



**A SPECIAL PRESENTATION**  
A CZECH REPUBLIC STUDENT REFLECTS ON HER TIME IN THE UNITED STATES

SEE PAGE 2



**TO THE NEXT LEVEL**  
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SEE PAGE 8

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# BRYAN COUNTY NEWS

RICHMOND HILL • PEMBROKE • ELLABELL

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## Big plans ahead for schools

### Superintendent gives system update at Rotary Club meeting

By TAYLOR CARPENTER  
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Bryan County Schools Superintendent Dr. Paul Brooksher spoke Thursday about the current state of the school system at the Rotary Club of Richmond Hill's weekly meeting at the

Richmond Hill City Center.

The McAllister Elementary School will be open in August of 2015, according to Brooksher, and will be built to hold 1,000 students.

With the addition of this McAllister Elementary, which will house grades K-5 and be located near

the County Administrative Complex and Henderson Park, the school system faces the new challenge of creating attendance zones, or districts, for the specific lower-level schools — Richmond Hill Primary; G.W. Carver Elementary; and Richmond Hill Elementary, he explained.

Currently Fort Stewart serves as a pseudo attendance line between North

and South Bryan, and with only one school offering each grade level, the county has never had to create attendance zones before, he said.

"A new building does not equal a better school," Brooksher said, adding that what makes Bryan County schools truly great is the quality of its teachers.

SCHOOLS continues on 3



Bryan County Schools Superintendent Dr. Paul Brooksher addresses the Rotary Club of Richmond Hill on Thursday at the Richmond Hill City Center.

Taylor Carpenter

## Officials encourage preparing for storms

### Sunday marks start of hurricane season

By JEFF WHITTEN  
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In a way, talking about hurricane season in Georgia is like crying wolf. Or beating a dead horse. About this time each year, public safety officials warn the public to prepare for hurricane season.

But a hurricane doesn't come.

After a while, the public tends to ignore the warnings. In fact, a recent press release from AAA reported a survey found nearly 70 percent of Georgia residents don't prepare for a hurricane.

But that's not a good idea, according to Bryan County Emergency Services Director Freddy Howell.

His advice? Be like the Boy Scouts. Be prepared.

"Preparation, that's the name of the game," he said. "Be alert of situations and when they name a storm in the ocean, keep monitoring it and if it starts looking like it's coming this way, start taking all the necessary precautions."

And with the 2014 hurricane season getting under way Sunday, it's as good a time as any to start thinking about what one would do were a hurricane to impact Bryan County.

#### Resources available to help

There's a world of information available online and in many cases there are apps for what you might need.

For starters, Bryan County residents can visit [www.bryancountyga.org/departments/emergency\\_services/](http://www.bryancountyga.org/departments/emergency_services/) or the Ready Georgia website at [www.ready.ga.gov](http://www.ready.ga.gov) to help get prepared.

Ready Georgia enables users to create a personalized kit checklist and communications plan, making it simple to take those first steps toward being prepared. There is also detailed information about hurricane-

STORMS continues on 5

## IN THE SHADOW OF THE VA

### One local vet says problems with clinics is not new

By JEFF WHITTEN  
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As controversy swirls around the troubled Veterans Administration and its ability to provide medical care to the nation's veterans, one local veteran says the agency has long had issues serving its constituents.

Richmond Hill's Donald Singleton, a Vietnam combat veteran who now spends much of his time working on behalf of other veterans, said the public should know the VA's problems are nothing new.

"I've been dealing with the VA since 1969. This kind of thing has been going on I know for 40 years," he said. "It isn't anything new. I've heard stories that are unbelievable."

