

Barrow County seeks tax break for seniors

News briefs

WINDER - Barrow County commissioners on Tuesday agreed to ask the Georgia General Assembly for a homestead exemption for the county's senior citizens.

"Our objective is to give school tax relief to senior citizens on a fixed income," Commission Chairman Doug Garrison said in a memo to commissioners.

Under the proposal, there would be a five-year "phase-in exemption." Essentially, the homeowner of a house appraised at \$200,000 or less would not pay any school taxes, if the requirements of the county's current double homestead exemption are met.

County officials will give the proposed exemption to state Rep. Terry England, R-Auburn, who is expected to present the proposed exemption to the legislature this session.

Braselton OKs impact-fee bill

The city of Braselton this week approved an impact fee ordinance, aimed at taxing new development in the fast-growing community that straddles four counties.

Revenues from the impact fees will be used to offset costs of public facilities, ranging from roads to recreational areas to public safety facilities. Under the fee structure approved Tuesday, the town would charge impact fees on new construction including residential, commercial and industrial developments.

For example, an attached or detached residential unit would be charged \$562.39 per dwelling, according to the fee structure. A hotel would be charged \$124.40 per room and a fast-food restaurant would be required to pay \$1,506.66 per 1,000 square feet, under the fee structure.

- Todd DeFeo

Barrow appointed to agriculture panel

U.S. Rep. John Barrow, D-Athens, was appointed this week to the House Committee on Agriculture, the second committee assignment Barrow has received.

Barrow represents the 12th Congressional District, which stretches from

Athens to Augusta to Savannah.

In a news release, Barrow pointed out that the 12th District encompasses many rural communities where agriculture plays a central role. According to the United States Department of Agriculture's 2002 Census of Agriculture, there are 3,081 farms in the 12th District, with the market value of production topping \$200 million.

Barrow also serves on the House Committee on Education and the Workforce.

Kemp submits bill on electronic reports

State Sen. Brian Kemp has introduced legislation that would allow state departments and agencies to submit reports electronically rather than spending money on printing voluminous reports.

Kemp, R-Athens, said in a news release that Senate Bill 49 would let state agencies reproduce reports in the most effective and efficient way possible, including on CD-ROM or on a Web site.

The measure would save thousands of dollars on printing and postage costs each year, Kemp said in the news release.

Kemp represents the 46th Senate District, which covers Clarke, Oconee and Oglethorpe counties and the Hull area of Madison County.

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