



Geneva Businesses Cited for Sales to Minors

Ann Henderson
Geneva Newspapers

Three days after a teen group spoke to the Geneva City Council about the hazards of second-hand smoke, three local businesses were cited for selling cigarettes to minors.

The Piggly Wiggly, HoBo Pantry and Riverside Citgo were visited by Jason Powell, a narcotics agent with the Alabama Alcohol Beverage Control, who handed out administrative citations.

"He had a female juvenile to go try to buy tobacco products," said Geneva Police Chief Frankie Lindsey. "She was sent in to purchase cigarettes."

ABC Agent David Hall said the owners or managers of the three stores pleaded guilty to the administrative charge. The Citgo agreed to pay a fine of \$200, the amount for a first offense. The other stores agreed to have their employees attend training through the responsible vendor program.

"These were random checks on businesses that have permits to sell cigarettes," said Hall.

Alabama allows convenience and grocery stores to sell tobacco products to anyone age 19 and above. The random checks are part of the ABC's mission to curb underage smoking and drinking, he said.

He said ABC officers are now going to step up patrols of parties where underage drinking is anticipated.

The district office where Hall and Powell work includes the counties of Geneva, Coffee, Houston, Henry, Barbour and Dale.

He said a detail to check for compliance could be held each month in one of the counties. "It's up to the agent which county he works," said Hall. About 20 businesses could be checked during the inspection.

"We have minor operatives who have been trained to work in these details," said Hall.

The stores in Geneva were given the option of a fine or training for employ-

ees as the penalty for the first offense.

A second violation carries a fine of \$400.

A third violation will result in a revocation hearing before the ABC Commission to determine if the store is to lose the permit for tobacco sales.

"I think smoking is an epidemic among teens," said Lindsey. "Statistics are saying teenage smoking has declined. But I don't believe it."

Recently, six teens were cited for possession of tobacco products while gathered at the Geneva County Courthouse, said Lindsey.

"I see them every day gathered in teen-gathering grounds, smoking and laughing," said Lindsey. "They usually throw the cigarettes down when we drive by."

"It's against the law," he said. "But in some cases their mothers and daddies don't care. It's a really hard thing to enforce."

The members of the teen group, Nip-It Youth Leader-

Smoking, see page 3A



Stan Lawton, standing, a senior at Geneva High School and a member of the Nip It Youth Leadership, discusses the dangers of second-hand smoke with members of the Geneva City Council on Monday, Aug. 21. Also present were NIYL members Kacey Beard, Geneva; Makayla Yeoman, Hartford; and Chris Hart, Geneva; Kathy Peterson, director of Geneva County Family Resource Center; and Mary Baltikauski, agent coordinator with Alabama Cooperative Extension System. (Photo by Ann Henderson)

Samson Fills Water Position, Discusses Storm Insurance

Ann Henderson
Geneva Newspapers

The Samson City Council had to meet twice to get a quorum to vote on a vacancy in the water and sewer department.

The applicants were Rob White, the step-son of Mayor Clay King and Ricky Wilson, a former owner of the restaurant on Alabama 87 South.

Council members Ronald Davis and Roger Baine did not attend two special meetings on Wednesday, Aug. 23 or Thursday, Aug. 24.

Davis' wife is an employee at Samson Banking Company and as well as the daughter-in-law of Baine. King is a vice president in the family business.

Davis said he thought it best he did not go to the meeting to avoid the appearance of conflict of interest.

The vote to hire White was unanimous on Thursday with King turning the meeting over to council member Michael Miller and abstaining from the vote.

White began work on Friday and is currently enrolled in a waste-water class. If he passes the test, he should be certified in December. Awater certification

class will follow next spring.

"He will still have to work under the supervision of James Dixon for nine months," said City Clerk Hazel McGowan. Dixon is the manager of the Geneva Water Works and has been hired to supervise the Samson water and sewer departments until an employee completes the training.

White's employment is contingent upon his passing all the certification classes within a year. His starting salary is \$9.50 per hour.

He also fills in when other employees are absent on either the garbage or trash truck, said McGowan.

