



Butts County Georgia Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2015



Prepared by

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Butts County Board of Commissioners Office

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Section 1: Summary

I am pleased to present the fourth annual report on the state of the Butts County Government for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2014 and ending on June 30, 2015. Most county governments run on the fiscal year model rather than the calendar year and ours is one of them so our new year begins each July with the passage of the annual budget. FY 2015 was a very busy year with a lot of changes that presented themselves through the year. As they always do, our employees met these head on and have grown together as a team of individuals working collectively for a better Butts county. Our departments and agencies and their employees, under the leadership of our Department Heads, Constitutional Officers and Elected Officers, have exercised considerable stewardship over the resources they are given to work with and in doing so, have contributed to a healthy fiscal condition and a highly effective government service delivery strategy. Improvement in the economy has been slow but is definitely showing signs of improvement, as evidenced by new businesses, which have made the decision to come here, modest growth in our tax digest and the growth that is beginning to show life in the housing market.



Some of our major projects that have been completed or will be completed in the coming weeks address sorely needed capital improvement projects and increase fire coverage in the County. The list of improvements was not long but it covered some of our largest and most sensitive structures including the Butts County Detention Center and the Ernest Biles Youth Center, both of which received new roof systems this year. In addition, the main gymnasium at the Youth Center received extensive renovations, including a new floor, refurbished bleachers and interior upgrades. Air conditioning this gym was also a major project and now patrons can enjoy a climate controlled environment throughout the year, making this facility suitable for large-scale events that bring revenue to the County.

Last year's relocation of the 4H Extension Service to the Youth Center has proven to be a win-win situation for all of our youth as the two departments compliment each other in what they offer to the younger citizens of Butts County. We are very proud of the Ernest Biles Youth Center and how much better it is today than it was a year ago. I am appreciative to the Community Development Director, Leisure Services Director and to the Sheriff of Butts County for helping to make this revitalized building better for our community.

The County also broke ground on a new fire station to serve the citizens of District 2. This district had been the only district that did not have a 24-hour fire coverage system in place. For decades, the County has relied on the Flovilla Fire Department to provide volunteer firefighter coverage to that area but as their volunteer base shrank, many calls were unable to be answered, necessitating a response from stations many miles from that part of the county.

The new station was dedicated on July 17th, 2015 and began operations shortly thereafter. It is located on Highway 42 South at the intersection of Highway 42, 87 and US 23 on a three-acre parcel donated to the County by Mr. J. B. White. From this location, the station will have access to Indian Springs, Flovilla, the southern end of the County, Mt. Vernon Road and other critical areas. Additionally, it will serve such key areas as the Indian Springs Holiness Campground, Indian Springs State Park and Dauset Trails Nature Center, all of which are key tourist attractions in Butts County. Full time firefighters, also certified as an EMT, will be on duty around the clock once the station is operational. This will shorten the response time to critical incidents considerably. Project Management was overseen by Douglas Manning of the Community Development Department, with assistance from Bill Holton, Roger Jewell, Kimberly LeCroy, Artisica Stodghill, Marty Long and the Public Works Department, Chief Mike Wilson and the Fire Department and many contractors. The new station has been designated as “Indian Springs Fire Station” which will carry the station number of 8. I am especially grateful to State Representative Susan Holmes who assisted us with obtaining the services of the Georgia Department of Corrections Inmate Construction Team to erect and finish the station.

On the economic development front, our Community Development Department began working last fall with a local developer to bring two new businesses to Jackson. Zaxby’s, a large chain restaurant that serves chicken products and Waffle House, also a large chain 24-Hour diner have since closed on properties adjacent to our County Administration Building and have begun construction on new facilities. Prior to construction, the City of Jackson proposed the development of a right-turn lane or “deceleration” lane to be developed along West Third Street from our building all the way to the Dairy Queen, which would provide a turn in lane to our future use property, the new Zaxby’s and Waffle House as well as Dairy Queen. This turned into a joint project with Jackson providing the engineering and building of the lane while the County and Zaxby’s providing some of the funding. All four West Third entities donated frontage to the project, and as of this writing, the project is well underway. That should help to keep traffic moving once all of these businesses are open for business.

Last year, I reported that we had been working with our governmental partner, the City of Jackson, to achieve better code enforcement and to address a number of problem areas that have existed for many years. Since then, many blighted properties have been eliminated or corrected, both in the city of Jackson and the County. Addressing blighted structures is not a simple process and it involves cooperation from local governments, the court system and the public to make it work. We feel that the measures we spent considerable time working on have now begun to bear fruit and will continue to do so.

