

The Sparta Ishmaelite

Wednesday October 14, 2026

Can We Afford This SPLOST?



By Karen West,
News Reporter

With this addition to the upcoming November 3 ballot for countywide vote, many people are asking, what exactly is a SPLOST?

A SPLOST - Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax in Georgia works as a temporary 1% sales tax added to most retail purchases within a county to fund local infrastructure and capital projects.

How It Works -

Initiation - The County Board of Commissioners proposes a tax and creates a SPECIFIC list of capital



projects, in order of importance, along with total dollar amounts for each project.

Intergovernmental Agreements- The County negotiates agreements with cities inside its borders (in this case, the City of Sparta is the only participant) to share a portion of proceeds, based on population or project needs.

Voter Approval- Residents must approve the tax and the project list via a public vote with the referendum lasting an average of 5-6 years.

Collection - The 1% sales tax is added to most retail purchases made within the county that are subject to the state sales tax

paid by residents, visitors, and online shoppers. In the case of online purchases the tax is applied based on where the purchased product is delivered, not by the buyers' home county or sellers' location.



Renewal - Once the time or money limit has been reached, the tax ends unless the commissioners vote to reapprove a new phase under another referendum.

What exactly is an allowable project under SPLOST?

SPLOST may be used for capital projects for the benefit of the community such as roads, bridges, public safety equipment, courthouses, parks, recreation centers, and retiring general obligation debt. It CANNOT be used for day to day operating expenses, employee salaries, routine

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Kenya Brown Goes Above and Beyond: A Homegrown Educator Making an Impact



Submitted By:
Rakyah Watkins,
Instructional Specialist

There is something special about seeing a hometown educator return to her community and pour into the next generation. Ms. Kenya Brown, a Sparta native and first year teacher, is doing exactly that, and her dedication has earned her recognition as the September recipient of the Above and Beyond Award.

Although she is just beginning her teaching career, Ms. Brown has already



September Above and Beyond Award Recipient
Hancock Central Middle School

demonstrated the commitment, initiative, and high expectations of a seasoned educator. Taking on the challenge of teaching both mathematics and science, she continues to push her students to recognize their potential and understand that they are capable of achieving at higher levels.

Ms. Brown is raising expectations by challenging students to think critically, participate actively, and take ownership of their learning. Her dedication has earned positive feedback from both students and parents. She also demonstrates a strong commitment to professional growth by seeking support, requesting resources, and putting those resources into practice. She regularly collaborates with Instructional Specialist Rakyah Watkins, utilizing instructional materials and science equipment to enhance classroom learning.

In science, Ms. Brown is planning hands-on experiments and investigations that give students opportunities to explore, question, and apply scientific concepts. Ms. Brown

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THE HANCOCK COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

NOW HAVE Sample Ballots AVAILABLE.

YOU CAN STOP BY OUR OFFICE & REQUEST YOURS TODAY.

OFFICE HOURS ARE 9:00am - 5:00pm | MONDAY-FRIDAY

EMAIL: BOER.DEPUTY@HANCOCKCOUNTYGA.GOV

PHONE: (706)444-5259

ADDRESS: 9091 E. BROAD STREET SPARTA, GA. 31087

Your Vote. Your Voice. Your Future.



OUR LOCAL HERO

From: The City of Sparta

The City of Sparta's own Gas Superintendent, Bobby Gunter, received the 2026 Everyday Energy Hero award from the Natural Gas Association of Georgia!

This recognition celebrates hardworking natural



gas professionals who go above and beyond to make a difference in their communities.

We're proud of Bobby and grateful for his dedication to serving Sparta and keeping our natural gas system operating safely.

Join us in congratulating Bobby on this well-deserved recognition!

HANCOCK COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

EARLY VOTING begins

TUESDAY OCTOBER 13TH til FRIDAY OCTOBER 30TH

SATURDAY VOTINGS OCTOBER 17TH OCTOBER 24TH

VOTE

Your Vote. Your Voice. Our Community.



Hickory Grove Missionary Baptist Church, Inc

4933 Hickory Grove Church Road/Post Office Box 402 Sparta, Georgia 31087

www.hickorygrovembc.org Reverend Michael Curry, Pastor

Church Announcements/ ALL ARE INVITED TO ATTEND

PINK OUT DAY will be observed on Sunday October 25th at 11:00 a.m.
in an effort to raise awareness and show support for breast cancer.

Pastor Michael Curry will deliver the message. All are invited to attend and requested to wear something pink.

