and external customers.

**Congratulations to
Customer Service Superstars
Joan Postero and Debbie Smith!**





From the IT Workroom

What to Do When During A Cyber Attack!

As the holiday season approaches, it's important to stay alert against cybercrime. This time of year is a favorite for cybercriminals who use tactics to manipulate your emotions and exploit your routines. Here are a couple of examples of how this could happen:

- You receive an email from a former employee, with a link to donate to a children's charity during the holiday season. It seems legitimate, but clicking the link immediately installs malware on your computer!
- A free USB drive is handed to you as a Black Friday gift in a shopping center, and when you plug it into your computer to share files with a coworker, it automatically runs harmful scripts!

Unfortunately, these types of attacks are common and can quickly spread across a network. While it's helpful to know how to avoid these risks, let's assume the worst has happened—you've clicked a malicious link or downloaded a suspicious file. In moments like this, it's natural to panic, but staying calm is key. Here's what you can do to minimize the damage and protect your coworkers:

1) **Disconnect From the Network.** In order to prevent any spread of malicious files, it is important that you immediately disconnect your device from the network. If this is a desktop computer, you can do this by unplugging the Ethernet cable from the back of the computer. If this is a laptop or other mobile device, disconnect it from the Wi-Fi.

2) **Report the Incident.** Immediately after disconnecting from the network, call a member of the IT Department. You will not get in trouble. We need to know as soon as possible if anything occurs, so we can mitigate any possible spread within the network. If you are unable to reach us via phone, send in an email to ochelpdesk@oconee.ga.us and move onto Step 3.

3) **Turn Off Your Device.** In the event that you cannot immediately reach a member of IT, or we instruct you to, please turn off your device until we can verify that it is free of any malware.

Below we've included the direct extensions of each member of the IT Team. Please let us know if you have any questions!

Justin Milligan, Ext 3510

Anna Leigh Hardigree, Ext 3576

Juan Silva, Ext 3561

Sarah Baird, ext 3599

Human Resources Scoop

Calendar Reminders:

Dec 13: Open Enrollment Deadline

Dec 19: Employee Holiday Luncheon

Dec 24-25: Christmas Eve/Day

Jan 1: New Years Day

Upcoming Events for Employees!

December 19: Employee Holiday Luncheon

Mark your calendars! The annual Employee Holiday Luncheon is scheduled for Thursday, December 19, from noon to 2 p.m. at the Oconee County Civic Center, and we want to see you there. Lunch will be catered by Countryside. Don't forget to come dressed in your best holiday sweater to enter the Ugliest Christmas Sweater Contest!

December 24-25 and January 1: Holiday Closures

Oconee County Offices will be closed December 24th-25th for Christmas, and January 1st for New Year's Day.

Offices will temporarily shut down from noon to 2 pm on December 19th for the Holiday Employee Luncheon.

Open Enrollment

Open enrollment is now through December 13th. If you need to make changes to your elections, or enroll in the FSA, please contact HR at 706-769-3938, barmstrong@oconee.ga.us or jfaulkner@oconee.ga.us ASAP. You do not need to do anything to keep your elections the same, unless you wish to participate in the FSA which requires enrollment each year.





Around the County

Athens Area Diaper Bank Drive/Volunteer

Ocnee County is partnering with Athens Area Diaper Bank for a drive to collect diapers. The Athens Area Diaper Bank strives to eradicate diaper need by providing diapers to low-income families in the local area, while raising public awareness of diaper need and its impact.

Drop-off for donations will be at the Administration Building, 7635 Macon Highway, front desk receptionist, anytime **before December 5 at 5 PM**. All sizes of diapers and pull-ups are accepted. Open packs are accepted too.

If you would like to volunteer to help organize and pack donations at the Diaper Bank facility please contact Diane Baggett at dbaggett@oconee.ga.us. There is only 12 spots available, so rsvp soon!

If we are filled up please feel free to register for the Invasive Plant Removal happening December 3rd and 17th from 9 am-1 pm at Heritage Park. Registration is online at www.oconeeounty.com/FormCenter/Parks-and-Recreation-11/Heritage-Park-Invasive-Plant-Removal-Vol-86.