As always, we continue to work with all of our other government partners, including the Board of Education, Development Authority, Hospital Authority, Water Authority and of course, our three municipalities of Jackson, Flovilla and Jenkinsburg. Regular meetings, held about every four months with all of these governments, ensure that the line of communication remains open. Each one is a partner with us and we are proud of the excellent working relationship we have. Even when we disagree, we respect each other’s position and we move forward. This year we enhanced our support of the Hospital Authority by reallocating a mil of property tax to the

Authority, rather than direct funding. This allows the hospital to receive the benefit of a mill which should strengthen and grow as the economy continues to improve and it reduces over a half a million dollars from the general fund budget by funding them directly from a tax we were already collecting anyway.

We are now in discussions of taking this partnership to a new level by working on an intergovernmental retreat. It is our hope that we will take our local elected officials from all governments, local appointed leaders and a number of community leaders to a strategic retreat where we can discuss and have a serious conversation about the future of this county. Conversations earlier this year about consolidation of government services led in a different direction when the discussion began to center around how we can work together to make each other stronger and become more unified as a community of local governments. The results of these meetings led to the announcement and publication of the following statement, which I drafted earlier this year. We hope that this will become the basis of an even better working relationship that will help us as leaders to move this county forward.

After serious discussion, the following conclusions were reached and it was the feeling of the majority of the committee that these should be shared with the government bodies of each entity and the community at large that:

1. There does not seem to be an overwhelming drive from the various constituencies of those represented that consolidation is needed and necessary. While some citizens have questioned whether or not consolidation would be good for the cities and county, this question has only been raised by a very small selection of the electorate.
2. It was the feeling of the representatives of the three cities and the Board of Commissioners that if a study were called for by any local community entities that the costs of preparing said study should be borne by those same entities with the full cooperation of the local governments to ensure that they receive accurate and necessary information.
3. It was strongly felt by all members of the committee that the three cities and the county, as well as the school system and local authorities currently have an excellent working relations and that the good standing of this relationship should now be channeled in a positive, new direction.
4. The new direction, as envisioned by the committee, would be to explore ways in which all of the entities represented, plus the authorities, could work together along with community partners to develop and implement a strategic plan for defining the kind of county we want to be through workshops, facilitated meetings, visioning conferences and town hall meetings.
5. That all entities would take a comprehensive look at any existing agreements between the governments, determine whether these should be updated or enhanced and to

postulate new ideas where services not currently consolidated might be consolidated through intergovernmental service agreements.

6. It was further agreed upon by all present that the future of our county, which is inclusive of all cities, communities and citizens, is in all of our hands and that this is the time when we need to take a strong, focused and farsseeing look at where our county is today, where we hope for it to be tomorrow and what steps will need to be taken to get it us where we want to be.

CHARTING THE CHANGES

Our county departments and the employees who work in them are the backbone of the entire operation of the County. Each department provides a range of services to the community which, when looked at as the collective whole, enhances the quality of life in Butts County.

The Administration Department, which is the central agency of the County government handles the major tasks of managing the County on a daily basis, including looking after the financial condition of the County, it's personnel functions, legislative and policy direction and much more. Our Controller, Chiquita Barkley, has been instrumental in helping to focus the teamwork and cooperative spirit that our employees have and to help channel that towards making the office work better for the agencies we support and the personnel who staff them. We welcomed a new Payroll Benefits Coordinator to the office, Shwander Newton, and she has taken employee wellness as a personal mission, in addition to a variety of other enhancements to personnel processing. Our County Clerk, Crystal Epps, continues to redefine the role of the County Clerk with capability and innovation, bringing new technologies to make the Commissioner's jobs easier. Fran Womack, who has worked in Administration for almost ten years continues to keep a close eye on the expenditures of the county and making sure that our bills are paid in a timely and efficient manner. These are just a quick snapshot of the many things each of these individuals do and their support of me has been tremendous.

As I mentioned earlier, Leisure Services has probably seen the most change this year as they received improved facilities and other enhancements to the department. We said goodbye to Dan Magee, who undertook a new job closer to home and welcomed Linda Parrish as the new Director of Leisure Services. Linda brings considerable background in recreational and leisure service programs to Butts County and she is already off to a great start, assisted by Mitch Bowman, who came on board several months ago as the new Programming Manager for the department.