During the Thursday special meeting, the council discussed the insurance for vehicles, public officials and city property.

Following the storms of the past few years, the deductible has risen to \$100,000 for any damage that resulted from a named storm or numbered depression. The coverage will also be limited to \$300,000 per occurrence.

The changes were put in place since Geneva County is along the Gulf Coast, and susceptible to high winds.

By contrast, for typical damage from a fire, the deductible is \$2,500.

In the past, the Federal Emergency Management Agency has paid a town's deductible from a national disaster. King was not sure if that will continue due to the high cost in Louisiana and Mississippi from Katrina.

The city will also have to put extra security measures in place, said McGowan.

That list includes a fence around the old water tank near the city barn; fences around the two lift stations on Alabama Highway 52; a new lock on the lagoon fence; removal of the old electric junction box at the log cabin museum; and side and back rails on the bleachers at the rec park.

"I'm not comfortable with this. But we may not have a choice," said King.

The value of the city's property is estimated at \$4.5 million.

The values of the buildings include

- * community center - \$168,000
- * library - \$170,000
- * fire/rescue station - \$123,000
- * city shop - \$56,000
- * old armory - \$168,000
- * police station - \$146,000
- * pavillion - \$22,511
- * airport hangar - \$72,000

* lift stations - \$180,000

* cook house - \$41,000

* museum - \$51,500

* new armory - \$772,500

"You couldn't replace any of these buildings for these amounts," said King. "The community center would cost about \$300,000 to build today."

McGowan was asked to contact neighboring towns to see if their insurance coverage has changed. The council will meet in special session Wednesday since the decision must be made by Sept. 1.

In other business, the council agreed to pay the 25 percent match to receive a weather siren through a program through the Alabama Emergency Management Agency. The cost is \$3,875. The siren will be placed at the city shop and set off by E911 during an emergency.

The council also voted to sell the magistrate's car to the police department at fair market value. The Crown Victoria had been purchased through the municipal court and operated for about a year.

When the magistrate needs to travel, he will drive the Taurus that was purchased for general city use.

Chancellor Woman Claims She Shot Intruder

Stephen Crews
Geneva Newspapers

Police are looking for a man reportedly shot by a one-armed, 75-year-old Geneva County woman during a burglary attempt. There have been no reported visits to the emergency room due to a shooting as of press time according to officials associated with the case.

At approximately 11:00 p.m. on Wednesday night, August 23, Catherine Tate says her burglar alarm indicated someone was trying to get inside her bait shop. The business is next to her home.

Tate says she found a man trying to get inside and refused to stop. She says her business has been broken into several times in the past.

"When I heard the office alarm I came and grabbed my flashlight and gun. Then I came and saw him by the door. I shot him with this, a 38-caliber gun. I hit him. Yeah, I know I hit him," said Tate in an interview with WTVY News-4 on Wednesday night.

The suspect is described



Catherine Tate

as only a small framed black male around 150-pounds. Authorities are checking area emergency rooms to see if anyone matching that description comes in with a bullet wound. They also believe they have an idea of who might have committed the crime.

District Attorney Kirke Adams said that he commends Tate and would attempt to prosecute an individual if an arrest is made in the case. "If you mess with a 75-year old woman then you deserve a bullet in you," said Adams in response to Tate's actions.



Football season kicked off last week with several jamborees. More info begins on page 7A. (Staff photo by Stephen Crews)

22 Deficiencies Found in Geneva County Temporary Jail Igloos

Ann Henderson
Geneva Newspapers

At 9:45 a.m. Monday during the Geneva County Commission meeting, Sheriff Greg Ward said he wanted it made perfectly clear he was not the reason inmates have not been housed in the new fiberglass igloos.

By 2 p.m., he had a four-page list of deficiencies submitted by deputy state fire marshal Jeff Thompson.

During the morning session, the one deficiency the commission discussed at length was the construction of a landing at the door leading from the jail administrator's office to the igloos. Steps are in place now.

"Who's required to do the steps?" questioned Ward. He was asking whether they were to be built by Domes

The Report

A complete list of the findings is located on page 8A of this week's paper.

