

## Be wary of scams while shopping, enjoying holidays

The holiday season is a joyous time of year filled with giving — and taking, unfortunately. The holidays present an opportunity for scammers and thieves. The Georgia Office of the Attorney General offers these tips to help consumers protect themselves.

- Be cautious when shopping online. Scammers may set up fake websites with merchandise listed at below-market prices to lure people into paying for these items that won't be delivered.

To avoid scams, make purchases from reputable, well-known websites. Also, look for "https" on every page you visit, especially before entering any personal or financial information. Https denotes that the site is secure and encrypted.

If you're not familiar with a site, try a search for the company name combined with the word "complaint," "review" or "scam" to see what others have to say.

If you are scammed, you can file a report with the Federal Bureau of Consumer Protection at [www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov).

- Use a credit card. Making a purchase with a credit card instead of cash, check or debit card provides more protection against fraud. If the transaction is fraudulent or someone used your card without permission, you can report the fraud to your credit card company and the most you will be liable for is \$50.

- Keep your packages safe. To avoid having a parcel stolen from your doorstep, consider requiring a signature or have the package sent to an address where someone will be available to accept it.

- Guard against identity theft. Check your bank and credit card accounts frequently and look for transactions that aren't familiar. Keep receipts and check them against your statements. If you find a fraudulent purchase, contact your bank or credit card company immediately.

- Watch out for malicious links. Be wary about opening attachments or links to greeting cards, advertisements for deals or notifications about package delivery problems.

The links could be from scammers looking for personal or financial information or trying to get you to download malware. It's safer to go directly to the retailer's website to look for deals or check on packages.



"That's not what I meant when I said we should support the community and shop at home."

## What's next for the old mill site

After the city's announcement that we had submitted the request for rezoning the former mill site property by The Port of St. Marys LLC, to the Coastal Regional Commission of Georgia for its review, I have had several questions about the process of this long anticipated economic project. It seems an appropriate time just to recap where we are and what the next steps will be.

About a year ago, the bankruptcy trustee for the property announced it had accepted a tentative offer from a firm to purchase all of the mill site property.

The firm subsequently hired a development company that spent many months engaged in a due diligence process to determine whether the property was viable for its planned development.

It has now concluded that step and determined that to move forward it requires a zoning change from planned development mixed use to



**John Morrissey**  
Guest columnist

planned development industrial under section 110-68 of the City of St. Marys zoning ordinance.

Because of the anticipated size of the project, value, and the amount of land impacted, a development of regional impact (DRI) has been created by the Port of St. Marys LLC.

The city is required to have the Coastal Regional Commission of Georgia review the request and approve the DRI before the city takes any further action. The commission has 30

days to review the project, notify affected parties, which include neighboring jurisdictions, impacted agencies and other state entities, then issue its report. That report will provide recommendation to city officials to help with the review of the zoning application.

At that point the developer and the Camden County Joint Development Authority will host public roundtables during which the developer will provide details on the project and citizens will be able to express comments.

Those first sessions will occur from 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, Dec. 5, and from 6 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 15, at the St. Marys Elementary School with the possibility of another session in January.

The City Council will not make any decision regarding the zoning request until the St. Marys Planning Commission has fully vetted the request and until public

comment has been heard and considered.

I remain optimistic that we are finally coming to the point where a critical economic development project that will create jobs and stimulate our local economy is within reach. It has been a long process and is not yet complete, but we are closing in.

For those of you interested in reading the details of the zoning application by The Port of St. Marys LLC and their initial plans for development, it can be found on the city's website home page at [www.stmarysga.gov](http://www.stmarysga.gov).

We have all been eager to see this valuable property developed in a way that will boost our economy and still protect our wildlife habitats and our environmentally sensitive marshes. That will continue to be our focus and our priority.