Senior Citizen Services has had the benefit of a full time Senior Center Manager for a year now. Chrissie Crabtree had been serving in this role for a number of years but always in a part-time position. Last July, she became a full time Center Manager and her extra time and effort have paid dividends in the increased programs being offered at the center. The Board also gave her a new part-time position to help with programs at the Center that went into effect this year.

The Emergency Services Department continues to see growth in call volume each year and this year has been no exception. With the opening of the new Station 8 near Indian Springs, the availability of fire resources will increase to meet the greater demands being put on the system. Artisica Stodghill has been assigned as the new Administrative Assistant to Chief Mike Wilson and his department will benefit from having someone to help them with the increasing volume of paperwork and initiatives of the department. In the near future, the department will receive two brand new fire engines, paid for entirely from sales tax pennies, to replace a pair of 19-year old units that have been in service since 1996.

Sonia Sands has been in her position as E-911 Director of since FY 2014 but since that time she has overseen the implementation of an entirely new 911 control system, the third generation system of its kind to be installed here, making our center cutting edge with technology. It has been remarked by State Training Center officials how well her employees are trained when they arrive at the Academy for the basic certification program.

Homeland Security Director Glen Goens continues to work toward bringing all of our Emergency Management plans required by FEMA and GEMA up to new codes and standards and has also been an integral part of bridging our 911 and Homeland Security with local area HAM radio operators, who are available to assist and augment our communications capabilities during times of disaster. The County relies on Glen to keep us alert, prepared and responsive in the event of a pending weather emergency, which Georgia seems to get with more regularity.

Public Works has also had a very busy year preparing two rather lengthy roads to become paved for the first time. They have also resurfaced a number of smaller roads in the county to bring them back into optimal condition. Where possible, they have continued to step in and assist areas that are under the State Department of Transportation due to their budget cutbacks, many of which should now have some relief due to the recently revised gas tax signed into law by the Governor. Our Public Works Department continues to get a lot done for the best return on every tax dollar received.

We continue our focus on greater quality and accountability in our financial practices, employment processes and procurement measures. Training has been a big part of this. County Controller Chiquita Barkley recently completed her Certified Financial Officer II program from the University of Georgia, following up on her completion of her CFO I program. I completed both the Certified County Official Program and the Management Development Program from the University and our County Clerk is nearing completion on her Certified Local Government Clerk program, also through UGA. This greater emphasis on training and enhancing the abilities of our employees pays dividends in many ways. Our goal for FY 2015 was for every employee who works under the Board of Commissioners to receive some form of training and this was achieved, summing with all of our employees being offered a driver improvement clinic in addition to those mentioned previously.

While much has been accomplished, there is still much to do in the future. We are at a critical point in our evolution and the decisions we make over the next few years will set the stage for the Butts County of the future. Continual improvement is critical if we are to be positioned

strongly to take advantage of opportunities when they arise. I said this last year and I continue to believe that this year. I believe we now have many opportunities ahead of us and we are beginning to realize that as a community we can do great things.

We have it within us to build a county that our citizens will be proud to call home, a place where jobs will grow, quality-of-life will continue to improve and services will reflect the maximum value of every dollar we receive. We don't have to follow others; we can lead too.

As I write these words, dirt is being moved just next door to our building as new businesses begin to rise in the air. A couple of blocks away, a brand new High School gymnasium is well underway and will be completed in the months ahead. The County will unveil a new and completely overhauled Uniform Development Ordinance next month, the first totally new one since the original was passed in 1998. Good, sound zoning practices will help us be ready for the growth that is coming and make sure it is an orderly growth that doesn't overtax our roads and our services.

On a final note, this will be my final report as County Administrator of Butts County, as I am being transitioned into a new role within the government. This new position brings with it a number of new and exciting challenges which I'm excited to be a part of and which I hope I will be able to use to benefit the County in the future. My new position will be Government Relations Director and it will encompass a number of areas I have devoted some time to as my other job duties permitted but which I was never able to give my full attention to in the past. These include:

- Serving as the County's liaison to the three cities, the authorities and the school system to make sure that open communications, assistance where possible and the exchange of information that is beneficial to all of our local government partners are maintained.
- Facilitating and overseeing a coordinated, strategic marketing initiative for the County that is inclusive of our cities, authorities, schools, historic sites, recreational venues and community partners. The goal here is to do everything possible to make our entire, collective community shine as much as possible and be attractive to those who might be interested in becoming a part of our community, including commercial, industrial or residential.
- Working with other community partners such as local civic organizations, community groups, churches and others to make sure that the County government is responsive and helpful to them in promoting the work and outreach they do in the community.
- Further developing our electronic media presence, including social media, website and related.
- Working with our legislative delegation to promote sound, feasible legislation that makes governance better without adversely affecting local governments.