Another Richmond Hill veteran, retired Navy Chief Petty Officer Rodney Denmark,

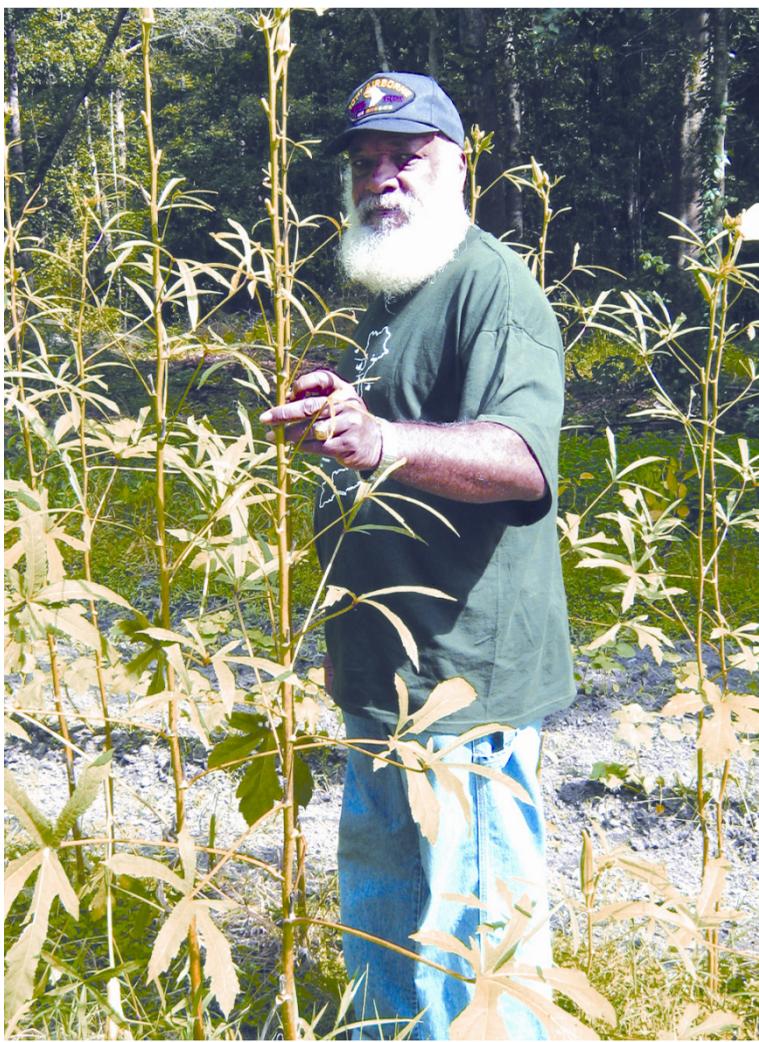
said he didn't deal with the VA until earlier this year when he lost his health insurance because the company he worked for as a paramedic went bankrupt.

"I spent 23 years in the Navy and 25 years after that as a paramedic and I had good insurance, so I didn't need the VA," Denmark said, noting he went to the Savannah VA clinic to sign up for health care and learned it would be a long time before he would see a doctor.

"It took three to four months to see one," he said. "And one of the guys I worked with is a veteran and he was sick as a dog with what we'd call a sick call problem, but the VA told him it would be three months before they could see him."

"There's no sense of immediacy. If you're sick

VA continues on 5



File photo

Richmond Hill resident Donald Singleton is just one local veteran who understands the issues with trying to receive health care through Veterans Affairs clinics. He says the problems are nothing new.

## Murray: Army size decisions still pending

By RANDY C. MURRAY  
Correspondent

The commander of the 3rd Infantry Division and Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield shared lunch and comments recently with the Coastal Georgia chapter of the Association of the U.S. Army at the Performing Arts Center in Flemington.

Maj. Gen. Mike Murray told AUSA members and community leaders that the most important decisions about Stewart-Hunter personnel cuts have not yet been made.

Murray said that for the last few years, the Army has been drawing down from a wartime high of about 550,000 active-duty soldiers to 490,000 soldiers. To make those reductions, the Army had to give up some of its brigade combat teams, one from each installation that had multiple BCTs.

"The BCT to the Army is like the air wing is to the Air Force," Murray said, explaining that a BCT has huge logistical and combat capabilities. "Although we're losing the

ARMY continues on 3



Randy C. Murray

Maj. Gen. Mike Murray gestures during a speech to the Coastal Empire Chapter of the Association of the U.S. Army May 21

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6 91868 31324 3