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Panel

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— whenever that was — doing an article about why oysters haven't taken off in the state of Georgia. And that piqued my interest enough that I jumped into that process, and again, we brought it to where we are today."

Jones said he's looking at the proposal as a McIntosh County-centered initiative, and has a stakeholder meeting scheduled for Oct. 30 in McIntosh County, though he sees the project as impacting all the state's coastal counties, and, with the distribution chain, throughout the state.

"McIntosh County, in the '20s and '30s, actually used to be a huge oyster producer in the state," Jones said. "They harvested the oysters, the wild-grown oysters, and they were canned. I understand there are still remnants of some canneries still existing in McIntosh County that didn't get quite cleaned up."

"But, they ... over-harvested, and the taste of the consumers changed — people weren't looking for canned oysters any longer. Our tastes are now more roasted and raw oysters. This is just a natural evolution of the demand by the marketplace to deliver oysters year-round."

Mark Risse, director of the University of Georgia Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant, said not only is

the potential there for oyster farming, but there's also motivation from the federal government.

"Aquaculture presents one of our biggest opportunities for rural development at the federal level — both (the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) and (the U.S. Department of Agriculture) are investing lots of money currently in developing U.S. aquaculture," Risse said. "They want to try and correct the tremendous trade imbalance the United States has in seafood — 95 percent of the seafood we eat is imported from other countries, and there's a huge federal effort to change that. We've got some success in these areas."

He pointed out work done in the 1990s to bring clam seed into the state to facilitate clam farming. Risse said the hope is to attract commercial oyster hatcheries to Georgia that will supply growers in the years going forward.

"But, we have proven that this can work in Georgia, it is economical and people could derive a livelihood and keep living in some of our rural, coastal areas through this venture," Risse said.

Charlie Phillips, owner of Sapelo Sea Farms, is one of the few that harvests wild-grown oysters, is involved in clam farming and is one of those looking to get into oyster farming, should legislation legalizing and regulating it pass the General Assembly. He said he's an environmentalist and a businessman, and

while some people think you can't do both, he said you can and you should.

"Nobody has the tides that we have until you get to New England, nobody has the marshes that we have — we got, like, 30 percent of the marshes on the East Coast — we got a really good environment to grow stuff in," Phillips said. "I tell people all the time, if you take care of your environment, you take care of your water quality, then your environment can take care of you and you can do stuff. You can have aquaculture, you can have clean water for recreational purposes, ... (and) fishing."

In other legislative news, Gov. Nathan Deal called the General Assembly to reconvene for a special emergency session Nov. 13 to deal with hurricane recovery. The legislature will also decide whether to approve a sales tax break for jet fuel, an issue that became fodder for the Republican gubernatorial nomination race earlier this year.

"Georgia was severely impacted by Hurricane Michael and many communities across our state sustained heavy financial losses," Deal said in a statement. "In response, I will ask the General Assembly to take immediate action and lead the way in spurring rapid economic recovery for southwest Georgia communities."

"Our state budget also needs to be amended to ensure that we adequately cover our obligations."



Bobby Haven/The Brunswick News

Frederica Academy upper class students fold Operation Christmas Child boxes at St. Simons Community Church on Tuesday.

Help

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and given to children in poverty who very likely won't receive another gift during the holiday season.

"Samaritan's Purse is, we feel like one, of the most trustworthy missions organizations that's actually going to take the majority of funds and resources to really go help needy people," said Mark Fritchman, associate pastor at St. Simons Community Church.

The church has taken part in the project for five years, Fritchman said, to help children around the world.

"It's an easy way for families in our church to do something fairly simple together," he said. "We kind

of promote it as 'Do it, go together as a family and go shop together.'"

The church had worked previously on a service project with Frederica Academy students and considered this an opportunity to invite the students to take part in more good work.

Frederica Academy football coach Brandon Derrick considered it a chance to give back.

"The community gives so much to us," he said. "We wanted to give back out here and help them."

The school provides

many opportunities to connect students with service projects locally. Earlier in the day Tuesday, Frederica Academy's senior class split up into two groups to volunteer at America's Second Harvest food pantry and at Safe Harbor Children's Center.

Derrick said the football team has also helped clean up after past hurricanes and served at Manna House. They don't do it for the attention, he said, but for the experience of giving back.

"We don't make it a big deal," he said.

