

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

From the desk of
Stephen Allison
Georgia State Representative - 8th District



Passing a responsible, balanced state budget that meets the needs of all Georgians is the House's greatest responsibility and number one priority. Crafting a state budget is not a simple, overnight task. Setting spending for the state for the year requires extensive work and months of review of every state agency's budget. Both the House and Senate are currently taking two weeks to work together in a joint effort, to review every instance of state spending. Our goal is to work together, along with Governor Perdue, to create a budget that helps improve our economy, grows businesses and puts Georgians back to work.

This week, Representatives and Senators gathered in Capitol meeting rooms to hear how state agencies and departments could cut spending even further for the upcoming Fiscal Year 2011 budget. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Georgia ranks 48th in state spending per person, which means Georgia state government is one of the leanest in the country and your tax dollars are going further than ever. In response to several requests from constituents that don't know how the state prioritizes its spending, here is a snapshot of our current state budget.

The Georgia General Assembly has discretion over \$16 billion in the General budget. This excludes \$2 billion in (the bulk of) motor fuel taxes, all lottery funds and the Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund, which are dedicated by state constitution to specific appropriation purposes. The

budget is allocated as follows: (Percent, Amount, Purpose) 44%, \$7 billion, K-12 Education (1.6 million students; 160,000 teachers); 14%, \$2.2 billion, Community Health (Medicaid, PeachCare, state health benefit plan, county public health departments); 12%, \$1.9 billion, Board of Regents (300,000 students; 35 colleges and universities); 8%, \$1.2 billion, Debt Sinking Fund (Bond payments); 6%, \$1 billion, Corrections (54,000 inmates; 37 prisons); 5%, \$800 million, Behavioral Health (7 state-run mental health hospitals, Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities); 3%, \$500 million Human Services (Child Welfare, TANF, Aging, Adoption, Foster Care Services); 2%, \$320 million, Technical Colleges (60,000 students; 65 colleges and branches); 6%, \$1.1 billion, Everything Else.

Everything Else totals just over \$1 billion in the budget. It covers 40 agencies and all branches of government, such as Public Safety; Juvenile Justice; Judicial System; Governor's Office, Senate and House; Teachers Retirement; Driver Services; Pardon and Paroles; and Revenue Department.

I will continue to monitor the budget process and appreciate all the input I have received from constituents and wanted you to have a first hand look at the budget. Please feel free to call me with any questions or comments that you might have regarding our state. You can reach me at my Capitol office at 404-656-0177.

Extension Tips



by
Robert Brewer

Take-charge steps help deal with job loss

Thousands of Americans are facing either the reality or the threat of job loss. If you, or someone close to you, faces unemployment, here are some things to keep in mind.

Rebuild your emotional strength before you begin working on the road to recovery. Losing a job under any circumstances is traumatic to most people.

You will naturally go through a grieving process. Let yourself grieve and recover emotionally.

Don't be afraid to take a time out from your concerns. Go for long walks. Rest more. Relax more. Try to refresh your spirit with whatever books, music, activities or rituals you find comforting and inspiring.

Nurture positive thoughts. Positive thoughts lead to positive action. Know that you have been successful in the past and will be successful again.

Reach out to family and friends. Let them help you.

Use this fateful event as an opportunity to refocus your values and redefine your goals. Identify what's most important in your life and define your goals accordingly. Don't dwell on the things you can't control. Instead, work on the things you can control.

Survival Steps

As soon as you feel strong enough, take the necessary steps to survive hard times.

Notify creditors of your situation and inform them

of your ability and plans to make payments. However, don't make promises you can't keep.

Sit down with the members of your household and list all expenses. Determine which expenses can be eliminated, reduced or deferred. Make cuts that are really going to count.

Develop revised written budgets covering the next several months based on the new information you develop. Control your spending accordingly.

Use new credit only for absolute necessities that cannot be delayed, forgone or paid in any other way. Keep careful account of the credit used.

Take steps to regain employment. And take advantage of available programs, benefits and insurance to supplement your income. Seek help that you need and follow through in using it.

