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Board of Elections prepares for runoffs

By **JESSICAH PETERS**
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COVINGTON — Elections in Newton County continue as Commissioner J.C. Henderson faces a runoff against candidate Sonya Hunte on July 22. Only eight out of 22 pre-

cincts will be voting in the BOC race; however, there is still a statewide Republican runoff in which all precincts will participate. The other runoff races are as follows:
• U.S. Senate race between former congressman Jack Kingston and David Perdue;

• District 10 U.S. House race between Jody Hice and Mike Collins; and
• District 112 state House race between Dave Belton of Morgan County and Aaron Brooks of Newton County.
Early voting begins Monday, June 30, and continues until Friday, July 18. Citi-

zens can vote in advance by going to the Newton County Administration Building, located at 1113 Usher St., from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday during the early voting period. However, Board of Elections Director Donna Morrison reminds voters who aren't voting early that

the administration building is not a precinct. She said eligible voters can find their precinct polling location on their voter registration card. Morrison said residents should check the Georgia Secretary of State website to see if they're eligible to vote. "Even if voters didn't vote in the primary, they can still

vote in the runoff," Morrison said. "As long as they're eligible voters. However, if citizens did vote in the primary, they can't switch parties in the runoff." When asked what it cost to hold the primary and runoff, Morrison said those price tags haven't been configured yet.

Picking up produce



Above, Rodney Lynch and his 4-year-old daughter Angelina shop for some vegetables and fruit at Ramsey's Produce in downtown Covington. The two stopped by to find some muscadines, but also to learn more about the delicious variety of veggies and fruits that summer brings. Top, ewith peaches now in season, Ramsey's Produce offers the fruit from both Georgia and South Carolina. It's suggested to leave the peaches out to ripen instead of refrigerating them. Ramsey's Produce is open from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday. It is located at 1158 Usher St. in Covington. (Staff Photos: Julie Wells)

BOC ready for budget discussions

By **JESSICAH PETERS**
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COVINGTON — County officials are preparing to configure the numbers for a two-year budget and discuss what can be done to reduce the millage rate. The first budget work session begins at 6:30 p.m. Monday at the Newton County Historic Courthouse. The Board of Commissioners created budget committees made up of at least two commissioners in order to hear from the various department heads. "For the last month and a half our commissioners have listened to department heads and I think they've gained knowledge on what each department needs," Chairman Keith Ellis said. "The committees gave an opportunity for department heads to converse with commissioners in a less formal setting. It was definitely a worthwhile endeavor." The county plans to not only reduce the millage rate, but also restore the five furlough days to the county employees. Ellis said they'll also be taking under advice the requests from all department heads and constitutional officers. "Although we haven't come to a consensus yet, there's been some discussion and in our strategic planning, we've all pledged to lower the millage rate," Ellis said. "And I'm personally pledging to voters that I will find a way to have all commissioners on board to do the same." The public budget work sessions will allow commissioners to ask questions about the proposed budget and there is no set agenda, according to Ellis. The other budget meetings will be held at 6:30 p.m. on June 9 and June 16. Ellis will also be hosting a "Chairman's Chat" prior to Monday's first meeting at 3 p.m. in his office. He also encouraged citizens to email or call their district commissioners prior to the budget process.

NHS graduate to join Naval Academy

By **RYAN MCKENZIE**
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COVINGTON — After graduating high school, a Newton High alumnus is taking a big step forward to attend the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md. Brendan "Trace" Brown was accepted to the academy after being nominated by Georgia Congressman Hank Johnson. "Trace has a strong desire to serve and protect his country," said Rep. Johnson in a press release. "Couple that with his drive to be part of a tradition of discipline at a U.S. Service Academy, and it's easy to see why the Naval Academy is the perfect fit. I'm pleased my office could help Trace get to the next level. We wish him the best of luck and look forward to hearing about his success in Annapolis." Brown has had his eye on the Naval Academy since his freshman year at NHS, working diligently for the rigorous selection process that includes an application, a thorough medical exam and being nominated for attendance. Brown's strong academic record and participation in extracurricular activities made him a successful candidate. "I made sure I took as many AP classes as I could and worked hard to do well in them," said Brown. "You really have to have strong academics. I think I took seven AP classes during high school." According to the Naval Academy's website, eligibility requirements also in-



Newton High graduate Brendan Brown will be attending the U.S. Naval Academy in the fall. Brown was nominated by Congressman Hank Johnson and hopes to eventually become an admiral. (Special photo)

clude being a U.S. citizen of good moral character, and not being married or having any dependents. Applicants must also be at least 17 years of age and no older than 23 on July 1 of the year they enter the academy.

Brown also participated in the National Honor Society, Student Government Association and played golf. Also, having been a member of the NHS Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps since his second semester of freshman year, he is leaving the unit as a commanding officer for the battalion. "Cadet Lt. Col. Brown currently serves as the commanding officer of the Marine Corps Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps, Newton High School," said Chief Warrant Officer Rawley Coleman, commander of the Newton High JROTC Unit. "He is the highest ranking cadet in the program and serves in the highest billet. Cadet Lt. Col. Brown entered the program as a freshman, and stayed all four years, starting out as cadet private in rank. Now transitioning into the next phase of his life, I am excited about what opportunity awaits Cadet Lt. Col. Brown at the United States Naval Academy. At the academy, Midshipman Brown will be among America's best and brightest. Over the years, the USNA has been proud to have helped shape the lives of countless outstanding individuals." Brown's father, who served as an air traffic controller in the Navy, precedes his son in serving in the armed forces. Brown will be an officer in the Navy after graduating from the academy. "My goal is to do 20 years in the Navy,

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Man accused of holiday break-ins

By **AIMEE JONES**
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COVINGTON — A man accused of breaking into houses in a south Newton County subdivision on Memorial Day has been arrested. Deputies with the Newton County Sheriff's Office began receiving calls Monday morning that a suspicious white man was seen walking around homes in the area of Berkshire subdivision and Veal Road, looking as though he were trying to break in. When deputies responded to the Veal Road address, the suspect had already left the area, but a witness said he saw the man driving away at a high rate of speed in a white Ford Crown Victoria. The back door of the home, which was later determined to be abandoned and bank-owned, was kicked in, according to the Sheriff's Office. Witnesses told deputies they had seen this same man attempting to break into homes in Berkshire subdivision. Depu-

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