Democratic candidate Julie Jordan, Registrar at Glynn Academy, wants to decriminalize (legalize) recreational marijuana, the most abused drug by High School students.

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Linda Hutchison

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Loan

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certificate until Sept. 20, although it was open for business, city records show. Likewise, the Glynn County Environmental Health Division did not issue a food service permit until Oct. 2, according to Sally Silbermann, a spokeswoman for Coastal Health District.

"They were never officially opened," she said.

The restaurant did properly obtain licenses for alcohol sales and business from the city.

On Sept. 13, Strong Roots Provision temporarily closed its doors when health department officials discovered the restaurant was serving food without a license.

Because the restaurant was never legally opened, the health department was not required to put a public notice of closure on the building's front, Silberman said.

The restaurant's closure also puts a potential snag in the Glynn County Economic Development Revolving Loan Fund, a program aimed at nurturing small businesses.

County commissioners on May 3 approved Strong Roots Provisions for a \$70,000 loan from the fund. The approval came with the recommendation of the Brunswick & Glynn Coun-

ty Development Authority, which vets applicants.

The loan has a 10-year term and was used to buy ovens, refrigerators, a range stove and other kitchen equipment, according to county records. The purchased items are collateral to secure the loan, but the application process does not require a credit check.

In return for the loan, business owners must agree to create one new job per \$20,000 loaned.

The county released the funds in one lump sum to Strong Roots Provisions in June. Since then, the company has made two repayments — in June and July — totaling \$1,351.93, according to Tamara Munson, the county's finance manager.

"It's essentially in default," Munson said of the loan. "We are in the legal process. We've sent certified letters."

With interest, Strong Roots Provisions owes the county \$69,515.61 as of Oct. 1, records show.

In a brief statement to The News on Tuesday, Raiford said, "I'm going to pay it back. That's all I've got to say."

Because the loan is secured by the kitchen equipment and items purchased with it, the county could seize the property to recoup its losses if the loan goes into full-blown default.

There is currently about \$240,000 remaining in the county's revolving loan fund. The money is granted to the

1,800, along with those that will come in future years, will be the catalyst for community service, for our economic development, for shaping the citizenry of the future," Bryant said.

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"This is the beginning of what we refer to as 'Signing Week,'" said Brad Bryant, vice president of the REACH program. "It used to be Signing Day."

The students will be able to apply their scholarships to the tuition costs of any HOPE-eligible schools in Georgia, which Bryant said have bought in significantly to the scholarship program.

"A lot of our colleges and institutions are matching or double-matching (the \$10,000)," Bryant said. "The University of Georgia, Georgia Tech, Georgia State, Georgia Southern have all said 'We believe enough in this cohort of young people that when they graduate we will take that \$10,000 and we'll add \$20,000 of our own money.'"

By the end of this week, 1,800 REACH scholars will be signed on to the program in Georgia.

"We believe that these

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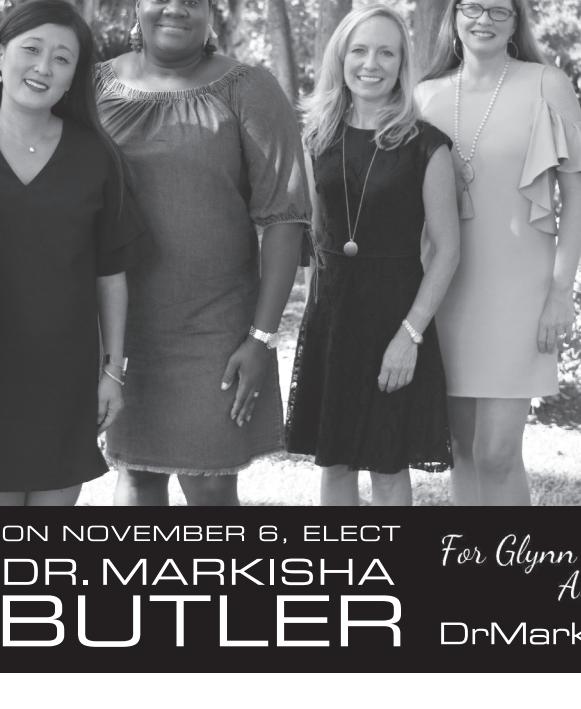
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Parents for Dr. Butler, left to right: Whitney Long, Grace Nudd, Dr. Markisha Butler, Greer Anderson, Tallie Pipkin.



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