Groundbreaking Set for New ABAC Lab Sciences Building

Upperclassmen enrolled in the bachelor's degree in biology can access their research projects 24 hours a day, seven days a week in the new laboratory sciences building which is about to rise from the ground on the north side of the ABAC campus.

Dr. Johnny Evans, Dean of the School of Science and Mathematics, said a groundbreaking for the $8.5 million building will be held at 11:30 a.m. on June 25 at the construction site near Conger Hall.

“Biology majors will have access to the most current technology and techniques in these laboratories,” Evans said. “Upperclassmen will also have access any time of the day or night to complete research projects.”

Evans emphasized that the 20,966 square foot building will be utilized by students across all majors on campus.

“The building will have specialized labs for the science majors, however, all ABAC students will use the general biology, chemistry, and the anatomy and physiology labs while they complete their core requirements,” Evans said. “This is a facility that will engage all ABAC students in studying modern scientific techniques and topics.”

ABAC President David Bridges said the new building would not have been possible without the support of Governor Nathan Deal, members of the General Assembly and the Board of Regents.

“Projects of this nature don’t just happen,” Bridges said. “We have received plenty of help from the Governor and legislators as well as Chancellor Hank Huckaby and his staff. We are very fortunate to be able to see this project come to fruition.”

Bridges also directed special thanks to ABAC Foundation Chair Lynn Lovett and the Foundation Trustees.

“Seven million dollars of this project will come from the state through general obligation bonds, Continued on page 3

Georgia Museum of Agriculture Offers July Workshops for Kids

Children from four to 11 years old can choose from five different workshops in July that offer hands-on activities, games, and crafts through Camp Wiregrass at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village at ABAC.

Camp Director Kelly Scott said that Camp Wiregrass provides a fun, interactive and educational environment in a unique setting. Each workshop session offers age appropriate activities and themes.

To register for any session of Camp Wiregrass, interested persons can e-mail Scott at museumcamp@abac.edu or register online at www.abac.edu/museum/kids-camp.

Registrations close two weeks prior to each workshop, and space is limited. Discounts are available for siblings, ABAC employees, and Friends of the Museum.

The workshops are $30 per person except for the two-day workshop, “Sew a Friend,” which is $55 per person. The price includes snacks and supplies with programming from 8:30-11:30 a.m.

“The Revolution is Coming” on July 2 is geared for 8-10 year-olds in celebration of Independence Day. Campers will actually join Continued on page 2
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the Museum’s militia. “One Room School” on July 7 will allow campers ages 6-8 years old an opportunity to experience a typical day in a one-room schoolhouse. “Sew a Friend,” a two-day workshop on July 9-10, allows campers to create a doll of their very own. Previous experience in sewing is not required.

Use your wits to solve puzzles and decipher riddles as participants compete in a heart-thumping scavenger hunt through the late 1800s and early 1900s with the “Amazing Race Georgia Historic Style” on July 14. This workshop is for children ages 8-10.

“Games and Traditional Toys” on July 16, for children of all ages, is a workshop which focuses on childhood play before TV and video games. Come play old favorites as well as learn a few “new” games from the 1800s. Campers will also create their own old-fashioned toys to take home.

For more information on the upcoming summer workshops, interested persons can contact Scott at (229) 391-5221, via e-mail at museumcamp@abac.edu, or visit the website www.abac.edu/museum/kids-camp.

Local Artisans Can Qualify for New Exhibit at GMA
Area artisans will have an opportunity to have their work showcased in a specially-curated exhibit which opens July 16 at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village at ABAC. The Best of Tiftarea Artisans is open to professional and hobby artisans ages 18 and up from Tift and surrounding counties.

Basketry, photography, pottery, fiber art, woodwork, paintings and drawings, and handcrafted jewelry will all be considered for this exhibit, which is presented in tandem with the Museum partner group, Tiftarea Artisans. A panel of judges will evaluate up to four submitted digital images per artisan and determine which pieces will be selected to become a part of the new exhibit.

Once the final exhibit is in place, the panel of judges will select the top three artisans who will receive recognition and cash prizes totaling $475 provided by Tiftarea Artisans during the exhibit’s opening reception on July 16. Most of the works on display will be made available for purchase during this time.

All eligible artisans are invited to apply by submitting up to four high-quality digital images of their work. There is a submission fee of $5 per image. Images for submission can be e-mailed to entries@tiftareaartisans.org. The submission fee must be mailed to Tiftarea Artisans, Attention: Exhibit Entry, PO Box 7227, Tifton, GA 31793.

Images of all submissions and the accompanying fees must be received by June 30. Artisans whose work has been accepted for participation in the exhibit will be notified by e-mail. Artwork selected for the exhibit must be delivered to the Gallery of the Museum by 4 p.m. on July 14.

The opening reception for The Best of Tiftarea Artisans is set for 6 p.m. on July 16. Local food bites and local musicians will be on tap for the opening reception. The exhibit will remain on display at the GMA Gallery until Nov. 3.

For more information, contact GMA Assistant Director and Curator Polly Huff at phuff@abac.edu.

Remaining Orientation Dates: June 26 • July 10 • July 17 • August 7

ABAC Baseball Player Named to All District Team
Caleb Slaughter, the top hitter on the baseball team at ABAC this year, has been selected for the East Central All District Team. He was one of six players from Georgia to make the team, which covers all National Junior College Athletic Association colleges in Georgia and Tennessee.

A freshman outfielder/first baseman from Cochran, Slaughter hit .349 for the Stallions this year. He led the team with 60 hits, scored 35 runs, and collected two doubles, two triples, and two home runs. He knocked in 25 runs and had 13 stolen bases. He had an on base percentage of .412.

