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UNION SENTINEL



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Gas tax reaches record high

House leaders ask Governor for special session to address issue

By JARED PUTNAM
Union Sentinel Editor

Georgia's gasoline tax rose again last Sunday, July 1, as a 1.3 cent increase kicked in just days before the July 4th holiday. The jump brings the state total to a record high 18.6 cents. The previous high was 17.7 cents in July 2006.

Sunday's spike comes only

one month after a 2 cents-per-gallon increase took effect at the beginning of June. The increases are prompted by state laws that require changes based on the price of gas.

Governor Sonny Perdue's office has stated that he will continue to observe the situation to see if the state is reaping too much financial gain from the tax.

However, House leaders, including Minority Leader DuBose Porter, are asking that Perdue call a Special Legislative Session to address the issue.

The Governor called such a session in 2005 in the wake of ballooning fuel prices following Hurricane Katrina. He received Legislative approval

to temporarily suspended gas taxes at that time.

State Representative Charles Jenkins echoed the sentiments that Porter expressed to Perdue in a letter, when Porter told the Governor, "We are not doing our job as public servants if we allow this to continue unaddressed."

"As your District 8

Representative, I agree," Jenkins said. "I go on record stating that I strongly feel this is not a time for legislative power struggles for partisan games."

Rep. Jenkins said that he would like to see gas prices in Georgia fall more in line with states like Tennessee, which according to Jenkins, currently has lower gas prices than

Georgia.

"I totally endorse the letter to the Governor," he added. "Right now, if Governor Sonny Perdue will call the Legislature into Special Session, I am confident we in the General Assembly will take immediate action by pulling together to stop gas taxes from going up any further."

Miller to release new book

Senator Zell Miller has a new book coming out, and isn't about politics. Entitled *The Miracle of Brasstown Valley*, it will remind some older readers of his first book over thirty years ago, *The Mountains Within Me*.

The new book is the story of the miraculous creation of a college in remote Brasstown Valley at the turn of the 19th Century and the captivating characters who Miller relates "with the Grace of God made it happen."

There is the Methodist circuit rider still in his 20's who came into Brasstown Valley in 1885 on a mule, "Bringing only a dream and the fierce faith of an Old Testament prophet."

There is the "Wise, resourceful, soft-spoken widow who breathed life into the infant school not once but twice." There is the man Young Harris himself, a wealthy Methodist layman whose generosity for Christian education was so great that his kin sued him because they felt left out.

The dynamic Joseph A. Sharp, later became the college president in 1899. Miller describes Sharp as a "Shakespearean scholar, who was more at home on the college farm with his britches rolled up and his shirt tail flapping."

Miller is quick to point out that the book is more than just about the birth of Young Harris College. While that is the story line of the book, it is much more than that, he says.

"I also write about that mystical valley, Choestoe 'where the rabbits dance' in Union County, where, even in the 1880s, education was exalted.

I write of these oldest mountains in the world where the nation's first 'gold rush' occurred, where the fascinating Cherokees



File photo/Jared Putnam

Senator Zell Miller gave a speech and signed books at a meeting of The Concerned Women of America held at First Baptist Church in July 2006.

lived and suffered a terrible tragedy. And I write of the shrewd, spunky and spirited settlers of this once isolated frontier and their vanishing ways."

The book should be at bookstores and on Amazon.com in early August. It is published by Stroud and Hall, the Macon,

Georgia company that published Miller's last two books which were national best-sellers. "This is a regional book, limited and narrow in scope," Miller explained. "I expect no great broad interest in it. But it's a story that I've been waiting to tell for a long time."

Zero Tolerance

You drink, you lose

By MARK HENDERSON
Deputy Sheriff's Office & Governors Office of Highway Safety

Impaired drivers, The Governor's Office of Highway Safety (GOHS) has a message for you this Independence Day weekend. "If You Drink and Drive, You'll Lose." Georgia law enforcement officers from Operation Zero-Tolerance (OZT) will be out in full force this holiday travel period, and if you're drinking and driving, they'll be looking for you.

State Troopers, police, and sheriff's deputies will set-up saturation patrols and sobriety checkpoints across the state where you least expect them. Drivers who are

checked will simply receive safety brochures, but motorists who are caught driving drunk or drugged will go to jail.

GOHS will mobilize officers from more than 500 law enforcement agencies throughout the state for OZT duty. Impaired drivers cause more than a third of Georgia's total traffic fatalities each year. Last year, that translated into a human cost of more than 500 funerals for Georgia families.

For drivers stopped after drinking or using drugs, being caught, arrested, and prosecuted can cost thousands of dollars for defense and fines. You can lose your car, your

See ZERO TOLERANCE, page 3A

Independence Day

A time to consider our core American beliefs

By STATE SEN. CHIP PEARSON

On this July 4, Americans will take a day off to spend time with their families, enjoying parades, picnics and fireworks. I know that some of you will take a moment to honor the principles of freedom and equality for which our patriot forefathers fought. Unfortunately, these days, many Americans take certain freedoms for granted – such as the right to vote and the right to free speech – as we go about our business as if these rights could never be taken away. This Independence Day, I'd like to take time to discuss one of the most important rights that we have as U.S. citizens – states' rights.



Chip Pearson

Independence was an act of the Second Continental Congress, declaring that the 13 original colonies were independent of Great Britain. As you know, the Declaration was adopted on July 4, 1776, and stands today along with the Constitution as the most important of American documents. At the time the Declaration was issued, the American colonies were "united" in declaring their independence from Britain, but were not

yet declaring themselves to be a single nation. That union would evolve and take shape during the next few years after the Declaration was issued. As a proclamation, the Declaration was used to try to establish clear reasons for an American rebellion that might persuade reluctant

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A Brief History
The Declaration of

D.O.T to fund road project

Two county roads to receive improvements

Georgia Transportation Board Chairman, Mike Evans announced \$300,000 in Georgia Department of Transportation funding for improvements to Airport Terminal Road and State Route 515 in Union County.

Georgia DOT will fund extensive grading and drainage improvements on Airport Terminal and the construction

of a deceleration lane on S.R. 515 at its intersection with Airport Terminal.

"The growth of Union County in general, and particularly retail growth in this area around Blairsville, make this an important project," Evans said. "(State Senator) Chip Pearson has diligently pursued funding for this work and I'm glad we are able to accommodate him."

Pearson, a Republican from Dawsonville, is Secretary of the Senate Transportation Committee. He added, "I want to help the Blairsville airport grow and expand its services for north central Georgia. This road work and the new terminal will help grow these services."

In addition to Senator Pearson, Evans credited State Representative Charles

Jenkins, and Union County Commissioner Lamar Paris with being critical to securing funding for the project.

Work will begin upon execution of contracts between Georgia DOT and the Union County Commission.

For general information on the Georgia DOT, please visit their website at (www.dot.state.ga.us).



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YOUR WEEKEND WEATHER

Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Scattered T-Storms High 89° Low 64°	Isolated T-Storms High 89° Low 65°	Isolated T-Storms High 86° Low 65°