

Amendments can confuse voters at the voting booth...continued from page 1A

Proposed Amendment No. 2 asks "Shall the Constitution of Georgia be amended so as to impose an annual \$10 trauma charge on certain passenger motor vehicles in this state for the purpose of funding trauma care?"

This proposed amendment would allow the collection of an additional \$10 tag fee which would not go into the state treasury, rather, it would be constitutionally directed to fund trauma hospitals around the state. The term *certain passenger motor vehicle means* the car you drive every day, AKA, your personal vehicle.

This proposal focuses on the fact that there are no Level 1 trauma centers in South Georgia. The fee is estimated to raise about \$82 million dollars annually, which would not be mixed in with the other state treasury funds, but be directed to a proposed Trauma Commission.

The bottom line: if approved, this \$10 tag tax won't ever go away. It is what it is, another tax drain on locals' pocketbooks. Voters will have to make this call. We expect most will vote *no*.

Proposed Amendment No. 3 asks "Shall the Constitution of Georgia be amended so as to allow the Georgia Department of Transportation to enter into multi-year construction agreements without requiring appropriations in the current fiscal year for the total amount of payments that would be due under the entire agreement so as to reduce long-term construction costs paid by the state?"

That's a lot of long-winded verbiage. It really doesn't cost taxpayers any extra unless GDOT over extends itself in the long run. However, GDOT's financial position isn't that solid with-

out this proposed amendment. Chances are there will be many situations when GDOT is over extended, like in the current economy.

The proposal does allow for the cancellation of any multi-year contracts due to insufficiency of funds. With or without, GDOT already is faced with financial hardships. What state agency isn't? It's your call, but if it helps, awarding multi-year transportation contracts is a fairly common practice in many states although there are safeguards normally built in that limit the total of funded long-term projects. The state needs multi-year contracts to be competitive. You decide.

Proposed Amendment No. 4 asks "Shall the Georgia Constitution be amended so as to provide for guaranteed cost savings for the state by authorizing a state entity to enter into

multi-year contracts which obligate state funds for energy efficiency or conservation improvement projects?"

This proposal mirrors Amendment No. 3 because it allows the state to execute multi-year contracts to improve energy efficiency and conservation. The contracts would be limited to 25 years.

Currently, the state is prohibited from entering into multi-year contracts with vendors. In this case, for equipment and other amenities would be guaranteed through a contract with vendors with the lease payments to be gained from increases in energy efficiencies.

The state legislature has already approved enacting legislation to allow for multi-year contracts for state agencies for very narrow purposes involving generating energy savings and with those savings

from energy costs being the means of payback. Vendors offering these contracts must place funds into escrow accounts and those funds could be drafted if the promised savings do not materialize annually.

Again, the state needs multi-year contracts to be competitive. You decide.

Proposed Amendment No. 5 asks "Shall the Constitution of Georgia be amended so as to allow the owners of real property located in industrial areas to remove the property from the industrial area?"

Actually, this proposal applies only to Chatham and Jeff Davis counties. It fixes a 1950s era constitutional amendment, and allows property owners in these two counties to remove their property from an industrial zoning designation in areas

specifically zoned industrial. What the heck, let's give them a yes.

The lone **Statewide Referendum Question** asks "Shall the Act be approved which grants an exemption from state ad valorem taxation for inventory of a business?"

It's a trick Freeport question because this past session the legislature approved two tax cuts, one of which phases out the quarter mill the state gets from local property taxes.

So business inventory and in fact, all property will be freed from the state's quarter mill tax by 2016. This one just speeds up the process for businesses statewide. Word to the wise, every little bit helps businesses in a tough market. Especially if it means the creation of more jobs statewide.

37th annual Folk School Fall Festival



The Folk School Cloggers put on an enthusiastic performance on the Festival Barn Stage.



Over 200 craftspeople and artists will line the Folk School's scenic paths and Festival Barn with their wares.

John C. Campbell Folk School will host its 37th annual Fall Festival the first weekend of October in Brasstown with over 200 craft vendors, 40 craft demonstrators, 30 performing music and dance groups, multiple kids' activities and 20 food booths. Fall Festival is one of the largest and most popular events of its type in the region and will be held on Saturday and Sunday, October 2 & 3, from 10 AM to 5 PM. This year, the Festival is also part of the nationwide event American Craft Week, where people, organizations, and artists around the country are promoting craft in America together for the entire week.

Folk School Director Jan Davidson said, "We bring people together at Fall Festival to enjoy craft, music, and dance in the larger context of celebrating our Appalachian heritage. It's a great tradition for many local people."

American Craft Week is a time to recognize the value of handmade objects, both

functional and decorative. Juried and non-juried craftspeople and artists will offer their handmade items for sale in booths dotting the scenic campus. A wide variety of media will be represented, including fiber, pottery, wood, metal, jewelry, paintings, and glass. The festival brings in many local artists and crafts people, as well as people from all over the country.

The entertainment lineup this year features over 30 talented acts on two stages for continuous live music and dance during the weekend festival. Individuals and groups will perform old-time, bluegrass, folk, gospel, and Celtic music. Dance performances scheduled will include clogging, morris, garland, and rapper sword. "There is an amazingly high quality of music and dance on the whole at Fall Festival. It's a nice variety - a little bit of everything," said Bob Dalsemer, Music and Dance Coordinator at the Folk School, and organizer of the

entertainment at Fall Festival.

A kid and family-friendly event, the Folk School Fall Festival features several areas that are just for young people. Many local civic groups and churches raise funds at the festival by selling meals, snacks and drinks from their booths. This year, there will be food for a variety of tastes, from kettle corn to the Folk School's Famous Barbecue.

Each year at the Festival, the Folk School hosts demonstrators of traditional and contemporary styles of craft. Kisha Blount, Assistant Program Manager, said, "The folks in the Mountain Life Area will demonstrate the old mountain ways of getting along - from grinding corn or forging metal, to making music." There will also be demonstrations of contemporary woodturning, pottery, spinning, and weaving, among others, throughout campus studios.

Both the Folk School's Craft Shop and History Center will be open during the festival.

The festival will be held Saturday and Sunday, October 2 and 3, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on the school's campus on Brasstown Road in Brasstown, NC. Admission prices per day are \$5 for adults, \$3 for children ages 12-17, and free for children under 12. Parking is free. For more information about Fall Festival or John C. Campbell Folk School, call 1-800-365-5724 or 828-837-2775 or visit www.folkschool.org/fallfestival. For more information about other events happening during American Craft Week, please visit their website: americancraftweek.com/. NT(Sep29,P2)SH

Grief Group monthly meeting

Georgia Mountains Hospice offers an open Grief Group meeting monthly on the first Thursday of every month at 10 AM in the Stencil Room of our building at 70 Caring Way in Jasper. The group is led by one of our professional bereavement counselors. Serving Cherokee, Pickens, Dawson, Murray, Gilmer, Fannin and Union counties since 1993. Please call 706-253-4100 or 1-800-692-7199 for details or directions. N(Sep29,Z6)CA