

Chairman Bruce's Newsletter

1-30-08

I hope the new year has started off well for each of you. I know that the past year was filled with new experiences and learning opportunities for me and I enter 2008 with a much more extensive, although by no means complete, knowledge of county government. I look forward to serving you again this year and I hope that the experience I gain each day will translate into better decision making for our county. I am excited about many of the events and opportunities coming up this year.

As we move into the new year, Fannin County has already been the recipient of a couple of grants to assist us in serving Fannin County. One recent small grant came to us through the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia, a very helpful organization that provides most all of the training and organizational events for Georgia's county commissioners as well as other county staff. This particular grant will assist us in purchasing items for records management.

Many of you are already aware of the grant our fire department was awarded by Homeland Security. This grant of around \$300,000 will allow us to purchase airpack units and spare air tanks for all of our current volunteer fire fighters. These units run just shy of \$5,000 each. As another benefit of the grant, we will be purchasing a thermal imaging camera that will help our fire fighters find potential victims inside of homes and other structures that are filled with smoke. It is hard to describe just how much this will benefit your county fire department. It will not only increase the safety for our volunteer force, but it will give them increased confidence in the dependability of their equipment and this confidence will translate into better fire fighting and rescue services.

In an effort to assist the Packages for Soldiers program at Fannin County High School, we have set up a donation box outside of the Commissioners' Office and a donation jar at the front desk to help cover the postage costs. My wife, Pam, has been very involved in this effort from the beginning and she has given us a list of things needed to send. Close to 100 packages have been sent so far and they want to make up and send many more. Monetary donations are needed as each box takes about 9 dollars to send. They have heard back from the soldiers and here are some of their most common needs: toiletries (small hotel and trial size shampoo, soap, conditioner and lotion), used DVD's, q-tips, pens, pencils and paper, female hygiene items, razors, nail clippers, AA batteries, individually wrapped snacks, eye drops, foot powder, socks, small baseballs and softballs, hard candy and baby wipes (for cleaning away the sand) are always needed. Try to help in any way you can.

Lastly I want to congratulate Fannin High's Boys and Girls basketball teams. Ms. Suzanne Pass has done a fine job taking over in the big shoes of Johnny Farmer who has moved over to the boys team and pulled together an excellent team and historic season. I have laughingly mentioned to several people that this year's team has won more games in one year than the teams I played on did in three years. I know all of us former players are enjoying watching their success this year and wish them the best as they finish up the regular season and head into the playoffs. I hope all of you can come out to cheer them on in one of their remaining home games.

God Bless you all and remember to visit www.fannincountyga.org for additional county information and announcements.

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Howell (Howie) Bruce, Jr.
Chairman
Fannin County Board of Commissioners
www.fannincountyga.org