Frank T. Edwards, Publicity Chair 706-444-3286 Twin922@yahoo.com

Tabernacle Baptist Church Pastor Terry Boone

New St. Sparta, Ga. 706-833-8747

Shivers Grove Community Church

347 Shivers Grove Road Sparta, Ga. 31087

Services every 3rd Sunday Sunday School starts @ 11:00 AM

Church Worship @ 12:00 Noon

Reverend Marion Hargrove, Pastor Sister Mary Leslie, Secretary

Nazareth Baptist Church, 4186 Hwy. 15 Sparta, GA

will be celebrating Rev. Danny R. Walker and Lady Cleventeen Walker's

27th Pastoral Anniversary

on Sunday, October 18, 2026 beginning at 11:05 a.m.

The Mistress of Ceremony will be Ms. Vanessa Brundage Fluellen and the
guest speaker for this occasion will be Rev. Dr. Omer Reid of the Flagg

Chapel Baptist Church, Milledgeville, GA.

We extend an invitation to everyone to come out and join us in this great
celebration of our pastor and wife.

Dinner will be served immediately following the service.

ZEBULON COMMUNITY CHURCH

7266 BROWN CHAPEL RD. 31087

PASTOR BRO. BILLY CARROLL PHONE 706-829-4403

SERVICES EVERY SUNDAY 11:00-----SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:00

GOD IS NEAR THE VALLEY

By: EDWARD WILLIAMS - DEACON & Gideon

There are, moments in life that leaves us shaken and searching for answers. A terrible accident, painful injuries, long days in the hospital, and the uncertainty of recovery can weigh heavily on the body and spirit. When someone we care about is suffering, We often wish we could take there pain away, yet even in these difficult moments, God reminds us that He is near to the brokenhearted and faithful through every trial.

The Bible says in (Psalms 34:18) –“The Lord is nigh to them that are of a broken heart; and seventh such as be of a contrite spirit”. God does not abandon His children in times of suffering. He walks beside them through every painful step, every sheepless night, and every difficulty day of recovery. Right now, you might feel weak, discouraged, and overwhelmed. Broken bonds may heal slowly, and the road back may seem long. But even when the body is hurting, God can bring peace to the soul . He is the Great Physician, able to comfort in ways that Doctors and Medicine alone cannot. Every breath every small improvement and every day is evident that God is working.

Sometimes we do not understand why tragedies happen. But we do know that God can bring hope out hopeless situations. Trails often deepen our faith and remind us how dependent we are of Him. In the darkest valleys, His present becomes more precious than ever before. Think about the story of Job, he experiences pain, loss and suffering beyond what most people could imagine.

Yet through it all, Job learned that God was still faithful. Suffering did not mean that God had forgotten Him. In the end, God straightened him and restored him. This season might be difficult, but it is not without purpose. God can even use this painful chapter to show His mercy, strength, and grace. Recover may take time, But God's love never leaves. He is always present, in every prayer lifted and every hand that offers support. Continue to pray, to trust, and to hope.

Explaining The Memory Verse

“God’s Justice Brings Peace”

Lesson Text: Nahum 1:1–3, 6–8,12,13,15 Background Scripture: Nahum 1

“The LORD is a jealous and avenging God; the LORD takes vengeance and is filled with wrath. The LORD takes vengeance on his foes and vents his wrath against his enemies” (Nahum 1:2).

God really, loves us. He loves us so much that He will protect us whenever we need Him. But we have to do the right things (behave) and obey Him also. So, God finally had enough of the evil of the Assyrians, and He was tired of seeing the people of Judah get hurt. So, God destroyed Judah’s enemies, the Assyrians.

TELLING HOW TO LIVE

When someone does something wrong to us, we don’t have to worry about getting them back. Since we love and trust God, we can always learn on (trust) Him. God gets the best justice when people hurt us, and always at the perfect time. The reason why is because God doesn’t want to be mean, He always wants to be fair. We should try to be fair to others too!

PRAYER

Dear heavenly Father, thank You for protecting us better than anyone. Help us to remember that You take care of everything and everyone that may do wrong to us.

Because You love and protect us, in Jesus’ name we say Thank You, Amen!

References: Minister Minnie Harmon-Boone (DDiv, ECE) Holy Bible: NIV, ESV

Jesus Is All Ministries Golden Universal Outreach Ministries

Email and Phone Number goldenenterprises59@gmail.com 7068338747



The Appeal of a Pocket Park

Have you ever heard of a "Pocket Park"?

A Pocket Park is a very small, publically accessible outdoor space - usually less than 1/4 acre or about the size of a single city lot-built to provide greenery and a place of rest and tranquility in a densely built urban area. Whew! That explanation is bigger than most Pocket Parks, themselves!

Because of their diminutive size, the amenities are often scaled down, reclaiming neglected or fire damaged urban plots, turning them into miniature respite with trees, plants, benches, and little private areas to give neighbors a spot to read, chat,



Karen West,
News Reporter

watch birds and butterflies, or eat their lunch outside in the fresh air.