- Continuing my work as the County Legislative Coordinator to analyze legislation, determine impact on local governments, report this information to all affected parties and work with everyone to craft a coordinated response.
- Continuing my work as the Camera Ready Liaison to the State Film Office and leveraging our location to attract the film industry to this area, promote tourism and build interest in our community.
- Working with our Development Authority and Chamber of Commerce to promote healthy business growth, industrial development and to create jobs.

In closing, let me say “Thank you” to everyone that supported me over the last three and a half years that I held the role of County Administrator and in my previous roles with the County. I could not have done it without your support, friendship and encouragement and knowing that is still there now makes me feel much more confident in working within this new arena. I am proud of the strong financial reserves we have built over the last several years, and even though we have had to use some of those to complete some projects the Board wanted, we have now brought our reserves into the balance that is recommended. Unlike personal household budgets, government reserves can be too high and can impact the County in negative ways; now we are where we need to be to strike the balance between too much and too little.

Let me here say welcome to our new County Administrator, Dr. Keith Moffett, who will begin his duties with the County on July 20th. Dr. Moffett brings with him a wealth of educational background, experience in urban government management and economic development, plus much more. Dr. Moffett will play a pivotal role in the direction of Butts County in the immediate future and I am looking forward to working with him and his vision for our community in the months and years ahead. I hope you will welcome him warmly to our Butts County family.

Finally, thank you to our Commissioners, Constitutional Officers, Elected Officials, Department Heads and employees for their tireless work and advocacy on behalf of Butts County. Each of them is an integral part of a successful, visionary and forward-thinking government.

Without further delay, I present for your review, the Butts County Annual Report for FY 2015, covering the period of July 1, 2014-June 30, 2015 and close by saying that I consider it an honor to work for the citizens of Butts County, the place I have been fortunate to call home my entire life.

Sincerely,



J. Michael Brewer, CAO
County Administrator
July 20, 2015

Section 2: Fiscal Year 2015 Accomplishments and Challenges

In July of 2014, the Board of Commissioners passed the annual operating budget of \$17.9m and set the County millage rate at 14.281 mils. This was down from 17.413 mils just four years earlier and was accomplished due to a combination of strategic cost management, retirement of old debt and the diligent work of every county employee. With the budget process behind, the Commissioners voted to begin a focused effort on determining whether or not County employees were fairly compensated in comparison to the area job market, jobs of similar type and based on what each position does for the County. Staff began to work on this initiative and compile market data.

In August, the County broke ground on a new fire station to serve the Indian Springs/Flovilla region of the County, the last area not covered by some type of around the clock fire coverage. The building site, donated by local businessman and former County Commissioner J.B. White, consisted of three acres of land located at the junction of highways 42, 23 and 87 south and would house a two-bay fire station capable of also supporting a future EMS unit.



“For many years, we have relied on the volunteer firefighter resources from the City of Flovilla” remarked Chairman Roger McDaniel at the groundbreaking ceremony. “We are greatly appreciative of what they have been able to do for this part of Butts County for a long time but we need to step up and do more for this district and the citizens of Flovilla, Indian Springs and the areas in southern Butts County that don’t enjoy the same full-time fire protection that others have in the County” he stated. The County also held its summer meeting of the County, Cities, School System and Authorities at Fresh Air Barbecue during August. They also moved towards greater employee and elected official accountability by passing a Code of Ethics to govern County officials.

In September, we said goodbye to Employee Benefits Coordinator Tara Morris who got married and moved to Louisiana. We also celebrated the 19th annual Ernest Biles Memorial Golf Tournament, held at Hickory Hills Golf Club near Jackson. This particular tournament raises

funds, all of which go toward helping the youth of Butts County to participate in organized sporting events through scholarships, sports clinics and other organized activities.