Make use of community resources to maintain health, vitality and a positive outlook. Eat well, sleep well and maintain social contacts.

Comfort, Don't Cheer

If family members or friends are facing job loss, remember that grieving is a natural process. Grieve with them. Don't try to cheer them up before they're ready. Support them emotionally with your presence, your assurances and your willingness to listen. Be a good companion, providing sincere interest, compassion and positive talk.

The best motivation is often the high regard and high expectations our friends have for us. Present a canvas filled with sincere compliments, exciting challenges and positive expectations.

Above all, provide the practical help your loved one needs while recovering emotionally. Help do the tasks that need to be done and help shoulder the concerns that should be shouldered so recovery can proceed quickly.



"IT'S ON MY MIND.."
Danny H. Parris

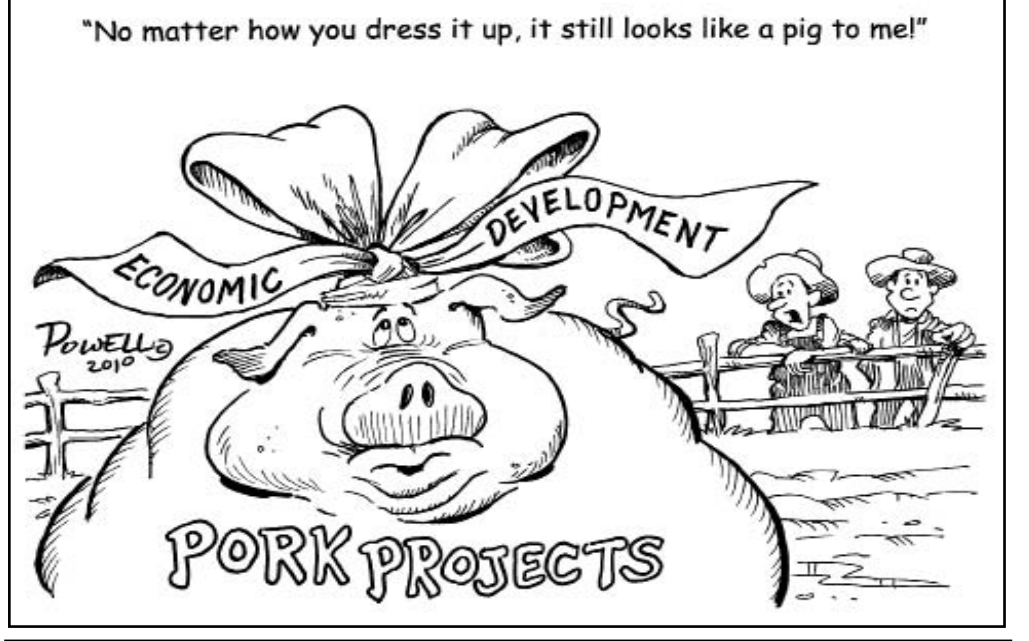
What Day Is This?

A man and his wife sat down for their morning breakfast. The wife proceeded to ask her husband a very disturbing question. She said, "You do know what today is don't you?" Being a thoughtful, loving husband, his answer was, "Yes." However, he had no clue as to what day it was. He thought of birthdays, anniversaries and every holiday on the calendar shot through his mind, but to no avail. Fortunately, his wife did not pursue the conversation and the husband was off the hot seat for the time being. He rushed off to work knowing that when he returned home he had better know what today is. About 10 a.m. the wife received a love telegram from her husband. At 1 p.m. she received a dozen red roses from her husband. As the clock struck three a delivery truck arrived with a very expensive outfit, suit, shoes and all. When the husband arrived home he was greeted with the most excited wife you have ever seen. She said, "Honey, I have had the most wonderful Ground Hog Day of my whole life." It pays in more ways than one to know what day today is. Like the husband, there are multitudes who have no clue about today. They live life today with a hit or miss plan. The significance of life and living seems to be a hidden mystery to them. In numerous households, both husbands and wives get up in the morning, hit the highways and fight traffic to their employment. Many of them struggle through their work without any satisfaction; dreading going home, cooking, helping children

