



READY TO SOAR • 1B

Roddy White, Julio Jones excited about Falcons' passing attack.

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Rutberg not eligible for recount

BY CRYSTAL TATUM
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COVINGTON — District 5 Republican candidate Jared Rutberg missed the chance to be in a runoff by just 26 votes, but he won't be asking for a recount.

A total of 2,483 ballots were cast in the District 5 Republican primary. Ronnie Dimsdale and Levie Maddox received the exact same number of votes — 740 — or 29.8 percent — and will be heading to a runoff.

Rutberg received 214 votes, or 28.76 percent, a difference of 1.04 percent. That's just four-tenths of a percentage point over what Rutberg needed to be entitled to request a recount.

In addition to votes tallied Tuesday night, there are three provisional ballots, but none are for District 5, according to Board of Elections Director Donna Morrison.

"I'd rather lose now than in the runoff," Rutberg said Wednesday. "I'd like to thank everyone for their great support and for running a clean campaign."

There were four candidates in the Republican primary — Wesley Dowdy trailed far behind with 11.64 percent, or 289 votes.

The runoff between Dimsdale and Maddox will take place Tuesday, Aug. 21.

The winner will face Marcello Banes in the November general election.

Network center to be finished next month

BY MICHELLE FLOYD
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COVINGTON — A new, potentially safer network center is expected to be completed next month.

The Newton County Board of Education recently approved the construction of a Network Operations Center to be located at the Newton College & Career Academy.

The board approved a recommendation by Newton County School System Superintendent Gary Mathews for the low bid of \$654,148 by Bon Building Services out of Conyers.

Bids ranged from the low bid to \$801,000.

"I feel there's a need ... in order to protect the safety and data of the equipment," said Dr. Gary Shattuck, director of Technology & Media Services at NCSS.

In September, Shattuck told the board of his idea to relocate the operations center, which contains the system's servers, data storage and other equipment and is currently housed at the Newton County BOE building on Newton Drive in Covington.

Several times the data room has overheated or had problems that required the work of the system's technology department, and Shattuck fears that its current location is hazardous. He feels that the center being moved to the basement of the Academy would be a safer place for the equipment because of more room and cooler temperatures; a redesigned setup also would help the hazardous situation.

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Double your pleasure in August



Staff Photo: Sue Ann Kuhn-Smith

Just before dawn Thursday, Citizen photographer Sue Ann Kuhn-Smith caught this glimpse of a full moon looking down from the heavens over east metro. It is one of two full moons that will make an appearance this month. On Aug. 31, a rare Blue Moon, a second full moon in a given month, will shine down. The oddity occurs with a month with two full moons every two to three years. A full moon occurs once every 29.5 days and usually this happens once a month. But with February having less than 30 days, this presents the potential for two full moons in a month.

Sheriff to offer gun safety training

BY BARBARA KNOWLES
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COVINGTON — The Newton County Sheriff's Office is offering a free Citizen's Firearms Safety Course this month.

Lt. Paul Gunter, the NCSO agency training coordinator, said the class has become very popular and is usually filled to capacity. He said those who have taken the class seem to find it rewarding.

"They feel more confident in having a firearm in their home and feel a little bit more secure in understanding the dos and don'ts," he said.

The course will consist of information on laws governing the use of deadly force; firearms safety at and away from the range; and basic nomenclature of the revolver and semi-automatic pistols. Additionally, the participants will have an opportunity to fire their weapon at the NCSO Weapons Range.

"Our biggest thing is to give our citizens the ability to get more knowledge and understanding of what the laws in Georgia are and when they can use their firearm and make sure they have a working knowledge of the firearm they have in their home — how to use it, how to clean it and how to take care of it and how to secure it," he said.

He said he cautions people that they should secure their firearm based on who lives in their home and who has access to it and suggests that all owners of firearms obtain a carry permit for it.

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Library faces staffing shortage after budget cuts

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COVINGTON — The Newton County Library System continues to face deep cuts that are impacting services.

Staff at the library has been reduced by 57 percent since this time last year, according to Library Director Lace Keaton. Staff was reduced by 30 percent due to state budget cuts at the beginning of this year.

Thanks to a hike in the cost to provide employee benefits, additional staff have left or had hours cut, she said.

Previously, a portion of an employee's salary went toward paying for health insurance, but the Georgia Department of Community Health decided earlier this year to charge a flat rate for anyone who has health insurance through the state. The cost is \$745

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Special Photos

Right, Kim Degonia took this photo during a recent trip to the library. These books are waiting to be restocked in the children's library. Left, shelves in the children's section of the library sit bare. Degonia said it's impossible to find a book without the assistance of a librarian, but there is no longer a staff member dedicated to that area.

\$6,000 grant will tag animals adopted from shelter

BY CRYSTAL TATUM
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COVINGTON — Dogs and cats that are adopted from the Newton County animal control shelter will soon get an extra safeguard to make sure they never have to return.

Newton County Animal Control has received a \$6,000 grant

that will fund 300 tags to issue to cats and dogs when they are adopted, along with an engraving unit to include the owner's contact information on the tag. The grant is through the American Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and is being administered by the National Animal Control Association. ASPCA awarded the National Animal Control Association \$150,000

to implement tagging programs in municipal and county animal care and control agencies.

According to Dr. Emily Weiss, vice president of shelter research and development for ASPCA, the association's research indicates that while most pet owners know it's a good idea to have their animal tagged, only about a third actually do.

"There's a disparity between

behavior and attitude," she said. Based on follow-ups with pet owners that have used the tags in the past, ASPCA concluded that 89 percent kept the tags on their pets after receiving them.

"It's like giving a vaccine; it's a preventative tool to keep them out of the shelter and get them home," Weiss said.

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WEATHER



Partly sunny. Highs in the mid-90s. Lows in the lower 70s.
More weather, 2A

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