In October, the County began moving earth to prepare Douglas Creek Road in District 1 for its transition into a paved road. Funds for this project were allocated from the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Taxes specifically set aside for road improvement projects. Work was done to improve the existing road bed to the standards required by Georgia DOT, which include a 60 foot right of way (30 feet from the center of the road in both directions). This involved the removal of trees in the right of way, as well as the shaping of slopes, improving visibility where needed and digging out ditches. Once this process is complete, the application of the triple-surface paving material can begin. Triple-surface is a lower-traffic grade of paving material than the type of asphalt used on heavily travelled roads and streets and is more ideally suited for rural use which has lower traffic, allowing the paving material to last a lot longer. It has enabled counties to pave roads at attainable costs where before it would have not been cost efficient.

Following the presentation of accumulated data on government salaries, the Board of Commissioners authorized the County Administrator to contract with the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government to do a complete wage and compensation study on all County positions, to include new and updated job descriptions and recommendations for any salary adjustments that might need to be made to make County employee compensation fair and equitable within the job market and the organization.

Finally, the County embarked upon moving from a paper-based agenda management system to a computerized, paperless agenda management system. County Clerk Crystal Epps would head up this project and begin implementation of the system sometime in 2015.

In November, County Commissioner Keith Douglas won re-election to a second term in office in the 4th District. Commissioner Douglas had already served one full term of four years, plus part of another term that came open when former Commissioner Eddie Travis resigned from office due to health reasons. Former School Board resident and business Joe Brown won election to the board as well, representing the 3rd District (see January information).

For the first time in many years, the County held an employee appreciation luncheon in conjunction with Thanksgiving and all employees were treated to a Thanksgiving lunch at Buckner's Restaurant. During the luncheon, 33 County Employees were recognized for achieving various years of service with the County and door prizes of gift cards and a computer donated by Expert Computer was given away. The entire luncheon and door prizes were paid for using bonus points earned through the use of County credit cards, which were pooled together for the event.

In December, the Board voted to surplus over 100 properties that had been seized in various tax sales over the past four years and which had been held by the County. This was the first step towards securing an auction company to bundle all properties, sell them to the highest bidder and put these properties back on the tax digest.

Leisure Services Director Dan Magee also welcomed new Programs Coordinator Mitchell Bowman and introduced him to the Board of Commissioners while Controller Chiquita Barkley introduced new Employee Benefits Coordinator Shwander Newton to the Board, filling two vital positions with the County.

In January, the Board of Commissioners welcomed Joe Brown, Jr. as the new District 3 Commissioner following his election in 2014. Brown, a lifelong native of Butts County had previously served several terms on the Butts County School Board. During the years between his School Board terms and his taking office on the Board of Commissioners, he had been a member of the Butts County Industrial Development Authority. Brown took the seat vacated by Commissioner Mike Patterson, who had chosen not to run for office again.

The Board re-elected Roger McDaniel as Chairman and Robert Henderson as Vice Chairman; reappointed Michael Brewer as County Administrator on a three month basis, County Attorney Michael O'Quinn on a three month basis and County Clerk Crystal Epps on an annual basis.

The Board also learned, as the General Assembly began their session, that a new House Bill, designated as HB170, was proposing eliminating the sales taxes that cities and counties received from SPLOST and LOST proceeds. With 53% of all sales taxes generated in Butts County coming from fuel sales, the highest in the state, the loss of these sales taxes would have devastated the County and Cities. A task force consisting of representatives of all affected entities was quickly formed and began working on a plan of action.

In February, a task force consisting of representatives of all affected entities was quickly formed and began working on a plan of action to have the Georgia Legislature revise or defeat HB170, the Transportation Bill. The task force consisted of County Administrator Michael Brewer, School Superintendent Robert Costley, Development Authority Director Laura Hale, Commission Chairman Roger McDaniel, Jenkinsburg Mayor David Nestor, Flovilla Mayor Beth Ogletree, Jackson Mayor Kay Pippin and Water Authority Director Marcie Seleb. During February, the HB170 task force met weekly as a group and periodically with all of the governments in jointly held meetings, including two trips to the Georgia Capitol to meet with legislators and voice opposition at the provisions of the bill that would strip millions of dollars per year from local government operations.

In March, the Board of Commissioners voted to begin a phased reorganization of the County and to advertise for a new County Administrator. Until such time as one was appointed, Michael Brewer would remain in place as the Administrator and work with the Board to help secure a replacement. Brewer issued a statement at the time to the local news outlets, stating "Over the past few months, the board and I have had a number of discussions about the best direction and future for Butts County. While I was reluctant to accept the position when it was offered, I have always tried to do the very best job I could and to serve the citizens honorably and faithfully. However, one of the realizations that I have had over some time now is that officials change and often they want to bring new change with them. Our board decided they wanted a different kind of administrator and I am completely understanding of that desire. I am proud of my well-documented history of accomplishments with Butts County and I will continue to work closely

with the Board of Commissioners to help make Butts County better. All of us wish this for the future going forward and I will help that effort in any way possible”.

