

Chairman Bruce's Newsletter  
7-26-07

The creation, upgrade and maintenance of county roads is one of the reasons that county commissioners were created by the state years ago. It is still one of the primary duties that we have. On Monday, July 23<sup>rd</sup>, I had the privilege to host Mr. Mike Evans, the current Chairman of the current Georgia Department of Transportation Board of Commissioners. Not only is he the Chairman, but he is also the representative to this board from our District.

We spent the better part of the day discussing current Transportation Department funding issues and how that effects us at the county level. Along with Representative David Ralston and Area DOT Engineer Lou Chastain, we had the opportunity to tour some of the state roads in the county including Highway 5 and Spur 60. Mr. Evans was also able to speak briefly to the Blue Ridge Kiwanis and to a group of elected officials and county residents at the courthouse. I feel confident that Mr. Evans now has a better understanding of the need to look at and address problems with Highway 5. After hearing from myself, Mr. Ralston and others, I think he senses the urgent need to begin this process.

Mr. Evans is very accessible to the public and has a lot of information on his website, [MikeEvans.org](http://MikeEvans.org). Visit his site to see more about his ideas for the transportation issues facing our state and to find out how to contact him.

I would like to take a minute to recognize Mr. Tom Gilliland of United Community Bank for his appointment to the Tennessee Valley Authority's Board of Directors. This is very important to our county for a number of reasons. This is the first ever seat on this board held by a person representing the state of Georgia. Also, his long standing ties to our community will certainly give us a voice regarding the usage of Blue Ridge Lake and its water levels; a voice we have never had before.

I had the privilege to work for Mr. Gilliland at United Community Bank several years ago and I am absolutely certain he will do a great job representing our interests.

As I mentioned in my last radio update, the Board of Commissioners is proposing a millage rate of 5.16 mils. This is down from the previous rate of 5.969. The 5.16 rate represents the rollback value to generate the exact same property tax billing as the previous year. In almost every case, reassessed properties will be billed the same as the previous year even though the market value and assessed values of these properties increased.

The only new property tax monies coming in are from the tax on new properties created since the last digest. The dollar amount of the tax on these new parcels is approximately \$80,000. Even though many expenses are rising at the county level due to increased energy and employee health care costs, I remain committed to making and maintain prudent and responsible fiscal policy. The county should have to watch its expenses just as you do and not anticipate being able to fund mistakes through higher property taxes. If property taxes are to rise, the citizens of Fannin County should know what they are getting for it.

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