Pocket Parks offer a variety of benefits - providing the community with attractive outdoor spaces, helping to make the community more sociable, and supporting native wildlife with help from organizations like the Roslyn Carter Butterfly Trail and

then Audobon Society. By reducing urban noise, pollution, and the stress of traffic, Pocket Parks help breathe new life into communities. Outdoor activities have been linked to positive mental health, especially in teens, children, and young adults and overall help contribute to the quality of life for the whole community and those who utilize them.

Our Pocket Park, a project of the City of Sparta, will be in Downtown Sparta, across from The Real Deal and next to Harggo's Snack Bar in the vacant space, once a thriving business, left empty by a fire several years ago.

The park will feature

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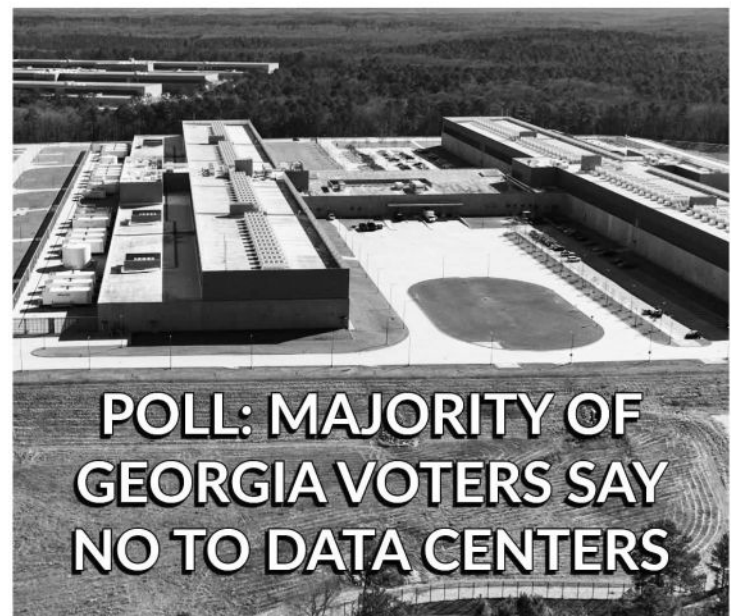
Data Center Discussion

By Karen West,
News Reporter

At the upcoming October 14, 2026 Hancock County Board of Commissioners Meeting, ACCG Representative Alicia Vaughn is scheduled to make a presentation on the future of Data Centers in Georgia.

The Association of County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG) states that they are neither "PRO" or "CON" data centers, calling them a "mixed bag". Instead of an outright ban or endorsement of data centers, the ACCG says that they "focus on equipping local county officials with framework, guidance, and resources to manage land use, infrastructure, and resources impacts" of the massive growth of data centers in Georgia.

Georgia ranks in the top 5 states in the United States for the number of data centers located here. Surrounded in secrecy,



even the number of actual facilities cannot be determined or agreed upon. Some sources list the operational data centers at 169 with between 246 and 304 more planned for the near future. DATA CENTER MAP.COM lists the Georgia number of present facilities at 276 with 169 in Atlanta and 63 in Augusta, and many many more proposed for our state.

There is a great deal of discrepancy in not only the number of facilities, but in their water usage,

vast need for local energy, amount of noise pollution, and what their impact on the environment and natural resources are, as well as if there are really any true benefits to rural economically challenged communities like ours.

There is also a great deal of concern over the lack of transparency about them, the secrecy that surrounds them and the overwhelming number of Non Disclosure Agreements

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HANCOCK COUNTY LEGAL NOTICES

NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS

H26-042

NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS

All Creditors of the Estate of Gladys Lamar, late of Hancock County, Georgia, are hereby notified to render their demands to the undersigned according to law, and all persons indebted to said estate are required to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

Shongala Madesha Harris Executrix of the Estate of Gladys Lamar, deceased

6081 Ga Hwy 15

Sparta, Ga 31087

September 23, 30, October 7, 14, 2026

H26-045

DEBTORS AND CREDITORS NOTICE

GEORGIA, HANCOCK COUNTY.

All creditors of the Estate of NANCY CRUMBLEY KENNEDY, deceased, late of Hancock County, Georgia, are hereby notified to render in their demands to the undersigned, according to law, and all persons indebted to said estate are required to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This 25th day of September, 2026.

/s/James B. Kennedy, IV

James B. Kennedy, IV

Executor of the Estate of Nancy Crumbley Kennedy

P.O. Box 190

Sparta, GA 31087

September 30, October 7, 14, 21, 2026

H26-049

NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS

HANCOCK COUNTY

All creditors of the estate of Willie Mae Nelson, deceased, late of Hancock County, Georgia, are hereby notified to render in their demands to the undersigned according to law; and all persons indebted to said estate are required to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This 6th of October, 2026.

