

Georgia Recovers Bus makes stop in Calhoun

Brandi Owczarz
staff@gordongazettega.com

On Friday afternoon, Sept. 11, 2026, the Georgia Council for Recovery visited Calhoun as part of the Georgia Recovers in Communities Bus Tour 2026, traveling around the state to bring the hope that recovery is possible and to recognize the month of September as National Recovery Month.

According to the Georgia Council for Recovery website, throughout

National Recovery Month, the Georgia Recovers Bus will make dozens of stops in communities across Georgia. The Georgia Recovers Bus Tour is an official State of Georgia National Recovery Month Event and the Georgia Council for Recovery is the exclusive statewide partner with the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities for this

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State, regional and local officials and leaders participated in the Georgia Recovers in Communities Bus Tour program on Friday, Sept. 11, 2026.

One severely injured in I-75 crash in Gordon on Wednesday



Brandi Owczarz
staff@gordongazettega.com

The Georgia State Patrol has released their preliminary investigative findings into a single-vehicle crash involving a tractor trailer that occurred on I-75 South in Gordon County on Wednesday.

According to the GSP, just after 2 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 9, 2026, a trooper from Georgia State Patrol Post 43 in Calhoun was dispatched to a single-vehicle crash on southbound Interstate 75, just north of Exit 310 in Gordon County.

The preliminary investigation indicates that a 2019 Freightliner Cascadia commercial motor vehicle (CMV), pulling a 2015 Utility dry van and driven by 58-year-old Arthur Lee McLendon of Washington, Ga., was traveling southbound in the center lane of I-75 when the vehicle veered to the right and exited the west side of the interstate.

The CMV continued traveling southbound and struck a culvert with its right-side wheels and undercarriage before striking a fence. The vehicle then entered a wooded area, where its front struck several small trees before striking a larger tree. McLendon was completely ejected from the CMV as a result of the crash. McLendon was transported from the scene by Life Force Air Medical, with unspecified injuries. His condition is unknown at press time.

The crash investigation remains ongoing, with assistance from the Georgia Department of Public Safety's Commercial Vehicle Enforcement (CVE) unit.

Tonight at The GEM! MARGARITATOWN Jimmy Buffett Tribute takes the stage

CONTRIBUTED

Sail away with Nero Simon & The Sunsetters as they bring their high-energy, beach-soaked show MARGARITATOWN to The GEM Theater stage for one unforgettable night of coastal anthems and island vibes. This feel-good tribute celebrates the timeless music of Jimmy Buffett, Kenny Chesney, Bob Marley, Zac Brown, and more — plus a few original Trop Rock favorites that capture that endless-summer spirit.

Saturday, Sept. 12, 2026 beginning at 7:30 p.m. The GEM is located at 114 North Wall Street in downtown Calhoun. For tickets, visit calhouncountygemtheatre.org

For emergency traffic and weather alerts, make sure you follow the Gordon Gazette on Facebook and Instagram!

Independent CDL academy opening with goal of providing safer drivers on roads

Brandi Owczarz
staff@gordongazettega.com

With commercial truck driving receiving a lot of attention these days due to questionable operations and records of unsafe driving, Shawn Gresham, a 17-year veteran truck driver with a clean driving record every year he's been in service, has taken his plight to ensure drivers are properly trained.

Gresham has founded Trucking Life Academy, expected to open in Dalton mid-October 2026 upon final licensing from the Georgia Department of Driver's Services, where those who want to begin a career driving tractor trailers can train to receive their certification for a Commercial Driver's License (CDL).

The planning and implementation of the independent academy has been a labor of love not only for Gresham, but for the dozens of donors who have supported the endeavor, with donations of office equipment to cash to discounted training grounds and more from supporters across the United States, especially in Dalton.

Gresham envisions his school to fill a gap he sees in commercial driver training; his goal is to make sure all of his students receive the correct training to become safe drivers on the road.