International, the contractor, or the county's maintenance crew.

The steps seemed to be the last item the contractor had to complete before the igloos could be used and the final payment made.

Geneva County Probate Judge/Commission Chairman Harry Adkison wondered why these igloos were cited by the fire marshal when the same situation exists in Henry County and inmates are already housed in those.

"The biggest thing is inconsistencies," said District One Commissioner Larry

Everett. Six fire marshals will have a different view, he said.

"I guess I'll have to go throw a fit in the state fire marshal's office," said Ward.

Phil Eldridge, the Hartford attorney who represents the county commission, said the state building code requires a flat pad leading from an outside door. "But the fire marshal should put it in writing and fax it to us."

District Four Commissioner Fred Hamic said he was required to submit a building plan to the department of public health and fire marshal's office before he could build a restaurant. And that was 36 years ago. "I had to do that before I moved the first scoop of dirt."

"We are here six months after the deadline and I still have a capacity problem,"

said Ward. "I'm trying my best to get the inmates in that jail."

Once the inmate situation stabilizes, Ward said he plans to put some of them to use around the county.

The county has purchased a vehicle to transport three or four inmates to pick up paper along county roads. "We are going to help each district," said Ward. "These will be non-violent offenders."

But Ward said the driver has not been hired. There was only one application for the part-time job when it was advertised as an Equipment Operator 1.

The commission has now agreed to upgrade the position to a Equipment Operator 2. The job's starting salary is \$8.35 per hour with

IGLOOS, see page 8A

Geneva Council Sticks by Garbage Can Policy

Ann Henderson
Geneva Newspapers

Terry Wilks has a green garbage can the same size and shape as the black cans the City of Geneva now sells for household disposal.

But the can at his home on W. B. Simmons Road will not be dumped if he has it parked by the curb on collection day.

He attended the city council meeting on Monday, Aug. 21 to ask why.

"I had it before you ever got the city cans," he said as he was leaning on the green can. He said it gets put out by the curb once every two months with the black can because he works out of town.

Mayor Karen Simmons explained that state law requires that garbage collection is mandatory at a residence that is occupied and that the city passed a local ordinance requiring the use of the black cans.

"We all had our cans before the ordinance was passed," she said. Council member Faye Owens said the city has to treat everybody the same.

Street Superintendent Donald Wayne Campbell said several residents who have moved into Geneva from the county brought their brown garbage cans with them. "I told them they have to purchase a can."

"In the areas without water service, the only way to know who pays garbage is by the black can," said Simmons. "If they don't pay the garbage fee, the can gets picked up."

She said it's not an easy issue because she has two cans at her family's pond house between Geneva and Hartford and rarely has enough garbage for both. "But I pay regardless of use."

Wilks said it was the principal of the thing because the green can is the same as the black can.

But Simmons said the principal is the garbage must be put in a city garbage can.

"It's how we (city council) get into trouble," said



Terry Wilks, standing in center, is shown asking the Geneva City Council on Monday, Aug. 21, why the green trash can he purchased before the city began using the black cans to dispose of household garbage does not fit the policy. (Photo by Ann Henderson)

Owen. "We need to adhere to policies."

Johnson said that since there has been a garbage can service, 210 cans have been sold. Each can is currently \$61. Everything a homeowner disposes must fit in the garbage can.

In other business, the council discussed the construction of a mini-storage unit off of Maple Avenue that is causing water drainage problems for properties at the rear on Glenn Street.

Clay had to be brought in to the property to build up the base for the unit. The recent rains caused the clay to flow into the back yards of the homes owned by Tony Clemmons and Alton and Mary Ellen Powell.

The options given to Jim Campbell, the mini-storage owner, were install a pipe from his property to Glenn Street; build a holding pond for the rainwater; or install an underground tank similar to a septic tank.

Simmons said an offer was made through Geneva attorney Jeff Hatcher for Campbell to pay for the pipe through Clemmons yard.

Council member Tom Earley lives on Glenn Street and said the piped

water would create mud on the street and excess water on the road.