with homework, doing laundry and sometimes without any appreciation from children or spouses. They go to bed depressed, fearing the sound of the alarm that signals the cycle to begin all over again. There are massive numbers of men and women who face each new day with the only goal to make a living rather than living a life. Someone has said that each morning puts a man on trial and each evening passes judgment. What day is today? Today may very well be the rest of your life. Albert Schweitzer prayed this morning prayer. "Here, Lord is my life. I place it on the altar today. Use it as you will." What is today? "It is the day that the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Ps.118:24). What is today? "Today is the day of salvation" (II Cor. 6:2). We are to recognize this is the day the Lord has made and we resolve to be happy in it. We are to receive today the gift of salvation. What day is today? It could very well be the exit day from time to eternity. Today, you could be with God in heaven or you could be in darkness and blackness separated from God. Henry Clay Trumbell said, "Today is, for all that we know, the opportunity and occasion of our lives. On what we say or do today may depend the success and completeness of our entire life struggle. It is for us, therefore, to use every moment of today as if our very eternity were dependent upon its words and deeds." Since our days are numbered and today could be our day of reckoning, today, is the day to hear His voice and experience abundant life. Yes, there are dog days and ground hog days on the calendar but God has on His calendar heavenly days for all who will receive them. Won't you make this a red-letter day in your life by seeing the light of day?

Elected Officials

- Governor Sonny Perdue, Georgia State Capitol Atlanta, GA 30334, 404-656-1776
- Sen. Johnny Isakson, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510, 202-224-3643
- Sen. Saxby Chambliss, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510, 202-224-3521
- U.S. Congressman Paul Broun, 10th District, Washington, DC 20515, 202-225-4101
- Rep. Stephen Allison, Georgia House of Representatives, 404-656-0177 or 0185
- Sen. Jim Butterworth, Georgia State Senate, 404-463-1367
- Towns County Commissioner Bill Kendall, 706-896-2276
- Clerk of Superior Court Cecil Dye, 706-896-2130
- Tax Commissioner Bruce Rogers, 706-896-2267
- Magistrate/Probate Judge David Rogers, 706-896-3467
- Sheriff Chris Clinton, 706-896-4444
- Coroner Ricky Mathis, 706-896-6254
- Enotah Circuit District Attorney Stan Gunter, 706-896-6489
- Board of Education: 706-896-2279, Michael Anderson, Donna Hedden, Bob Gibby, Larry Kimsey, Emily Phillips. Superintendent: Dr. Richard Behrens
- Hiawassee Mayor Barbara Mathis, 706-896-2202
- Hiawassee City Council: Janet Allen, Jay Chastain, Joan Crothers, Howard Cunningham, Annie Johnson
- Young Harris Mayor Andrea Gibby, 706-379-3171
- Young Harris City Council: Terry Ingram, John Kelley, Donald Keys, Matthew Miller, Jennifer Mulkey, David Sellers