John Morrissey is the mayor of St. Marys. He can be contacted at [john.morrissey@stmarysga.gov](mailto:john.morrissey@stmarysga.gov) or (912) 510-4041.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Spaceport can create a positive impact for county

Dear Editor,

While groups from outside Camden have recently joined the discussion, Spaceport Camden has been the topic of local conversation over the past three years.

In 2013, the Camden County Chamber of Commerce led local leaders in the Atlanta and Washington, D.C., fly-ins to open a discussion about a spaceport with state and federal representatives.

Camden's space history started in the 1960s at the former Thiokol property, now owned by Union Carbide, and the initiatives in the 2011 NASA Strategic Plan encouraged diversifying Camden's economic base. This 2011 change in NASA's focus involved:

- developing competitive opportunities for the commercial community to provide best value products and services to low Earth orbit and beyond.

- facilitating the transfer of NASA technology and engage in partnerships with other government agencies, industry and international entities to generate U.S. commercial activity and

other public benefits.

While the profitability of commercial aerospace has been challenging, a timely advantage emerged on Nov. 16 in the surprising bipartisan passage by the U.S. House of Representatives of the bicameral U.S. Commercial Space Launch Competitiveness Act. This broad support crosses political boundaries and provides a foundation for continued growth and expansion of commercial space applications.

Working in a high-performing school system for 20 years as a youth apprenticeship/career specialist exposed me to the challenges our graduates face.

I observed many leave Camden to complete higher degrees, along with those who used limited technical training to try and enter the local workforce. Many graduates desire to remain or return but had to yield to available opportunities elsewhere. Our local investment in education is often lost to other communities that benefit from our graduates settling in areas with a more diversified employment base.

I am encouraged about the economic and positive environmental impact the spaceport can create. Georgia leads the nation in aerospace

research and development. In 2011, there were over 88,000 workers and an additional 153,000 indirect and induced jobs related to aerospace in Georgia, representing a \$50.9 billion total economic output.

Georgia's average wage rate among aerospace industry workers in 2011 was 66 percent higher than the state's overall average rate and each state aerospace job supports 1.72 additional jobs.

The blessing in the proposed site is the opportunity to repair a past mistake and honor those lost in 1971. The environmental damage in the past can be effectively contained as well as retain in reserve nearly 10,000 acres. That will protect the coastal beauty that is fond to so many Camden residents.

The Camden County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors have supported the spaceport effort since 2013 and continue to strongly support economic opportunities that enhance head of household employment options, business development and economic diversity.

The board is confident in the leadership of Steve Howard and the Camden County Board of Commissioners.

The board encourages

local residents to participate in the public meeting from 5-8 p.m. on Monday, Dec. 7, at the Camden Community Recreation Center. Supporters intend to wear red in support of the spaceport and welcome others to do the same.

*Rachel M. Baldwin, chair  
Camden County  
Chamber of Commerce*

### Spaceport isn't the best idea for Camden County

Dear Editor,

Some shocking information about a toxic waste dump near Todd Creek was revealed at a local meeting this week. Union Carbide contractors were there to discuss a permit modification for the dump near Harriets Bluff, where a rocket launch site is proposed.

The permit modification request is to add pollutants to the permit, because more pollutants are being detected in the toxic waste dump. Among these is 4 - Chloroaniline, Dibenzenefuran, 1,4 - dichlorobenzene and flourene, all of which may have negative effects on human health, according to the Environmental Protection Agency and the World Health Organization.

## Tribune & Georgian

P.O. Box 6960 — 206 Osborne Street  
St. Marys, Georgia 31558  
(912) 882-4927 — Fax (912) 882-6519  
Publication Number (086-640)  
ISSN Number (1551-8353)

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The Tribune & Georgian is published with pride weekly for the people of Camden County by Community Newspapers Inc., Athens, Ga. We believe that strong newspapers build strong communities — "Newspapers get things done!" Our primary goal is to publish distinguished and profitable community-oriented newspapers. This mission will be accomplished through the teamwork of professionals dedicated to truth, integrity, loyalty, quality and hard work.

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