According to statistics from the National Safety Council, in 2025, there were a total of 5,340 people that died in large-truck crashes nationwide, with 62 – 70 percent of those killed



being people in other passenger vehicles. In that same year, more than 161,000 people were injured in large-truck crashes.

"They are just not getting correct training, in my opinion," said Brown. "There are so many truck drivers that are unsafe and don't know how to drive a truck properly. They cause so many fatal accidents. I don't want to just take someone's money and give them a CDL. My goal is to offer better training."

Chris Brown, a local businessman who owns Brown's Diesel & Towing, which serves Gordon, Whitfield and Catoosa counties, has become a huge supporter of Gresham's academy, donating a truck and trailer to the school. He said driver safety is the reason why he's invested in the program.

"To be honest, so many drivers have not had correct training and desperately need

correct training," said Brown. "Just a few months ago, I got a call early one morning where a driver had pulled up in a tractor trailer, going to a dock, and he went back up into the dock and ran off in the ditch with a loaded trailer. I pulled him out and about two and a half hours later, the company called me back out because the same driver I helped get back in the dock, pulled out of the dock, crossed the street to try to turn, and ran into the woods, blocking the whole road for more than 30 minutes. I had to pull this same driver out twice in one day."

Brown estimated that the driver had been on the road no more than six months.

"I've seen truckers just run over people; they pull up to make a turn and just run over cars. It's every day. So, in talking to Shawn

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The Bettye Butler Memorial Unity Run is just over a week away...get registered!

Brandi Owczarz
staff@gordongazettega.com

There is still time to register for the greatest run on earth! The United Way of Gordon County's 33rd annual Bettye Butler Memorial Unity Run 5k is just a few weeks away, set for Tuesday, Sept. 22, 2026.

This year's theme is 'Under the Big Top. Presented by Hamilton Health Calhoun, the annual fundraising event for United Way of Gordon County raises money for their Gordon County Community Partner Agencies while allowing attendees to enjoy a family-friendly community event.

New this year is the Community Cup Challenge. Organizers are making the Unity Run more fun than ever by letting participants create or join a Community Cup Team. Invite your family, friends, coworkers, neighbors, church members, teammates or civic group to participate together. You don't have to be the fastest—you just have to bring your

people together. Compete for awards including: Community Cup Champion, Best Team Spirit, Best Dressed Team and Top Fundraising Team.

Also new this year is chip timing. The Unity Run will now feature chip timing for a more accurate race experience. Runners official race time begins when they cross the starting line timing mat—not when the starting horn sounds. Participants must cross the starting line by 6:35 p.m. to receive an official chip time.

Race registration is now open! Be sure to sign up racers of any age for the Greatest Run on Earth! Registration is open



until 6 p.m. on September 22nd, but a discount applies to anyone who registers by September 11th. If you are interested in becoming a sponsor, there is still time! Check out United Way of Gordon County's website at www.gordoncountyunitedway.org or email cnorman@gordoncountyunitedway.org for more details.

OBITUARIES

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Sept. 16, 2026 from 10 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. at Thomas Funeral Home.

A graveside service will be held on Wednesday, Sept. 16, 2026 at 2 p.m. in the Georgia National Cemetery with military honors.

You may leave the family online condolences at www.thomasfuneralhomecalhoun.com

Thomas Funeral Home has proudly been entrusted with the care of Thomas Zygmund Sobolewski.



Juana Lopez Vasquez

Juana Maria Lopez Vasquez, 51, of Calhoun, passed away on Monday, Sept. 7, 2026. She was born on Jan. 5, 1975.

She is survived by her son, Joshua Dave Garcia; daughters, Heidy Jeaneth Garcia Lopez, Ana Maria Garcia Lopez and Luis Enrique Meza Rivas, Isabella Perez Lopez; husband, Alvaro Perez; brother, David Matzir and Sandra Matzir; sister, Libna Isabela Lopez Sontay and Andres Gilberto Vicente Sontay; grandchildren, Leilani Martina Meza Garcia, Luis Santiago Meza Garcia, Kailany Roxy Meza Garcia; other relatives, Deggerth Guillermo Vicente Lopez, Giannitsa Rigoberta Vicente Lopez, Deuel Faidel Vicente Lopez, Mary Isabella Vicente Lopez, Josue A. Ixmayer.