In the waning hours of March, the General Assembly passed a final version of House Bill 170 that left sales taxes for local governments mostly intact, averting what could have been a severe financial crisis for Butts County and the Cities and School System. Local officials and many state officials credited the organized work of counties, Butts County in particular, for helping to persuade the legislature to come up with other ideas for revenue sourcing.

In April, work was well underway on the FY2016 budget. Budget challenges continued to be trying to get a handle on predicting revenues from advalorem taxes, which have been difficult to predict ever since the State made changes to how these taxes on motor vehicles are collected.

One of the largest challenges dealt with a decline in revenues caused by laws made by the State regarding motor vehicle taxes. Fortunately, other revenue sources have been incorporated that have helped to offset some of the loss.

April also kicked off Opening Day at the Butts County Recreation Department with dozens of baseball teams participating in a “parade of champions”. The ceremonies drew the usual large crowd of Butts County citizens to witness the start of another great season at the park.

Leisure Services Director Dan Magee announced his intention to accept employment closer to home. The search process for a new Leisure Services Director began later that month.

In May, it was announced that County Administrator Michael Brewer would be reassigned to a new position in Government Relations once a new Administrator was selected. In this position, he will continue to handle public affairs, marketing of the county, legislative coordination with the state delegates, working with other local governments on cooperative ventures, film and tourism among other duties. Advertising was underway by this time and the Board began the process of reviewing applications late in the month.

Butts County held the surplus property sale on Thursday, May 21st at the County Administration Building. The auction, which was coordinated by County Clerk Crystal Epps and the firm of Hudson and Marshall, auctioneers, successfully disposed of a number of land parcels that had come into the ownership of the County due to failure to pay taxes. A near-capacity crowd was on hand to bid for parcels and the county’s gross sales totaled over \$195,000.00 which more than covered all costs of back due taxes, attorney’s fees and more.

Zaxby’s developers Mike and John Windham treated the employees of Community Development and Administration to a catered lunch consisting of a variety of Zaxby’s food. This was done in appreciation for all of the hard work by County employees to help them through the permitting process for the new restaurant to be built on West Third Street. The County additionally had permitted another restaurant business, Waffle House, to be constructed adjacent to the new Zaxby’s.

In June, Controller Chiquita Barkley presented a balanced budget to the Board of Commissioners for consideration and approval. The Butts County Board of Commissioners held a public hearing on Thursday, June 25th 2015 at 5PM concerning the proposed FY2016 budget. County staff presented the budget statement to the public during the public hearing portion of the meeting, after which the hearing was opened to the public for input and comments. The questions and comments posed mainly centered around clarification on the Leisure Services budget, Jail Fund, Development Authority funding and the Senior Citizens Center budget. Recommendations from the public included increased funding for the Senior Center in the future due to the large growth in programs offered by the Center such as “Meals on Wheels”.

Highlights on the budget presentation included:

- A discussion on the millage rate and how it would be broken down on a tax bill (see slide below). Assuming there are no changes to what the Board of Education has proposed on their millage rate, the overall millage rate for the county will be slightly lower than it was.
- Of particular importance is the removal of one mil of tax from the county millage rate and dedicating that mil to the Butts County Hospital Authority. Currently, the County millage rate is 14.281 mils, which has included the Hospital Authority funding as part of the overall budget. The County millage will now reflect a 13.281 mil rate and a 1.000 mill rate for the Hospital Authority, with no net increase or decrease. This will help to ensure a stable and secure funding source for the hospital in the future that won't be tied to the County budget.
- Funding to cover the increased costs to salaries that resulted from the completed University of Georgia salary and compensation analysis for the County. The changes recommended by the University resulted in just over \$200,000.00 additional dollars added to salaries of County personnel.

The budget proposed decreased as a result of this and other cuts by \$577,146.00 to a proposed \$18,583,714.

SUMMARY

As the fiscal year ends and a new one begins, we are already hard at work making changes that will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the county government. FY2015 was a year of great challenges, changes and accomplishments, attributed to the work of a number of County Employees, Elected Officials and the partnerships we have with our community, its businesses and industries. Thanks to all of them, the County is in a good position to move into the new Fiscal Year and the challenges this will bring with it.

