

# The Paper

of Flowery Branch



Falcons fill Gainesville stadium for scrimmage. **1B**

**FLOWERY BRANCH**

## Council wrestles with per diem pay idea

BY LISA LASKEY  
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City Council members debated, Aug. 1, whether the mayor and council members should receive per diem pay for meetings and appearances beyond regularly scheduled meetings.

By a 3-2 vote, members passed the first reading of an amendment to the city charter to allow such a move, but it was not without its detractors. Discussion will continue before its next agenda appearance Aug. 17.

If approved, the per diem pay likely would not extend to informational or internal meetings.

The charter authorizes a fixed monthly pay amount to the mayor and council members for performance of their duties, including attending meetings on behalf of the city.

If passed, the new ordinance would amend the charter and authorize the city to pay each an additional \$50 per diem, paid monthly, and not to exceed five meetings per month.

Mayor Mike Miller supports the measure as an incentive to city representatives to attend more public functions, as done in other cities that offer the extra pay.

Oakwood has authorized the

same per diem, with a limit of 10 meetings per month. Gainesville officials receive \$125 per meeting, not to exceed 10 meetings.

Miller currently receives \$500 and council members \$400 for each month served in office.

Council member Tara Richards favors the proposal, but for a different reason.

"We want to attract council members from all walks of life," she said.

Richards is concerned some members might not be able to take the extra time, for financial reasons, and a per diem would help offset the potential loss of income.

Council member Joe Anglin adamantly opposed the measure, or any increase in compensation. He strongly reiterated that, if enacted, he would never accept additional money for his service, citing extra appearances as part of the job.

"I'm really not in favor of a per diem," council member Fred Richards said in agreement.

Council member Damon Gibbs affirmed the first reading but noted that a budget amendment would be necessary. "There's no funds available at this time," he said.

All members agreed the move is to create a mechanism for potential future use. Tara Richards said that

she considered its passage not potentially applicable to at least three members of the current council whose posts are up for re-election. And, if enacted, a council member could refuse the pay.

Former city council member Ed Lezaj approached council during the public comment period and vehemently opposed the proposal. He spoke of his past position as a controller in private industry and couched his comments in terms of accounting.

Lezaj supports a fixed travel and incidental expense reimbursement

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**ATLANTA FALCONS**



**Nat Gurley** The Paper regional staff Atlanta Falcons training camp will be open for public viewing for two final dates, Aug. 10 and Aug. 11 from 3:30 to 6:05 p.m. at the team's training center in Flowery Branch.

## Fans can still catch practice

From staff reports

There's still time to check out your beloved birds.

Atlanta Falcons training camp, held at the team's training complex at 4400 Falcons Parkway, will be open for public viewing for two final days on Aug. 10 and Aug. 11.

Parking for practice viewing will be across from team headquarters at the Hog Mountain Sports Complex in Flowery Branch. Gates will open to the public approximately one hour before practice begins. Admission is free.

In the event of rain, practices will be moved indoors and closed to the public.

Spectators may bring hats, jackets, sunglasses, sunscreen, binoculars, blankets, umbrellas, lawn chairs and strollers.

The following items are not allowed: alcoholic beverages, camcorders, professional cameras, backpacks, or coolers. The Falcons training complex is a smoke-free facility and no pets are allowed.

**Falcon headquarters and training center**

**Where:** 4400 Falcons Parkway, Flowery Branch  
**Aug. 10,** 3:30 p.m. to 6:05 p.m.  
**Aug. 11,** 3:30 p.m. to 6:05 p.m.  
**For more information:** atlanta falcons.com

## HOLLYWOOD AT HOME



**Dana Towns** The Paper

Adam Sandler walks his family to a van before continuing the filming of "Blended" at Four Seasons subdivision.

## Movie 'Blended' continues filming in Flowery Branch

From staff reports

Romantic comedy "Blended" offered a field of dreams to subdivision Four Seasons' residents last week.

For devoted fans, dreams of a close-up glimpse of actors Adam Sandler or Drew Barrymore were realized as scenes were filmed throughout the week there. And, for the community a renovated sports field primed for future Little League dreams to

be realized.

Filming of the movie is expected to continue in South Hall until mid-August.

Four Seasons' resident Dolly Alexander had her first celebrity encounter right outside her front door. "Drew Barrymore parked her limo right in front of my house," said Alexander. She offered Barrymore's limousine driver something to drink and a spot on her porch, but he declined she said. "He was very nice."

Filming often begins early and Alexander said that, on this particular morning, they were underway by 7 a.m. She later dropped by the baseball field hoping to get an autograph.

Around 13 hours later, Sandler emerged from the set, causing an immediate uproar from the waiting crowd. Shouts of "I love

you Adam Sandler!" could be heard from down the street, according to production security guards. Crew members said that Sandler has been "really nice" to waiting fans.

Sandler has remained friendly with fans throughout filming, which occurred last week in Buford and the Mall of Georgia, and the preceding week in Lawrenceville. Extra and crew directional signs were spotted in Gainesville on Monday.

Sandler has been seen often stopping for photos and to sign autographs. One crew member said that a pregnant fan asked Sandler if he could sign her belly, and he did.

However, Sandler did not stop to sign autographs when ushering his family into a

See **'BLENDED'**, page 2A

## Braselton hospital construction on schedule

BY LISA LASKEY  
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Progress on the new Braselton Hospital has been inconvenienced by the heavier than average summer rainfall but is continuing on schedule, according to North Georgia Health System's Rudy Lonergan, director of facilities development.

"The rain has been a nuisance," said Lonergan. "But, overall, it has not yet impacted

the construction.

Site and utilities work were most affected, according to Lonergan, but contractors worked around the rain, often sitting out showers and working split shifts or into the evenings on drier days.

Construction on the new hospital's framework is well underway and on time. "Steel is moving at a fast pace," said Lonergan. "We expect to finish the steel in about six weeks or so."

The 100-plus bed hospital re-

mains on schedule for a spring 2015 opening. "We're hoping to see patients in May 2015," Lonergan said.

Area road construction has been a bit more challenged by the soil's wet conditions, according to Ga. DOT's Mohamed Arafa, communications officer for northwest Georgia. "We have not had much cooperation from Mother Nature," Arafa said.

"Work on the portion from Deaton Creek to the new hospital

entrance is in progress. This portion does have curb and gutter and GAB (graded aggregate base) placed on it.

"Crews are primarily focusing on the area between Spout Springs Road and state route 211 because of an intermediate completion date," said Lonergan, because this area must be completed first.

"The area from Deaton Creek to state route 211 will be the

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