Juana was loved by all that knew her and her presence will forever be in their hearts. Her favorite Bible verse was Philippians 1:21, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

The family will receive friends on Sunday, Sept. 13, 2026, from 12 Noon until 2 p.m. at Max Brannon and Sons Funeral Home.

Funeral services will be held on Sunday, Sept. 13, 2026, at 2 p.m. from the Chapel of Max Brannon and Sons Funeral Home with Pastor Rene Hernandez officiating. Burial will follow in Chandler Cemetery.

The Brannon family and staff are honored to serve the family of Juana Maria Lopez Vasquez.

"Descainsa en Paz Mama, Hasta que volvamos a encontrainos." Ana, Isa, Joshua, Heidy, Martina

Juana Maria López Vásquez, de 51 años, de Calhoun, Georgia, falleció el lunes 7 de septiembre de 2026. Nació el 5 de enero de 1975.

Le sobreviven su hijo, Joshua Dave García; sus hijas, Heidy Jeaneth García López, Ana María García López y Luis Enrique Meza Rivas, Isabella Pérez López; su marido, Álvaro Pérez; su hermano, David Matzir y Sandra Matzir; su hermana, Libna Isabela López Sontay y Andrés Gilberto Vicente Sontay; nietos, Leilani Martina Meza García, Luis Santiago Meza García, Kailany Roxy Meza García; otros familiares, Deggerth Guillermo Vicente López, Giannitsa Rigoberta Vicente López, Deuel Faidel Vicente López, Mary Isabella Vicente López, Josue A. Ixmayer.

Juana era amada por todos los que la conocían y su presencia estará para siempre en sus corazones. Su versículo bíblico favorito fue Filipenses 1:21, "Porque para mí vivir es Cristo, y morir es ganancia."

La familia recibirá a sus amigos el domingo 13 de septiembre de 2026, de 12:00 a 14:00 en la funeraria Max Brannon and Sons.

Los servicios funerarios se celebrarán el domingo 13 de septiembre de 2026 a las 14:00 horas en la Capilla de la Funeraria Max Brannon and Sons, con el pastor René Hernández oficiando. El entierro seguirá en el cementerio Chandler.

La familia y el personal Brannon se sienten honrados de servir a la familia de Juana María López Vásquez.

"Descainsa en Paz Mama, Hasta que volvamos a encontrainos." Ana, Isa, Joshua, Heidy, Martina



Faye Worley

Faye Goswick Worley, 88, of Calhoun, passed away on Sept. 9, 2026. She was born in Gordon County on Jan. 11, 1938, to the late Miller and Thelma Overton Goswick.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband Louie



Worley; brother, Therrell Goswick; daughter, Leisa Holbrook; and grandson, Matthew Kirkpatrick.

She was retired from Southeastern Freight Lines. Faye was a member of Calhoun First United Methodist Church.

She is survived by: daughters, Tracye Linn (Ricky), Sara Angland, Marissa Yancey (Tom), Kippy Tankersley (Duke), and Polly Brown (Jeff); grandchildren, Conner Bailey (Becky), Jason Parrott, Shane Parrott (Resa), Carly Weaver (Nathan), Craig Harris (Emily), Caleb Faw, Celeste Holbrook, Jack Holbrook, Kristin Owens, Mandi Blagg (Eric), Meaghan Nelson (Ricky), Emily Didrick (Jarrett) and Mallory Palmer; ten great-grandchildren; and six great-great-grandchildren. Several nieces and nephews also survive.

The funeral service was held on Friday, Sept. 11, 2026, at 11 a.m. from the chapel of Thomas Funeral Home with Rev. Jeremy Noffsinger officiating. Burial followed in Fain Cemetery.

Pallbearers were Chandler Bailey, Conner Bailey, Eric Blagg, Jarrett Didrick, Caleb Faw, Jack Holbrook Ricky Nelson, and Shane Parrott.