Holiday Door Decorating Contest

The Holiday Committee would like to remind all departments/offices to have their doors for the contest **decorated by December 6th** and photos taken and emailed to Whitney Sperlik, wsperlik@oconee.ga.us, by December 9th. The winner will be announced at the Holiday Luncheon on December 19th.

Bring One for the Chipper

Keep Ocnee County Beautiful is sponsoring "Bring One for the Chipper 2024," from December 25, 2024, through January 9, 2025, as part of a statewide effort to recycle Christmas trees. Trees can be dropped off at Home Depot on Epps Bridge Parkway or at Harris Shoals Park in Watkinsville. KOCBC will staff collection sites at both Harris Shoals Park and Home Depot on Epps on Saturday, January 9th, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. If you wish to place your tree in either location prior to January 9, please remove all decorations, lights, and stands and place in designated areas.

Trees are recycled by chipping them into mulch for use in landscaping, or by using them as fish or animal habitats.



Thank you Election's Staff

Oconee County Overall Turnout Percentage



Locality Name	Totals	Ballots Cast	% Turnout
Oconee County	32,117	27,661	86.13%
Union County	21,437	18,007	84.00%
Towns County	10,691	8,894	83.19%
Forsyth County	168,222	139,136	82.71%
Fayette County	91,463	75,464	82.51%
Morgan County	16,125	13,278	82.34%
Harris County	27,556	22,487	81.60%
Dawson County	24,188	19,659	81.28%
Glascock County	2,073	1,682	81.14%
Cherokee County	201,633	163,326	81.00%

Thank You -
Voters, Poll Officials,
Board Members &
Staff



The Board of Elections and Registration staff, along with their dedicated poll officials, served a record-breaking number of citizens — 21,272 during the sixteen days of Advance Voting, 4,799 voters on Election Day and 1,804 absentee ballots issued. 86.13% of the electorate in Oconee County cast a ballot in the November 5, 2024 General Election, making Oconee County 1st in the State in voter turnout percentage—Phenomenal! Our poll officials have devoted many hours to serving the citizens of Oconee County, and we are extremely grateful for their commitment to Elections. Elections require team effort and countless hours of preparation to make it happen. Thanks to the collective effort of our poll workers, board members, and staff, all elections in 2024 were a success!



EMPLOYEE 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!

<u>Civic Center</u> Timothy Lee	12/10/2023	<u>Parks and Recreation</u> Chris Cotton	12/10/2007
<u>Finance</u> Susan Tidwell	12/30/2019	<u>Public Safety</u> Shawn Corbin	12/05/2005
<u>Jail</u> Julio Soto	12/20/2004	<u>Tax Commissioner</u> Carol McGrath	12/28/2020
<u>Law Enforcement</u> Collin Worsham	12/17/2018	<u>Water Resources</u> Adam Layfield	12/08/2014
Dylan Pulliam	12/18/2016		
Paul Maxey	12/11/1989		
William Lewis	12/27/2023		



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!

Chad Skelton	12/01	Scott Hollars	12/17
Lofton Tidwell	12/01	Madison Moore	12/18
David Gueth	12/03	Taylor Howell	12/19
Sunny Wallace-Burchett	12/06	Lesia Weaber	12/19
Tammy Gilstrap	12/08	Cheryl Newell	12/21
John Mobley	12/12	Shayne Stone	12/22
Joan Postero	12/12	Michael Hunsinger	12/27
Gregory Harrison	12/13	Marcus Youngblood	12/27
Evelyn King	12/15	Travis Wooster	12/29
Pam Morris	12/16	Julio Soto	12/30
Jeff Riddle	12/16	Mandi Ellis	12/31

Oconee Connections Employee Newsletter is published monthly by the Office of Communications. We want to hear from you! Please e-mail us with your department news, as well as employee announcements of births, engagements, weddings, and retirements. Please submit news items to dbaggett@oconee.ga.us by the 15th of the month prior to publication for inclusion in the newsletter. The Office of Communications reserves the right to edit all submissions for clarity and length.