Community Calendar

- Towns County Water Board Meeting** 3rd Monday of each month at 7 p.m. in the TC Water Office Building.
- Mountain Community Seniors** meet the second Thursday of each month at the Senior Center in Hiawassee at 2 p.m.
- Towns County Democratic Party** meets the 2nd Thursday of every month. Please call Kim Bailey at 706-994-2727 or 706-896-6747 for details.
- Towns County Republican Party** meets the 1st Tuesday of each month from 5 p.m.-6 p.m. Dinner at Daniels Steak House, 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. meeting, 896-7281.
- Towns County Planning Commission** is held the 2nd Monday of each month at 7 p.m. in the Courthouse.
- Towns County Commissioners** meeting is the 3rd Thursday at 5:30 p.m. in the courthouse.
- School Board Meeting**, 2nd Monday each month at 7 p.m. in the auditorium.
- Hiawassee City Council** 1st Tuesday of month 4 p.m., at City Hall.
- Young Harris City Council**, 1st Tuesday of month at 7 p.m., Young Harris City Hall.
- The Hiwassee River Valley Kennel Club** meetings are held at 7 p.m. the 1st Monday of each month at Brother's Restaurant on Hwy 64 in Murphy, NC. Call President Kit Miracle: 706-492-5253 or Peggy Moorman: 828-835-1082.
- The Unicoy Masonic Lodge** #259 meets on the 2nd Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m.
- the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 4:30 p.m., Courthouse.
- Towns County Board of Elections** holds its monthly meetings on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 4 p.m. at the Elections Office (Old Rock Jail).
- Towns County Historical Society** meets the 2nd Monday of each month at the Senior Center in Hiawassee at 5 p.m. Annual dues \$15, PO Box 1182, Hiawassee, GA 706-896-1060, www.townshistory.org
- Bridge Players** intermediate level meets at 12:45 p.m. on Mondays & Fridays at the Towns County Health Dept. Call Eden at 706-896-6921.
- Mountain Regional Arts and Crafts Guild, Inc (MRACG)** meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at ArtWorks Artisan Centre, located at 308 Big Sky Drive (behind the Holiday Inn), Hiawassee. Refreshments at 6 p.m. & the meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. Contact us by calling 706-896-0932, mtnregarts-craftsguild.org. mtnregarts-craftsguild@hotmail.com.
- VFW Post #7807 Fish Fry** will be 2nd and 4th Friday of the month, 4:30-7 p.m., \$9 a plate, all you can eat.
- Mountain Computer User Group** meets the 2nd Monday of each month at the Goolsby Center at YHC. Q & A at 6 p.m., meeting at 7 p.m.
- FPL Retirees Breakfast** will meet the 2nd Tuesday of each month at the Hole in the Wall Restaurant on the square in Blairsville at 9 a.m.
- Chattahoochee-Nantahala Chapter, Trout Unlimited** meets 2nd Thursday of each month at Cadence Bank in Blairsville. 5 p.m. Fly Tying - 7 p.m. General Meeting. Everyone welcome. www.ngatu692.com.
- Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)** meets the 3rd Monday of each month at various area restaurants. For information call John Quinlan at 706-896-2430 or visit www.moaa.org/chapter/blueridgemountains.
- Alcoholics Anonymous:** 24 hour phone line 828-837-4440.
- Mothers of Preschoolers** meets on the third Thursday of each month at First Baptist Church of Blairsville from 6 - 8 p.m. Call the church office at 706-745-2469 for more information.
- Chatuge Regional Hospital Auxiliary** on the 3rd Monday of each month, except the months of July, October and December, in the hospital cafeteria at 1:30 p.m.
- Old Fashioned Square Dance Lessons** each Mon. in Hiawassee, GA, 6 p.m. at the Senior Center (2 blocks south of the town square, beside the Courthouse) Hiawassee, GA 706-896-1060
- Mountain Magic Table Tennis Club** meets 6 p.m. Thursdays at Pine Log Baptist Church Fellowship Hall in Brasstown. Ping Pong players welcome. Call Lee (828) 389-0924.
- Mended Hearts Support Group** meets the 2nd Monday of each month at Chatuge Regional Hospital Cafeteria from 5:30-7 PM. For information contact 706-994-6988.

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Towns County Herald

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GUEST COLUMNS

From time to time, people in the community have a grand slant on an issue that would make a great guest editorial. Those who feel they have an issue of great importance should call our editor and talk with him about the idea. Others have a strong opinion after reading one of the many columns that appear throughout the paper. If so, please write. Please remember that publication of submitted editorials is not guaranteed.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SHOULD BE EMAILED OR MAILED TO: Towns County Herald, Letter to the Editor, PO Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546. Our email address: tcherald@brmemc.net. Letters should be limited to 200 words or less, signed, dated and include a phone number for verification purposes. This paper reserves the right to edit letters to conform with Editorial page policy or refuse to print letters deemed pointless, potentially defamatory or in poor taste. Letters should address issues of general interest, such as politics, the community, environment, school issues, etc. Letters opposing the views of previous comments are welcomed; however, letters cannot be directed at, nor name or ridicule previous writers. Letters that recognize good deeds of others will be considered for publication.*
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