

News

A mother seeks changes to make 30A safer

By PASHA CARROLL
SUN REPORTER

A mother continues to search for some meaning in the untimely death of her only child.

Joseph Eddy, 24, died Dec. 16, 2004 when his Ford F150 crashed into the back of a parked commercial tractor truck and flatbed trailer.

Since the sunny December morning, time has stood still for his mother, Jacqueline Parks. Christmas decorations still hang

in her Blue Mountain Beach home and her son's shoes are still lined neatly in front of his dresser.

And while she will never know why her son died, she knows she doesn't want anyone else to die if it can be prevented.

That is why she filed a wrongful death lawsuit against the driver, Ricky Waters, the company for which he was employed, Guntersville Fabrication and Sprinkler, and Brice Developments, the developers the equipment was

being delivered for.

It is her hopes that those responsible will take accountability for Eddy's death.

Parks contends that because of the time and place of the delivery vehicle it created a high risk for impact. The suit also alleges that Waters failed to take precautionary measures, such as road cones, to minimize the risk of impact.

"This is not just a lawsuit over the tragic loss of a young man, but is also

about provisions," Dennis Brannon, Parks' attorney said.

"This is more than just a lawsuit for damages," Brannon said. "We have to find something positive out of this."

In the struggle to come to terms with the death of her son's, Parks is seeking an ordinance that could have saved her sons life.

During the Jan. 25 Board of County Commissioners meeting, the board instructed Walton County

Planning Department to draft an ordinance that makes provisions for construction vehicles. The provisions would require designated parking off the right of way.

The ordinance, first brought before the board at the March 22 meeting, requires developments to have parking provisions for construction vehicles before any development order is approved and a public hearing has been scheduled for April 26.

Results from the March 22 Board of County Commissioners

Approved

- Carson Oaks - final plat approval
- Laurel Grove Phase III - final plat approval
- Eagle's Landing at Inlet Beach - final plat approval
- Cedar Woods at Water-Color - final plat approval
- Lakewood Development - final plat approval
- Ordinance to establish Somerset as a Community Development District
- Amendment to the county investment policy to provide greater flexibility in investments

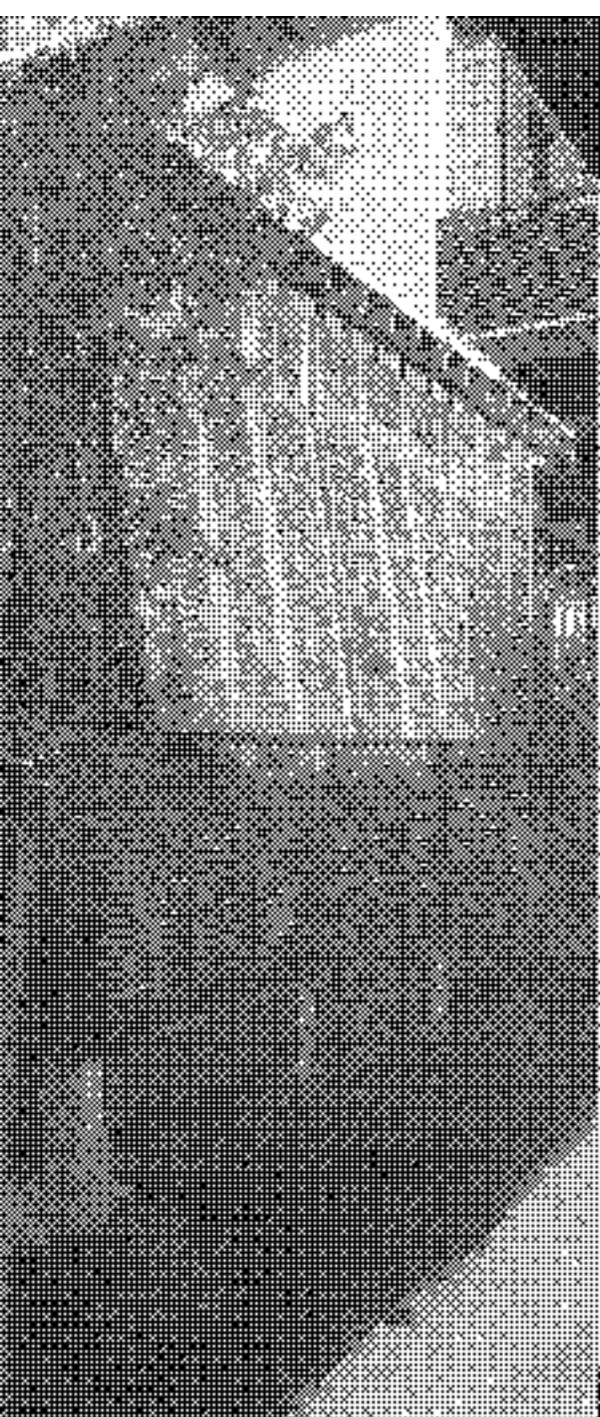
- Execution of the Joint Participation Agreement with Florida Department of Transportation for the County Road 83-A/Bay Loop Road Project
 - New compactor for the Walton County landfill - \$430,275
 - New 4-wheel drive hydraulic excavator for Walton County Public Works - \$159,113
 - Post Arts Quest Flags for the 17th annual event
 - National Crime Victims' Rights Week proclamation
 - To pave a portion of Lancelot Road in Mossy