We would be remiss if we did not mention our gratitude to our partner governments within Butts County. These include the cities of Jackson, Flovilla and Jenkinsburg, as well as the Water Authority, Hospital Authority, Development Authority, and the Butts County Board of Education. Our partnership with them continues to grow stronger and is already improving the quality of

local government services that are received by the citizens. Communication among all of these entities through joint meetings, electronic communications, and intergovernmental agreements are already continuing to bear dividends and tangible results.

Finally, as always, we must also mention our citizens, who are the reason that we exist and who give us our purpose in serving them. They are our customers and it is our goal to treat them as they should be and make sure they get world-class service from our departments. We don't always succeed but we continue to work in that direction and we appreciate the patience of our constituency as we do that. Our Board of Commissioners and staff is committed towards making Butts County the kind of place our citizens will be proud to call home and they have been the impetus for the tremendous progress we have made over the past few years.

In looking back over fiscal year 2015, we realize that we have seen many challenges and have overcome many obstacles. Working together, we feel certain that we will continue to improve and to overcome the challenges that fiscal year 2016 will bring and those beyond.

Section 3: Going Forward: Fiscal Year 2016 Budget

The fiscal year 2016 budget planning process took place during the months of March-July of this year and was adopted in July for implementation.

Future Plans

We intend to advance the momentum that has been generated by continuing the transition to a digital government wherever possible.

We have continued our efforts to introduce digital and social media into local government, allowing us to avail ourselves of these services as a way to keep the public better informed of timely information. We currently have a Facebook presence used for sharing news and information to augment our County website, located at www.buttscountyga.com. Here we are able to post news items, meeting notices, agendas for meetings, minutes for meetings and job announcements in a timely manner and the public can receive these postings by going to the website or subscribing for email updates. We also utilize Twitter to send short, fast announcements at the Twitter ID @ButtsCountyGA and this service has proven valuable during the recent ice storms in getting information out fast. Over 200 new subscribers followed the County Twitter account after ice storm announcements began to go out. We also utilize this service to tweet voting results the instant they were announced. These services will continue to be utilized and will be further refined and enhanced in FY 2015.

We will continue to welcome industry and economic development to Butts County and to work closely with our Industrial Development Authority and Water Authority wherever possible to help them succeed in drawing new development to the County as well as retain existing industry and commercial enterprises. We have also furthered and strengthened our ties with key individuals in the Georgia Department of Economic Development, Department of Labor,

Department of Community Affairs, Department of Tourism and the Georgia Film Commission and will continue to do so in the future.

Some of our biggest goals for the upcoming fiscal year continue to be to focus on ways that we can find to better define the vision of what we as a community want Butts County to be. What do we want to become? Do we want to gear ourselves towards attracting as much industry as possible? Do we want to focus on promoting our natural resources and tourism potential? Do we want to become the next hot spot for film companies? It is not only important for us to know what we want to be but to have a clearly defined roadmap that will guide us towards achieving what we want to be. That takes time and planning and because we represent the government that the people elected to do it, we will work harder to make this a focus in the new fiscal year and beyond.

One common goal that we all share is that we want more than anything else for this county to succeed and to become a better individual county as well as a strong regional player in the state. By working on both the internal and external issues that we as the county government face, we will be in a far better position to lead this county forward.

Contact Information

Butts County Commissioner's Office
625 West Third Street
Jackson, Georgia 30233
Office (770) 775-8200
Fax (770) 775-8211
www.buttscountyga.com (website)

Commissioners & County Administrator



Commissioner-G.S. "Gator" Hodges, District 1, elected 2008; took office 2009; second term. Commissioner Hodges represents the north, northeast and eastern portions of Butts County including Worthville, Jackson Lake and Stark. He is an employee of the CSX Railroad where he works as an instructor and he holds certification as both a Basic and Advanced Certified

Commissioner. He was elected as Vice Chairman in 2011 and Chairman in 2013. Hodges has been appointed by the Governor of Georgia to both the Board of Directors of the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority and the Georgia Public Defenders Standards and Training Council. He also serves on the Middle Ocmulgee Water Council, Chairs the ACCG Subcommittee on Economic Development and is a graduate of Leadership Butts County, the Georgia Academy for Economic Development and Leadership Georgia. In 2010, Hodges was selected by Georgia Trend Magazine for membership in their "Top 40 under 40" influential leaders in Georgia. Hodges lives in the Stark-Jackson Lake community with his wife, Keri, and their son, Noah. They are active members of the Rock Springs Congregational Methodist Church in Milner. *On Facebook Page: G.S. "Gator" Hodges*