Campbell said the underground stormwater drains at the end of Glenn Street did not function properly because they were clogged with tree roots. "It will make the situation worse."

Simmons said she was concerned the pipe would add more water to a flood-prone street.

Powell said the most feasible solution was to put the underground tank.

But the tank would have been installed under the fourth unit where construction is already under way.

"But we don't have the authority to make him do it," said Simmons.

She commended Hatcher for trying to resolve the situation.

Johnson said Monday a solution may be reached before an injunction is filed against Campbell.

In other business, the council agreed to buy a long trailer for Lincoln Fabric to use to recycle cardboard; accept an offer from Wal-Mart to build a handicap ramp that connects the store parking lot to the senior center; and agreed to hold a budget workshop on Sept. 18.



District Attorney Makes Donation

Geneva County District Attorney Kirke Adams (left) recently presented a check to David Hall, an agent with the Alabama Alcohol Beverage Control Board, district office in Dothan. The funds will be used to purchase a hand-held breathalyzer to be used mainly when officers investigate rural parties looking for underage drinking. (Submitted Photograph)

Smoking

Continued from Page 1A

ship, have signed pledges not to use tobacco products, ever.

"We would like for you to appoint a member as the NIYL team contact to help prevent second-hand smoke and develop smoke-free places in Geneva," said Stan Lawton, NIYL member and a senior at Geneva High School.

Rufus Lee agreed to represent the Geneva City Council with this project.

The city passed a No Smoking ordinance on March 1, 1993, to prohibit smoking or use of tobacco products in city hall, the public library, public school buildings and city vehicles.

Johnson said the recreation parks would be the next public place to be designated as smoke free.

For an employee who violates the policy, the first offense is a letter of reprimand in the personnel file, said City Clerk Lisa Johnson.

The second offense will result in a day off without pay. The third offense could result in dismissal.

Lawton said during the city council meeting, the team supports harsher restrictions on businesses.

Lindsey then said the ABC officers were investigating the Geneva businesses. "They made 12 undercover cases in the last month."

NIYL activities are funded through a grant of \$26,950 from the Children's Policy Council and the Al-

abama Department of Public Health. The policy council was formed to disperse the money awarded to Alabama in the settlement from the lawsuit against tobacco companies.

"An Evening With The Arts" Set in Opp

Special to Geneva Newspapers

The Opp Cultural Arts Council will have a "One Woman Show & Sale" for Colleen Guy, on Thursday, September 7, 2006, from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. at the Dean Building at the corner of Main Street and Hart Avenue. Refreshments will be served and the public is invited to view her artwork. Most of her work has been painted in recent months and some will be on loan from friends and family. There will be over forty pieces of varied subjects; some portraiture, still life, landscapes, etc. It will be a show worthy of your time and for your enjoyment of a wonderful evening in downtown Opp.

Member Renewal Time

October is time to renew your membership to the Opp Cultural Arts Council and interested persons may join by paying dues, which are \$25.00 per year. Martha Chisum and Betty Gunnels will be on hand to

receive your dues.

Colleen Guy

Colleen Guy is a native of the Wiregrass. She lives in Hartford and maintains a studio in her home. Colleen began drawing at an early age and was soon painting with oil paint; which remains her favorite medium. She sold her first painting when she was a young teenager. The subject was a head study of an old man. Although her subjects are varied, portraiture remains her favorite subject.

While living in northwest Florida a few years ago, Colleen began doing house portraits, among other subjects. She has displayed her work throughout the Southeast, winning many awards along the way.

Colleen is still doing portraiture and also does landscape work and still life painting. She uses several mediums including watercolor, acrylic, oil, and now has begun using pastel to do children's portraits.

Colleen is a member of Dothan Wiregrass Art League and the Opp Cultural Arts Council. She devotes a day a week to painting with the "Tuesday Painters" of the Opp Cultural Arts Council at the Dean Building in Opp.

Colleen's work may be seen at the Gallery on Main in Enterprise, Ala. and Kyleigh Farms in Chancellor, Ala.