The family would like to thank Traci Clements and her caring staff of Morning Pointe Assisted Living and Tapestry Hospice for the wonderful care their mom received. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Family Resource Center - PCA Attn: Angela White P.O. Box 1312 Calhoun, 30703.

You may leave the family online condolences at www.thomasfuneralhomecalhoun.com

Thomas Funeral Home has proudly been entrusted with the care of Faye Goswick Worley.





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CDL

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and learning about his goals for the training side of the Academy, I really respect what he wants to do because that's the aspect you don't see," said Brown. "Most people see the money aspect of running a CDL school; they don't worry about the actual training. They just rush these drivers through, and those are the drivers who kill families."

Brown isn't the only businessman who has donated to the cause, with many of Gresham's supporters coming from the trucking community.

Gresham received an unbelievable deal for a majorly discounted rent on a five-acre training lot in Dalton from Rosedale Group, where he works as a truck driver. The tract of land is where Gresham will conduct the training. Gresham also received a huge discount on large office space inside the Rosedale complex, with a classroom area and private offices for the academy.

"Rosedale requires good drivers as well," said Gresham. "This will be a win-win for the company to have highly trained and qualified drivers right next door."

A friend of Gresham's, who Gresham had trained as a driver and who now owns JC Trucking Business Solutions LLC, also donated a truck. Ideal Leasing Services donated a trailer, giving Gresham's school two trucks and two trailers.

Globe Life – Liberty National Division, The Estep Agencies donated a conference table and other furnishings for the academy.

Touched by all of the donations, including monetary donations from \$10 to hundreds of dollars, Gresham is establishing a Founder's Wall within the academy, where the name of every donor will be placed, honoring the community that built the school.

According to Gresham, classes will be conveniently held over eight weekends, so students can obtain the 160 hours of driving and class time required to become certified to drive a truck. The weekend classes will allow those who want to learn to drive a truck, but need to continue to work in their current career while training, to be able to do so.

Affordable compared to some of the other driving schools, Gresham

plans to make sure none of his driving students hit the road without the proper training to safely transport on the highway.

"One policy I have is, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) requires drivers to master the skill; if you don't master the skill at my academy, you can go to the next class at no charge to continue to get the skill mastered," said Gresham. "I'm not recharging. Because I've been blessed with such low overhead and so many donations, my classes are more economically feasible than other schools and my students are going to stay here and learn the skill."

In August, Gresham had received enough monetary donations to put into place everything he needed to start operations, including insurance and bond.

Gresham wants to make it easy for those interested in driving a truck to be able to do so with the proper training because he himself had a hard time getting into the business.

As many do, Gresham found himself in trouble in his early 20's, with non-violent, non-drug related arrests and time in jail. Deciding that wasn't the life he wanted to live, Gresham performed a 180 and received a Pell Grant to attend Chattahoochee Technical College to get his training to drive a truck. It wasn't easy to get to that eight-week program due to a run-down car that never wanted to start, but Gresham made it work and passed his training. Armed with his CDL, it took Gresham more than six months to get a job due to his arrest background. Rosedale Transport was the company that finally gave him a chance to begin his 17-year career, a career that Gresham has accomplished a clean driving record each year. Superiors were so impressed with his driving record that Gresham became a driver-trainer for the company.

Training drivers over the years has proven to Gresham that the right approach is to make sure all drivers are trained appropriately and thoroughly, even if it means training for a longer amount of time than required.

"I want to make sure the roads are safe," said Gresham. "That starts with the right training for truck drivers."

For more information on Trucking Life Academy, including upcoming classes, visit <https://truckinglifewithshawn.com/>



ABOVE: Chris Brown, a local businessman who owns Brown's Diesel & Towing, which serves Gordon, Whitfield and Catoosa counties, along with his wife, have become huge supporters of Gresham's academy, donating a truck and trailer to the school. BELOW: JC Trucking Business Solutions LLC, also donated a truck to Gresham's academy.