E-Mail: ghodges@buttscounty.org



Commissioner-Robert L. Henderson, Sr., District 2, elected 2008; took office 2009; second term. Commissioner Henderson represents the southeast and southern portions of Butts County including Flovilla, Cork, Mt. Vernon and portions of Jackson. He is the owner of R.L. Henderson and Sons Tree Removal Service and also serves as the Pastor of Rock Creek Baptist Church in Indian Springs. He holds certification as both a Basic and Advanced County Commissioner.

E-Mail: rhenderson@buttscounty.org

Commissioner-Joe Brown, District 3, elected 2014; took office 2015. Commissioner Brown represents the southern, southwestern and western portions of Butts County including south Jackson, Towaliga and portions of McKibben. He is the President of American Mills and is a lifelong resident of Butts County, having served a number of years as an elected member of the Butts County School Board as well as a member of the Industrial Development Authority. He is currently working on his certification as a County Commissioner.

E-Mail: jbrown@buttscounty.org



Commissioner-Keith Douglas, District 4, elected 2009; took office 2009; elected to full term 2010; completed previous commissioner's term and is currently in his first term of office in his own right. Commissioner Douglas represents the central district, which includes portions of Jackson, southern Jenkinsburg; Shiloh and surrounding areas. He is employed by the Georgia Department of Corrections and holds both Basic and Advanced Commissioner Certification.

E-Mail: kdouglas@buttscounty.org



Commissioner-Roger D. McDaniel, District 5, elected 2008, re-elected 2012; took office 2009; second term. Commissioner McDaniel represents the west, northwest and northern portions of Butts County including Worthville, Fincherville and North Jenkinsburg. He is an employee of the Georgia Power Department and holds certification as both a Basic and Advanced Certified Commissioner. He has served as Chair in 2011 and 2012 and was elected Chairman again for 2014.

E-Mail: rmcdaniel@buttscounty.org

County Administrator-J. Michael Brewer, employed 1986; appointed as Deputy County Administrator in 2007 and County Administrator in 2012. Mr. Brewer serves as the Chief Administrative Officer of the County, in charge of administration, human resources, policy development, public affairs and constituent services. He will relinquish this position on July 20th, 2018. Over the past 29 years, he has held the positions of Personnel Administrator, County Clerk, Emergency Management Director, Communications Director, Assistant Communications Director and Emergency Medical Technician. He also served as Chairman of the Board of Directors for both Southern Crescent Technical College and Sylvan Grove Hospital. In 1998, he became the first and currently, the only Butts County citizen to be awarded the Governor's Public Safety Award Medal, Georgia's highest honor for public safety officials and has received numerous commendations and citations during his career. He was most recently named Butts County Citizen of the Year, the second time he has received this honor. *On Twitter: @JMichaelBrewer Facebook Page: J. Michael Brewer*

E-Mail: jmbrewer@buttscounty.org

Senior Management Team

Chiquita Barkley	County Controller	770-775-8200
Michael Brewer	Government Relations Director	770-775-8038
Crystal Griggs-Epps	County Clerk	770-775-8200

Constitutional & Elected Officers

Elizabeth Biles	Probate Judge	770-775-8204
Bill Fears	Superior Court Judge	770-775-8205
Gary Long	Sheriff	770-775-8216
Rebecca Pitts	Chief Magistrate Judge	770-775-8220
Rhonda T. Smith	Clerk of Superior Court	770-775-8215
Nancy J. Washington	Tax Commissioner	770-775-8206
Andy Williams	County Surveyor	770-775-0566
Ralph Wilson	County Coroner	770-775-7657

Appointed Officers

Jenny Brown	Extension Service	770-775-8209
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Glen Goens	Homeland Security Director	770-775-8212
Marty Long	Public Works Director	770-775-8213
Linda Parrish	Leisure Services Director	770-775-8228
Douglas Manning	Community Development Director	770-775-8210
Charles McKeehan	Chief Tax Appraiser	770-775-8207
Sonia Sands	911 Communications Director	770-775-8232
Avery Smith	Elections & Registration Director	770-775-8202
Donn V. Taylor	Library Branch Manager	770-775-7524
Mike Wilson	Public Safety Director, Fire/EMS	770-775-8212