

Chairman's Update 9-6-07

In a recent emergency preparedness study conducted at the University of Georgia, at the request of University President Michael Adams, the first item listed in the executive summary is the deployment of an outgoing or reverse 911 alert system. Fannin County is in the process of implementing such a system now. Under the guidance of Lonnie Oliver, our EMA / EMS director, we have contracted with CodeRED Rapid Emergency Notification System. In the event of a county or regional emergency, this system will allow us to deliver customized pre-recorded emergency messages directly to homes and businesses, live individuals and answering machines, at the rate of up to 60,000 calls per hour. These messages can be sent to both home and cellular phones and could be used for notification for everything from tornado warnings to child abduction alerts. Mr. Oliver and I are in the setup stage of this project and we hope to begin testing by the end of October with full implementation by the end of the year, if not sooner. Look for more information in the weeks to come. Visit www.coderedweb.com for more details on how the system works.

Remember to bring your old tires that you want to dispose of to the Hemptown Fire Station on Highway 515 this Saturday anytime from 9:00 until 1:00. This is the first date of our tire collection program which we received grant money to conduct. We feel this is another good step in our county beautification efforts. Tire collection will take place Saturday the 15th at Martin Tire Center on Highway 60 outside of McCaysville.

The Georgia Literary Festival is quickly approaching. The honored writer at this year's festival will be the late Appalachian poet and novelist Byron Herbert Reece, whose 90th birthday falls in the month of the literary festival. Featured authors and speakers are to include: Bettie Sellers, former Poet Laureate of Georgia, our own Ethelene Jones, poet, newspaper columnist and author of *Facets of Fannin: A History of Fannin County*, Cathy Cox, former Georgia Secretary of State, now President of Young Harris College and many other excellent speakers. The festival observance will be Friday September 28 through Sunday September 30. Mark your calendar for this special honor for our community.

Lastly, I would like to ask everyone to keep Clark Drennan, Fannin County High School's head football coach, in their thoughts and prayers. He was first thought to have suffered a mild stroke over the weekend but now doctors believe it was a less severe type of event. He has been recuperating at Erlanger Hospital and will hopefully be on his way home by the time this goes to press.

I met Clark over 10 years ago when he was attending North Georgia College at the same time as my wife Pam. He is only a couple of years older than I am and his medical problem, along with Commissioner Morris' recent heart problems, has really caused me to be much more aware of my own health. I have been taking a small dose of blood pressure medicine for about 3 years now and have my own hypertension under control. All of us, especially us men in our 30s and 40s, need to remember to have regular and routine preventative health exams. These recent events that I mentioned show that we're never too young to begin taking charge of our own health and that heart and blood pressure related problems can arise much earlier than we think. Men, we need to especially remember to visit our doctors regularly.

Women do a much better job of managing their health and taking care of themselves. Women, encourage the men in your lives to see the doctor regularly. For more information about stroke and stroke prevention, visit www.stroke.org or one of the many other excellent heart and stroke related websites.

God Bless and have a great weekend.

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