

Commissioner's Update Newsletter – Week of June 4th, 2007

During this time of year when school is out and high school seniors have graduated and are preparing for the next step in their lives, we find our community focused very intently on young adults and children. April was Child Abuse Awareness Month in Georgia and I was honored to be able to speak on April 26th at the candlelight vigil which capped off the month of awareness. It was a joy to see all of the concerned parents and citizens in attendance at that event.

May was also dedicated to children's welfare. On any given day there are approximately 15,000 children in foster care in Georgia – children who find themselves in state's care because of abuse and/or neglect. Governor Sonny Perdue designated the month of May as "Foster Care Month in Georgia," and local DFCS offices throughout the state stepped up campaigns to recruit more foster parents. On May 1st, I had the privilege to sign a proclamation supporting and encouraging adoption and foster care in Fannin County. I cannot stress strongly enough how important these programs are in our area. With the ever increasing cases of child neglect due to methamphetamine addicted parents, the need for foster parents has never been greater. At present, there are approximately 4,200 active foster homes in the state, but more families are needed to care for the 15,000 children currently living in foster care. Throughout May DFCS county offices across the state sponsored foster parent appreciation activities, family activities, information fairs, seminars and training sessions. You can get more information about adoption or foster care contact your local DFCS office or call 877-210-KIDS, that's 1-877-210-5437 or visit www.dfcs.dhr.georgia.gov.

Please remember that Fannin County remains in a "no burn" status as designated by the Georgia Forestry Commission. We continue to find ourselves in an "Extreme" fire danger rating area due to winds, low humidity and, of course, lack of rainfall. This ban will remain in effect until rainfall and humidity conditions have improved enough to reduce the danger of wildfires.

Throughout this June, we are actively seeking new volunteers for our county fire service. Whether you are an experienced firefighter or are interested in learning how you can help, we want to hear from you and have you consider joining us. Call (706) 632-4711 if you would like information about how to become a volunteer firefighter.

On a continued note about our emergency services, please always be aware of your surroundings while driving and do your best to quickly and safely get out of the way when a fire truck, rescue vehicle or ambulance nears you while using lights and sirens. Remember to pull to the right shoulder of the road to allow them to safely pass. Be especially mindful at intersections as I have recently witnessed cars, unaware that an emergency services vehicle was near, drive through these intersections not only endangering their lives but also the lives of those around them.

On a sad note, I would like to take a brief moment to remember John Wilson of the Second Chance animal rescue organization. Mr. Wilson unexpectedly passed away recently. His hard work and dedication to the care of all animals will truly be missed.

And lastly, congratulations to the 2007 Leadership Fannin graduates. Speaking from personal experience, the wealth of knowledge they gather in that course will not only benefit them as individuals, but benefit the county as a whole.

As always, you can visit www.fannincountyga.org for additional county government information.

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