- Head for Spectraflex, Inc.
 - To apply for a grant for a new library bookmobile
 - Emergency Management Preparedness Assistance Grant totaling \$128,365
 - Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan
 - Interlocal Agreement for Dispatch Services with South Walton Fire District
 - Florida Department of Environmental Protection Hurricane Recovery Grant for dune restoration - \$5,570,000
 - Schippers Marine contract changed to include

- reconstruction of the last two accesses damaged in Hurricane Ivan
 - County Road 283 Realignment at U.S. Highway 331
 - Designation of portion of U.S. 98 as "Henry Koerber Memorial Boulevard"
 - Lease agreement between Walton County and Charles S. Ryan for commercial property in Freeport
 - States Attorney agreement for prosecution of county ordinances
 - Increase by \$5 for boat launch, dog tag and beach permit fees

- Sugar Sands also known as Lehigh Development Order
 - Solicitation of private sector proposals for development at Mossy Head industrial Park
- Committees and boards**
 - Committee was formed to survey and nix the unnecessary crosswalks, signage and speed bumps on old U.S. Highway 98
 - Committee formed to look at lighting issues

Please see County Page A6



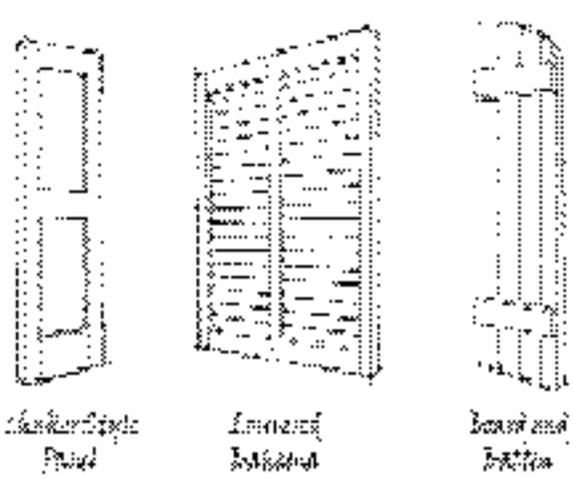
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News

Commissioners pass construction-parking ordinance

By PASHA CARROLL
SUN REPORTER

Walton County Commissioners passed an ordinance on April 26 that will require a construction vehicle parking plan to be a part of major development plans in South Walton.

"It is bitter-sweet," Jacqueline Parks said about commissioners' unanimous vote to adopt the ordinance. The ordinance requires the designation of construction site employee parking and prohibits parking in right-of-ways at construction site.

Parks' son, Joseph Eddy, died after his pickup collided with a construction vehicle parked on County Road 30A in December.

County Commissioner Cindy Meadows, whose district the ordinance will mostly affect, lobbied for action since the accident.

"I was very pleased that it passed," Meadows said. "It is going to go a long way with the problems."

Jimmie Hinze, Director of the Center of Construction Safety and Loss Control at University of Florida's College of Design, Construction and Planning, endorsed the ordinance in a letter presented to the board.

"I suspect this ordinance could become a model for the rest of the state, and possible the nation," Hinze wrote.

Hinze said the ordinance would help maintain a buffer between the construction site and traveling public. His letter states the "realistic" ordinance will "save lives and reduce injuries."

The next hurdle will be enforcement of the ordinance, Dennis Brannon, Parks' attorney, said.

"It comes down to enforcement," Brannon said.

"It is going to be a lot stronger than getting a ticket, when a developer sees their project shut down," he said.

College courses headed to South Walton High School

By JOYCE OWEN
SUN REPORTER

DEFUNIAK SPRINGS — With the promise of \$300,000 from the St. Joe Community Foundation, the Walton County School District plans to establish a pilot program that will offer college-level classes at South Walton High School.

The St. Joe Community Foundation will provide the funds over a three-year period.

Walton County School Superintendent Carlene Anderson said the start of any new educational program always depended on

the two schools prevented students and faculty from fully participating.

With the grant from St. Joe, the college will hire teachers that will be stationed at SWHS.

"Having college faculty at South Walton is going to make a difference," White said.

"This South Walton High School pilot program will capitalize on OWC's long list of successful partnerships with Walton County and provide a number of accelerated studies opportunities for college-bound students. We are delighted to be a part of this innovative partnership and look forward to the positive difference it will make for this county," she said.

Eligible 10th, 11th and 12th grade students can chose from dual enrollment and honors coursework.

The program will offer advanced placement courses taught by high school teachers with special training. OWC faculty members with a master's or doctoral degree in the subject area will teach college-level dual enrollment courses.

The college will also conduct workplace and off-site training and development activities for teachers. The college and school district will offer college success skills at Walton County high schools.

"Walton County School District is excited about this partnership," said Anderson. "This venture will enhance curricular offerings, increasing the opportunity for collegiate students. We welcome the community support and look forward to increased collaboration with Okaloosa-Walton College.

"We are ready to implement the program and get this in the classroom," said Anderson.

With the support of the foundation, the school district can focus on developing a program that will bring college faculty to the school rather than have students travel to Okaloosa-Walton College for classes, according to Anderson.

OWC Senior College Vice President Dr. Jill White said the partnership to provide additional educational opportunities between OWC and Walton County had always been productive.

There was just one problem — distance.

The amount of time spent traveling between

the two schools prevented students and faculty from fully participating.

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