

Recount...from Page 1A

though legal challenges by Trump continue in various battleground states.

Also in the Nov. 11 presser, citing an "untenable situation" for local election officials, Raffensperger announced that the state runoff for District 4 Public Service Commissioner would be rescheduled from Dec. 1 to coincide with the two U.S. Senate race runoffs on Jan. 5, 2021.

"This will protect the integrity of both elections and make for better election administration," Raffensperger said. "It has the added benefit of saving taxpayers millions of dollars (by consolidating the elections)."

The registration deadline to vote in the Jan. 5 runoff elections is Dec. 7, with three weeks of early voting set to begin Dec. 14; there will be no Saturday voting for the runoff. Additionally last week,

Raffensperger issued a warning to "out-of-state partisans" following reports that people were being urged online to move to Georgia to swing the Senate runoffs to the Democratic Party.

"Moving to the state with the sole purpose of voting and leaving is illegal and is considered voter fraud," he said.

Citing Georgia law, Raffensperger said that such activity is a felony in the state punishable by up to 10 years in prison and a \$100,000 fine.

"Let me be clear," he said. "Those who come to Georgia with the intention of voter fraud will be prosecuted. We thoroughly investigate every single allegation of voter fraud. Anyone is welcome to move to the state named the No. 1 place to do business."

"However, let me warn anyone attempting election mischief: If you illegally

participate in our elections, you might be spending a lot more time in Georgia than you planned."

The Secretary of State assured citizens that he had "a team of seasoned investigators" looking into all allegations of illegal voting and fraud, and that this team would continue doing so for the remainder of the election cycle.

"My office will continue to investigate each and every instance of illegal voting, double voting, felon voting, people voting out of state," Raffensperger said in his press conference. "If you report it, we will investigate it. Every legal vote will count. We will continue to follow and enforce the law."

Citizens may report suspicions of voter fraud at <https://sos.ga.gov/cgi-bin/EMailStopVoterFraud.asp> or by calling the Voter Fraud Hotline at 877-725-9797.

Sports Center...from Page 1A

"But as we stand here today, I think those questions have been answered."

"We are blessed to have a commissioner with the foresight that Lamar has. To have a thriving community, you must have good roads, good schools, good health care and good recreation."

According to Paris, NASCAR legend Bill Elliott was the land's previous owner until the county took it off his hands. Later, when it was time to name the street that houses the Department of Driver Services and now the double gym, Paris chose "Chase" to honor Elliott's then-young son.

And he said Nov. 10 it was only fitting the ribbon-cutting should take place just two days removed from NASCAR crowning Chase Elliott its 2020 champion.

On the subject of 2020, Paris added that the timing of the new Sports Center's completion could not have been better with the upcoming recreation basketball season around the corner.

"With the school gyms unavailable due to COVID, we would've been unable to have most of our basketball programs this year," Paris said. "Even though we couldn't plan for COVID, this new facility has been a huge boost for our recreation program."

It became apparent about five years ago that the county needed a new gym, Paris said, and since restoring the old "red roof" gym proved unviable, the commissioner and other community leaders visited recreation departments around North Georgia in search of inspiration.

Finally, in 2018, the county selected the current site to serve as the future home of the then-dubbed "Double Gym," and architect Tom Wright got the ball rolling on the beautiful new structure.

"Since it was going to be



Union County's own Brad McAfee sunk the very first basket inside the recently completed Sports Center on Nov. 10.

Photo by Todd Forrest

on the Glenn Gooch Bypass and visible to everyone, I felt we needed a higher-quality facility than just a typical school gym," Paris said.

In early 2019, the county received proposals from 10 different contractors, ranging from \$3.2 million to \$4.2 million. And according to Paris, the lowest bid came from Braselton's BM&K Construction, a company Union County has worked with before.

In the summer of 2019, construction was ready to get underway, with March 2020 pegged as a tentative target date for completion.

Weather, COVID and other delays pushed the finish line into the fall, but after a year of construction, Union County received its Certificate of Occupancy and clearance from the fire marshal on Sept. 30.

To add the finishing touches, local artist Al Garnto was called upon to provide the entrance sculptures, which were completed only hours

before last Tuesday's ribbon-cutting.

Paris also acknowledged Sean and Chase Barnett, Keith Donaldson, Mike Kiernan and Panel Built Inc., Mike Patton, Lane Plott, Wade Sprayberry, Mike Thomason and the Union County Road Department for their contributions to the gym.

After moving outside for the ribbon-cutting ceremony, the festivities transitioned back indoors as the Purple Gym played host to the building's first basketball shot, taken by Union County native Brad McAfee.

After putting the ball through the hoop for the first time in the new facilities, Paris and Union County Recreation Department employees hosted a tour of the center, which features two gyms and concessions on the bottom floor and Rec Department offices upstairs.

The Sports Center is now open to the public Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Hope House honors founding member Evelyn Ueltzen



(L-R): Hope House Board Members Lorri Burks, Mary Colwell, Ken Engle, Eric Wood, Evelyn Ueltzen, Evelyn Miller, and Terry Stuart. Not pictured is Board Member Liz Schellingerhoudt and Executive Director Pam Alexander.

Hope House's founding member, Evelyn Ueltzen, recently stepped down from its board of directors after 10 years of exemplary volunteer service. Hope House is a faith based, non-profit, organization that provides assistance with the basic necessities of life to Union County residents, transients, and homeless populations who are in critical need. The organization began in September 2009 under the umbrella of the former Union County Ministerial Alliance. Evelyn attended that first meeting and has led the organization through the last 10+ years of operation. At Hope House, we endeavor to be a hope to those who are vulnerable or in need (Matthew 25:44 - 45

"They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?' He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'")

The Hope House Board of Directors would like to thank Evelyn for the countless hours and endless responsibilities she has accepted over the last decade. In addition to being a founding member of Hope House, she has served as the chairman, secretary, and most recently, treasurer for the Hope House Board. She, along with others has coordinated and facilitated Hope House's largest fund raiser, The Super

Chef Showdown, held each March at Blairsville's First United Methodist Church.

Since their humble beginning, Hope House has helped thousands of individuals and families by awarding many dollars to help its clients with electricity, propane and rent. Hope House receives no federal or state funds, but rather relies entirely on the donations of churches, businesses, and individuals. In 2019, HH awarded over \$53,000.00 to Union County residents who needed help with rent, utilities, and other basic needs.

"For to this end we toil and struggle, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the savior of all people..." 1 Timothy 4:10