

# CoffeeBreak

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## SPOTLIGHT ON SCHOOLS / LAUREN MCDONALD

“You could just see the expressions on their faces, how excited they are to be here.” — *Kate Worthley, Frederica Academy senior*



Bobby Haven/The Brunswick News

U.S. District Court Judge Lisa Godbey Wood talks with Frederica Academy students Aug. 30 after a naturalization ceremony federal court in Brunswick.

## FA students see naturalization firsthand

Seven newly sworn United States citizens sat on the front rows of a Glynn County federal courtroom last Thursday, experiencing their first moments of American citizenship.

And just a couple of rows behind them sat a group of Frederica Academy students, who had the chance to see the swearing-in process firsthand.

Steve Jobe, a political science teacher at Frederica Academy, brought about 15 students to the naturalization ceremony last week in hopes of educating them on how people can become American citizens.

“It’s to appreciate their U.S. citizenship, which we often take for granted, and just to recognize there is a process that it is in place for people who want to apply,” Jobe said. “And it’s not given to basically everybody.”

U.S. District Court Judge Lisa Godbey Wood opened the ceremony, which lasted nearly an hour, with a

warm hello to the new citizens, their families and other guests.

“Welcome to what is the best day in federal court,” she said.

After being sworn in, the seven new citizens were addressed and congratulated by about 15 community members representing local groups.

Steve Stirling, the president and CEO of MAP International, shared his own story of moving to America from South Korea, where he contracted polio and spent several years in an orphanage before his American family adopted him.

“In 1966, we came to America, and it’s this month 50 years ago that I became a U.S. citizen,” Stirling said. In America, he said, one can dream big.

“There is no other place in the world where a kid from an orphanage in South Korea can go to the best schools, become a vice president of a Fortune 500 company, marry

a beautiful wonderful wife ... have two kids,” Stirling said. “Only in America is that possible.”

Naturalized citizens have nearly all the same rights as those born in the United States, Stirling said, but with those rights comes responsibility.

“As you have now earned your citizenship, you need to do something to be a part of the fabric of this country,” he said.

The patriotic ceremony was touching to Frederica Academy senior Kate Worthley.

“You could just see the expressions on their faces, how excited they are to be here,” she said afterward. “It gives us a sense of honor, living in our country, that we were born into this.”

*Spotlight on Schools appears Thursdays. Contact Lauren McDonald at [lmcdonald@thebrunswicknews.com](mailto:lmcdonald@thebrunswicknews.com) or at 912-265-8320, ext. 322 to suggest a topic for a column.*

## Federal regulators give blessing to utility merger plan

By MEG KINNARD  
Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. — A deal to merge troubled South Carolina utility SCANA with Dominion Energy cleared another hurdle this week, moving a step closer to an agreement that could mean more than a billion dollars in rebates for utility customers.

Dominion announced on Tuesday that the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission had approved the indirect transfer of the operating license for the V.C. Summer Nuclear Station from SCANA subsidiary South Carolina Electric & Gas Co. to the Virginia-based company.

SCANA suddenly needed a buyer after spending \$5 billion on a pair of reactors abandoned a year ago at V.C. Summer. Thousands of people were left jobless in the debacle, which has spawned more than a dozen lawsuits and followed the bankruptcy of lead contractor Westinghouse.

Dominion is offering more than \$1 billion in rebates to SCE&G customers in the deal, which would also cut rates by about 7 percent.

SCANA shareholders voted in July to approve the deal, which gives Dominion

more of a foothold in South Carolina. It’s gotten blessings from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and Georgia state regulators and still needs approvals from the public service commissions of North and South Carolina.

SCE&G customers have gotten some relief following paying out more than \$2 billion toward the now-defunct project over the past decade. Last month, lower temporary rates passed by state lawmakers went into effect until the end of the year, knocking about \$25 a month off the average residential customer’s bill. Along with credits retroactive to April, SCE&G has said the cuts time will cost it \$270 million.

Santee Cooper, the minority owner of the V.C. Summer project, spent about \$4 billion on the reactors. A committee of lawmakers on Wednesday continued to hear information about the utility as they consider whether to try to sell its utility’s holdings. South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster has been pushing for such a sale since the project’s failure, calling it a way for Santee Cooper to pay its nuclear debt and protect customers, although some lawmakers are unsure if that would be possible.

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## IN THE STATE

### Authorities: 3-month-old girl found dead in home

**1. CALHOUN:** Authorities say a 3-month-old girl has been found dead in a north Georgia home.

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution reports Gordon County Sheriff’s deputies were called to the home Monday morning. A Tuesday sheriff’s office release says witnesses told authorities the girl was alive Sunday night and found dead the next day.

It’s unclear how the infant died. It also is unclear how the witnesses are connected to the infant. The release says the Georgia Bureau of Investigation will conduct an autopsy on the girl. The sheriff’s office says an investigation is ongoing.

**2. ATLANTA:** The mayor of Atlanta says the public can now review some of the city’s individual expenses online.

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution reports Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms announced the “Open Checkbook” practice Tuesday at a press conference. The newspaper reports this is a first for the administration, which is under investigation by multiple agencies for possible corruption and public record law violations.

Bottoms says “Open Checkbook” allows the public to track individual expenditures by department, date, vendor and fund. The available data currently stretches from January 2017 to June 30 of this year. Bottoms says it will be expanded upon and updated quarterly.

The newspaper says the available data appears to be missing some information when cross-checked against earlier city data.

**2. ATLANTA:** A former Atlanta-area police sergeant has been indicted on charges related to inappropriate sexual contact with four victims, including two under age 16.

The indictment against former East Lake sergeant Richard Gooddine, 38, was announced by the Fulton County district attorney’s office Tuesday.

Gooddine faces 17 counts including aggravated sexual battery, child molestation and violation of oath by a public officer. His alleged crimes occurred between 2011 and 2018.



Numbers on stories correspond to map locations. The star locates Brunswick.

Each aggravated sexual battery charge against Gooddine carries a possible sentence of 25 years to life, the district attorney’s office said in a statement.

The statement alleges that Gooddine attempted to “intimidate and threaten” his latest victim, a 15-year-old girl.

It says he went to the hospital where the girl was undergoing a sexual assault test kit in August before being removed by hospital staff.

**3. DECATUR:** Georgia police say a teen stabbed his on-again, off-again girlfriend to death in a “crime of passion.”

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution reports 17-year-old India Chapman was stabbed eight times on Friday in what arrest warrants say was a “crime of passion” by 18-year-old Sincere Brown. It’s unclear what events that led up to the slaying caused it to be termed a “crime of passion.”

DeKalb County police say Brown also attempted to hide Chapman’s death. Police say Chapman’s body was later found by one of Brown’s relatives near a county home. Brown has since been charged with murder and concealing a death in the slaying.

It’s unclear if Brown has a lawyer.

— Associated Press

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