Philemon Nelson Jr

Administrator for the Estate

435 Pumping Station Road

Sparta, GA 31087

October 14, 21, 28, November 4, 2026

H26-050

DEBTORS AND CREDITORS NOTICE

GEORGIA, HANCOCK COUNTY.

All creditors of the Estate of Earnest W. Batchelor, Jr., deceased, late of Hancock County, Georgia, are hereby notified to render in their demands to the undersigned, according to law, and all persons indebted to said estate are required to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This 7th day of October, 2026.

/s/ Mitzi L. Batchelor

Mitzi L. Batchelor, Executrix of the Estate of Earnest W. Batchelor, Jr.

P.O. Box 190

Sparta, GA 31087

October 14, 21, 28, November 4, 2026

PETITION TO BE APPOINTED

H26-044

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF HANCOCK COUNTY

STATE OF GEORGIA

IN RE: ESTATE OF ADDIE DORA DEAN WARREN, DECEASED

ESTATE NO. E-26-058

NOTICE

To Whom It May Concern:

ANGEL WARREN-BARBER have petitioned to be appointed Administrator(s) of the estate of ADDIE DORA DEAN WARREN, deceased, of said County. All interested parties are hereby notified to show cause why said Petition should not be granted by filing an objection.

All objections to the Petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections, and must be filed with the Court on or before OCTOBER 23, 2026. In addition, all objections must be sworn to before a notary public or before a Probate Court Clerk. Filing fees must be tendered with your objection unless you qualify to file as an indigent party.

Contact Probate Court personnel for the required amount of filing fees. If any objections are filed, a hearing will be scheduled at a later date. If no objections are filed, the Petition may be granted without a hearing.

Sabrina M. Lamar

Judge of the Probate Court

Jasmine J. Stokes

Deputy Clerk of the Probate Court

12630 Broad Street, Sparta, GA 31087

706-444-5343

October 7, 14, 21, 28, 2026

PETITION FOR NAME CHANGE

H26-046

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF HANCOCK COUNTY

STATE OF GEORGIA

In Re: CRIS ALLAN WALKER

Civil Action File No. 2026SUCV90

NOTICE OF PETITION TO CHANGE NAME

GEORGIA, Hancock County

Notice is hereby given that Cris Allan Walker, the undersigned, filed his petition to the Superior Court of Hancock County, Georgia on the 28th day of September, 2026, praying for a change in name of the petition from Cris Allan Walker to Chris Allan Walker. Notice is hereby given pursuant to law for any interested or affected party to appear in said court and to file an objection to said name change. Objections must be filed within said court within thirty (30) days of the filing of said petition. This 28th day of September, 2026.

Cris Allan Walker,

Petitioner

September 30, October 7, 14, 21, 2026

PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

H26-043

SUMMARIES OF PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

Pursuant to requirements of the Georgia Constitution, Attorney General Christopher Carr, Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, and Legislative Counsel Betsy Howerton hereby provide the summaries of the proposed constitutional amendments that will appear on the November 3, 2026, general election ballot for consideration by the people of Georgia (short captions are those adopted by the Constitutional Amendments Publication Board):

- 1 -

Increases the maximum qualifying acreage for assessment and taxation as

fore OCTOBER 30, 2026. In addition, all objections must be sworn to before a notary public or before a Probate Court Clerk. Filing fees must be tendered with your objection unless you qualify to file as an indigent party.

Contact Probate Court personnel for the required amount of filing fees. If any objections are filed, a hearing will be scheduled at a later date. If no objections are filed, the Petition may be granted without a hearing.

Sabrina M. Lamar

Judge of the Probate Court

Jasmine J. Stokes

Deputy Clerk of the Probate Court

12630 Broad Street, Sparta, GA 31087

706-444-5343

October 7, 14, 21, 28, 2026

Data Center Discussion

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(NDA) that proceed their entrance into communities.

Interestingly, Alicia Vaughn has been quoted at calling data centers "a very important part of our lives- they are here to stay".

Be sure to arrive early for the Hancock County Board of Commissioners Meeting on Wednesday, Oct.14, 2026 at 5 pm at the Hancock County Courthouse, so that you can sign up to ask your questions, and hopefully get some answers, before, and after Ms. Vaughn's presentation, lusted as one of the main topics of the meeting's agenda.



REAL SECURITY ISN'T FOUND IN GOVERNMENT OR A CENTRALIZED DIGITAL SYSTEM. IT IS FOUND IN A COMMUNITY OF NEIGHBORS WHO KNOW HOW TO FARM, FIX THINGS. AND LOOK OUT FOR EACH OTHER.

The Tucker Homestead.

THE GEORGIAN

The Sandersville Progress & The Sparta Ishmaelite

Covering Washington & Hancock Counties

Legal Organ of Washington & Hancock County

In County: \$38

Out of County:\$45

Out of State (GA): \$55

First Name: _____

Last Name: _____

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