“Caleb learned a lot about how to hit college pitching in his freshman season,” ABAC Coach Brandon Reeder said. “He has the tools to be a special player.”

An imposing figure at the plate with his 6-foot-4, 220-pound frame, Slaughter finished in the top 10 in the Georgia Collegiate Athletic Association in batting average, hits, and home runs.

“He became more selective at the plate and attacked the ball more as the season went along,” Reeder said. “I look for him to hit in the middle of our lineup next season and be a league leader in RBIs.

“Caleb doesn’t back down, and it seemed like he was always up to bat with the game on the line. That experience will be good for him in the future as we work toward winning a conference championship next season.”
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...and we certainly appreciate that,” Bridges said. “The remainder of the project will be funded by the ABAC Foundation which shows yet again how crucial Foundation support is to this institution. The trustees really came through for us in a time when we needed them the most.”

ABAC Director of Capital Planning Melvin Merrill said International City Builders from Warner Robins was selected through a bid process to construct the building. The Georgia State Finance and Investment Commission will manage the construction process.

“It’s a very compact building,” Merrill, who recently retired from ABAC but now works part time in the capital planning position, said. “It is designed to be very efficient. It has an unbelievable amount of usefulness per square foot.”

Merrill said the building will contain eight laboratories focusing on general biology, microbiology, molecular biology, general chemistry, tissue culture, organic chemistry, and anatomy/physiology. Preparation rooms will also support each lab. Several areas in the building are specifically designed for study and discussion among students.

“Because of the nature of the building, it has a very extensive heating, air, ventilating, plumbing, and electrical system,” Merrill said. Evans believes the building is an indication of things to come at ABAC.

“This building is the first step in preparing the School of Science and Mathematics to be a foundation for the growth of ABAC,” Evans said. “This is a lab facility only, and as ABAC grows, this will be phase one of a science and mathematics complex.

“It will provide an attractive facility for incoming students, and I think it will be a deciding factor for students to choose ABAC.”

ABAC is the only college or university south of Macon in the University System of Georgia to experience enrollment growth in each of the last two fall semesters. The bachelor’s degree in biology has been extremely popular since it became a part of the ABAC curriculum in the 2011 fall term.

Evans said some classrooms in 63-year-old Gray Hall will be used for mathematics courses but the first floor labs will all be replaced by the modern labs in the new building.

“All the modern equipment for studying genetics, molecular biology and microbiology will be available for our students,” Evans said. “The tissue culture lab will be used to prepare plant samples for study.”

Merrill said construction of the facility should be completed by July, 2016.
Independence Day Celebration

Friday
July 3, 2015
6:30PM - 9:00PM

Enjoy good food, a spectacular fireworks show and a celebration of our veterans in a family-oriented environment!

Featuring
The Plath Family Band

For more information, call (229) 391-5205 or visit our website at www.abac.edu/museum
Nick Higginbotham from Lake Park has been selected to receive a Rawlings Gold Glove Award for his stellar play in center field for the Stallions of ABAC. The award is presented on the national level each year to one player from each position on the field in conjunction with the American Baseball Coaches Association.

One of three outfielders in Division I of the National Junior College Athletic Association to receive the national award, Higginbotham collected 131 put outs, five assists and participated in two double plays during the 2015 season. The former Lowndes High School standout did not have an error on the year.

“It’s a real honor,” Higginbotham said. “For me, it’s really a blessing from the Lord because I didn’t know it was coming. I just go out there every day and compete.”

Higginbotham was the captain of the Stallions’ defense, which led the Georgia Collegiate Athletic Association in fielding percentage. ABAC committed the fewest errors in the league. ABAC Coach Brandon Reeder said Higginbotham’s nickname was “The No Fly Zone.”

“It was apparent from the moment Nick took the field for the first time that he would have an immediate impact on our program offensively and defensively,” Reeder said. “He is our motor. He brings the energy every day, and he is an exciting player to watch.”

Batting in the lead off position for the Stallions, Higginbotham hit .260 with six doubles and one triple on the year. He had six stolen bases, scored 36 runs, knocked in 20 runs, and racked up 50 hits. Higginbotham played in all 57 games and had an on base percentage of .385.

“I knew that he would be recognized for his defensive play but I had no idea it would be at the national level,” Reeder said. “To get to work with this kid every day is special. I’ll walk out on the field, and he will be hitting the ball up to himself, putting a glove on, and chasing the ball down. He is a remarkable competitor and itches to get better every day.”

ABAC finished fourth in the league tournament this year after bolting out to a 12-2 start in conference play. Reeder is counting on Higginbotham to be a key to 2016 success as well.

“He is going to be a center piece for next year’s team,” Reeder said. “There are only a handful of players in this league who can impact the game on offense, defense, and running the bases. ‘Higgy’ is one of them. He’s the kind of kid you root for, and he never disappoints you with his effort.”

Higginbotham said he is trying to stay in shape this summer by working on his hitting.

“Offense is a puzzle,” Higginbotham said. “You have to continually piece it together.”

Other members of the Gold Glove Team were Braxton Shetley, a pitcher for Guilford (N.C.) Tech; Trevor Denton, a catcher for Pitt (N.C.); Tanner Foerschler, a first baseman for Kansas City (Kans.); Cole Freeman, a second baseman for Delgado (La.); John Mastrangelo, a third baseman for Harford (Md.); Riley Delgado, a shortstop for Columbia (Tenn.) State; Johnny Balsamo, an outfielder for Dodge City (Kans.); and Chet Niehaus, an outfielder for Alabama Southern.