



Garden Club remembers Mathis

LAVONIA—Susan O'Connell of the Lavonia Garden Club shows off the poster she created from news clippings detailing Joyce Mathis' long-time membership in and leadership of the Lavonia Garden Club. The sign was presented to the Mathis family following a celebration of life service for Mathis Feb. 10 at First United Methodist Church.

Public forum on Comprehensive Plan update to be held March 19

CARNESVILLE—Input on the future of Franklin County is needed.

The Georgia Mountains Regional Commission (GMRC) is assisting Franklin County and the cities of Carnesville, Canon, Franklin Springs, Lavonia and Royston with the update of their joint Comprehensive Plan.

The first public forum to gather input on the plan will be March 19 from 6-7:30 p.m. at the Franklin County Justice Center in Carnesville.

The Comprehensive Plan is a state-required document that helps shape and coordinate local work programs for the county and cities.

These planning processes are designed to en-

sure that major projects and policies for the community are developed with public input, ensuring a level of coordination between local and state level interests.

This process will include multiple opportunities for public input, beginning with the March 19 public forum.

Initial meetings will walk through the basics of the document, the planning process and how the comprehensive plan is used to help guide community policies and programs.

Subsequent meetings will review the needs and goals for each community and what the local governments can do in preparation for the future.

In addition, there are also brief online surveys asking people to give their thoughts on select issues and priorities for each community.

The surveys will be accessible from April 1 through May 31, and will be open to anyone with a vested interest in the area. Links to the surveys will be posted on each government's website and will be posted around the area.

More meeting dates and times will be announced throughout the summer.

For any questions about the document or the process, contact Adam Hazell at ahazell@gmrc.ga.gov.

Northeast Georgia Bank announces promotions

LAVONIA – Northeast Georgia Bank has announced promotions to three senior leadership positions.

Bill Hogan has been promoted to Chief Executive Officer, Lee Vaughn to President and Rick Tatum as Senior Credit Officer.

A native of Hart County, Hogan began his 32-year banking career with Northeast Georgia Bank in 1992 as a management trainee and loan officer after working as a general manager with Ryans Family Steakhouses after college.

After seven years, he moved to positions as a commercial lender for Regions Bank in Greenville, S.C., and later as vice-president-business services officer with BB&T.

He and his brothers formed a family firm as developers, builders and real estate brokers in Upstate South Carolina from 2004-10.

Hogan returned to Lavonia and Northeast Georgia Bank in December 2010 as senior vice president – division manager and was promoted to senior credit officer in 2017. He took over reins as CEO in January.

“As I step into the CEO role at Northeast Georgia Bank, the significance of this position resonates deeply, not just as a career milestone but as a commitment to the thriving communities we've served since our humble beginnings in Lavonia, back in 1906,” Hogan said. “What began as a single office has evolved into a network of 10 branches, spanning nine communities along the I-85 corridor from Gwinnett County to the South Carolina line and beyond. Being part of community banking is a source of pride for me. I believe that access to credit is the lifeblood of a community, and Northeast Georgia Bank is uniquely positioned to fulfill this essential role. Our commitment to local decision-making, where our staff is empowered to make thoughtful judgments, underscores our dedication to providing personalized financial solutions that meet the unique needs of each community we serve.”

Hogan said the core of community banking lies in the responsibility of attracting and safeguarding deposits and then channeling them back into the community through loans.

“These loans play a transformative role, empowering families to reach their goals and fulfill the American dream—whether it's purchasing homes, cars, or other essential goods,” he said. “Our support extends to all stakeholders, including businesses, farmers, and various other entities, contributing to the prosperity



Northeast Georgia Bank recently announced promotions. Bill Hogan (above left) is now CEO, Lee Vaughn (above) was promoted to President and Rick Tatum (left) is Senior Credit Officer.

and growth of the places we call home.”

Hogan is currently a member of the Hartwell First Methodist Church, Franklin County Chamber of Commerce, Georgia Banker Association and Community Bankers Association.

He is a past member of the Lavonia Kiwanis Club, American Cancer Society, Franklin County Relay for Life, Hartwell Rotary Club, North Greenville Rotary Club, Greenville Chapter of Commerce, New Commerce Bank, Palmetto Bank and the Lavonia Chamber of Commerce. He held leadership positions in many of those organizations through the years.

Hogan is a graduate of Hart County High School, Anderson College, West Georgia College with a degree in political science and the Georgia Banker Association School of Banking at the University of Georgia.

He and wife Mary Brooks Hogan live in Hartwell, where both grew up. They have three grown children, Will of Athens, Carter of New York, N.Y., and Addison of Atlanta.

Hogan said when he is not working, he enjoys spending time with his family, in particular his wife, his friends and following UGA athletics.

“The success of Northeast Georgia Bank is a testament to our talented and professional staff, guided by the principles of local ownership and reflected in our well-capitalized and strong balance sheet,” Hogan said. “Our bankers actively participate in civic organizations, serve on boards, engage in church committees, and contribute to various service organizations. This collective dedication to community service under-

scores our shared interest in strengthening and enhancing the fabric of the communities we call home.”

Vaughn is a resident of Elbert County and has been with Northeast Georgia Bank for 15 years.

“I'm grateful for the opportunity to help lead Northeast Georgia Bank as we grow and serve our communities,” he said.

Vaughn is a veteran of 28 years in banking and is a past division manager and senior lending officer for NGB.

Vaughn is in his third term on the Elbert County Board of Commissioners and serves as chairman.

He is also a board member of the Development Authority of Elberton, Elbert County and Bowman and the Upper Ogeechee Regional Water Planning Council.

Tatum has been with Northeast Georgia Banks since June 2019 and has served as a division manager.

“Senior Credit Officer is the position I have spent a career working and striving toward,” Tatum said. “My purpose will be to focus on booking quality credits and loan file perfection.”

Tatum's experience includes positions as a business banker, credit team lead, senior credit analyst and branch manager at other banking institutions.

He has a Bachelor's of Business Administration degree from North Georgia College, now the University of North Georgia.

Tatum is a U.S. Army and Georgia National Guard veteran.

He commanded Alpha Company 1/121 Infantry, Georgia 48th Infantry Brigade in Bosnia during the SFOR-9 deployment in 2001.

Lavonia Boat Expo set for March 16

LAVONIA – The Lavonia Boat Expo will welcome spring March 16 by highlighting Lake Hartwell for recreation and leisure living.

New boats for fishing and cruising, gleaming new trucks and classic antique boats will be displayed on East Main Street.

A wide variety of vendors will offer fishing tackle, marine services and products, home improvement and indoor and outdoor décor.

Visitors will find information about boat rentals, dock and shoreline maintenance, landscaping, real estate, insurance and boating safety.

Exhibitors will give away freebies and hold drawings for visitors to



The Lavonia Boat Expo will return to downtown Lavonia March 16.

take home some swag.

Children will enjoy a complimentary super slide.

Satellite events are a pop-up mart behind the Gazebo and a nature and wildlife art exhibit hosted at Sweet Combs of Honey.

Restaurants and shops are offering sales and specials.

The boat show runs

from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Parking and admission are free.

In case of rain, information will be announced on WLHR 92.1 and posted on Facebook pages: Lavonia Community Awareness, Lavonia DDA & Welcome Center, WLHR 92.1, Franklin County Citizen and other Lake Hartwell pages.

Have something to sell?

Sell it in the Franklin County Citizen Leader!

To place a classified ad, call Jennifer at 706-356-8557.

Franklin County
Citizen Leader

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