



Upper Chamber Report

Raegan Weber, Press Director
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Senate Convenes for Second Legislative Day

By Kallarin Richards

The Senate began its second day of business by opening with the traditional Devotion, today delivered by President Pro Tempore Tommie Williams' older brother Pastor Danny Williams of First Baptist Church in Lowndes. Pastor Williams delivered a stirring sermon, emphasizing the need to seek faith during these difficult times in our state and country.

Senator Cecil Staton then took the well to bring attention to Georgia's need for a statewide trauma care system. He shared with his Senate colleagues the recent anniversary of a head-on collision he survived six years ago.

Fortunately, he was only 10 miles away from a trauma care center, which he credits for saving his life. He noted that Georgia's trauma death rate has been as high as 20 percent above the national average due to Georgia's lack of a statewide trauma system, where many rural areas are underserved. Only 30 percent of major traumatic injuries in Georgia are treated in a designated trauma center. Reaching the national average means over 600 lives could be saved.

Minority Leader Robert Brown addressed the Senate in a spirit of bipartisanship, pledging that his party is dedi-

cated to working across the aisle in a spirit of unity to solve the difficult challenges facing Georgia.

The Senate also welcomed the South Cobb High School Marching Band to the chamber today, which has been chosen to represent Georgia at the presidential inauguration in Washington, D.C. next week.

Sen. Steve Thompson presented the band with a resolution honoring their achievement. They were selected by the Presidential Inaugural Committee from more

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Sen. Chip Rogers Sworn In as Senate Majority Leader

By Matt Colvin

State Sen. Chip Rogers (R-Woodstock) was sworn in as Senate Majority Leader Monday on the first day of the 2009 Georgia General Assembly.

have entrusted me to serve as majority leader during this crucial stage in Georgia history," said Sen. Rogers. "We as a legislative body have an enormous responsibility to the taxpayers and remember not to advance our own political interests;

"It is an honor and privilege that my colleagues

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Second Legislative Day (cont'd)



Lt. Gov. Cagle, Sen. Thompson and other area legislators honor the South Cobb High Marching Band with a Senate Resolution.

than 1,300 applicants, and have received over \$150,000 in donations from Georgia citizens to fund their trip.

Earlier that morning, legislators attended the Georgia Chamber of Commerce's annual "Eggs and Issues" breakfast, where Governor Sonny Perdue, Lieutenant Governor Casey Cagle and Speaker Glenn Richardson outlined their legislative agenda for the 2009 Session. Collectively they will focus on the budget, transportation, education, tort reform, taxes and the drought.

The Senate adjourned until Wednesday, January 14, at 9 A.M. □

Sen. Rogers, (cont'd)

rather remember that we work for the individual citizens and we are here to represent their best interests."

Now entering his fourth term in office, Sen. Rogers was elected majority leader by his peers during the Republican caucus elections in November. Senator Rogers now holds the second-highest ranking position in the State Senate. The majority leader is the primary spokesperson for the majority party, often working with the lieutenant governor and president pro tempore to develop policy decisions. The majority leader also sets the calendar for the legislative session.

Sen. Rogers has served the Senate most recently as chairman of the Finance Committee. During his tenure in the Senate, Senator Rogers sponsored and passed a widespread and significant list of legislative accomplishments including the nation's strongest immigration enforcement laws. Senator Rogers has additionally championed identity theft and protection legislation, Georgia's first credit freeze law, Second Amendment protection, and the third strongest dog fighting restrictions in the country. Most recently Senator Rogers authored the "Transparency in Government Act" which requires state expenditures be placed on a

searchable Website so taxpayers can see how their money is spent.

Senator Rogers was also named to several influential committees, including Finance, where



he will now serve as secretary, Committee on Assignments, Administrative Affairs, Banking and Financial Institutions, Economic Development, Insurance and Labor, and Reapportionment and Redistricting. He will serve as an ex-officio member on the powerful Rules and Appropriations committees. □

Please note that the 2009 Legislative Process Dates will be included in future reports upon finalization.

Wednesday, January 14
DAILY NEWS CLIPS

Economy/Budget

State needs to make do

Augusta Chronicle

The Georgia General Assembly opened its latest session Monday, and it's facing the same problem as state residents: not enough money.

So the temptation facing lawmakers is clear: Since tax revenues are down, it seems logical to further tap the taxpayers to keep the budget balanced, right?

Wrong. Wrong, wrong, wrong.

http://chronicle.augusta.com/stories/2009/01/13/edi_507394.shtml

Atlanta leaders insist state shares in its pain

The Brunswick News

As the Georgia General Assembly begins wrestling with a \$2 billion budget shortfall, count on cities like Atlanta holding their hands out and demanding every nickel and dime they can squeeze from a state already strapped for cash. That can be bad for the rest of the state, especially if lawmakers cave in to the requests.

Cities like Atlanta possess far more resources than smaller communities to overcome a negative dollar flow yet still insist that the state and all Georgia taxpayers share their pain. The capital city, forced to lay off employees and close public parks on certain days, ostensibly believes that its needs should be priority No. 1.

http://www.thebrunswicknews.com/open_access/editorial/

Legislature has less to fight over

Albany Herald

One thing about tightening your financial belt — sometimes it makes it easier to get along.

That's the indication, anyway, from the opening day of the General Assembly. Previous sessions have also opened on cordial terms before devolving into spiteful arguments, but this year might be the exception.

Georgia, like nearly every other state, is facing unprecedented fiscal problems. Fortunately, our state is positioned better than, say, California to deal with them after Gov. Sonny Perdue took a proactive approach and ordered state departments to trim spending when revenues started coming in below projections.

<http://www.albanyherald.com/stories/20090113e1.htm>

Cagle may be odd man 'up' on tax

By [Jim Galloway](#)

Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Picture Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle at one end of a teeter-totter.

This is a playground metaphor, but bear with me. It could help you understand the unfortunate connection between the time you waste in your car and a 2010 race for governor that's still 22 months away.

This session, Cagle — one of three GOP candidates — is under pressure to prove both his own effectiveness and his independence from Gov. Sonny Perdue. He also must match wits with his institutional opponent, House Speaker Glenn Richardson.

<http://www.ajc.com/services/content/printedition/2009/01/14/polinsider.html>

At Kohl's job fairs, more than 2,000 people seek work

By [MICHELLE E. SHAW](#)

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

After getting laid off from his retail job in November, Endale Tefera set his sights on finding another.

With 17 years of experience, including managerial positions, the Atlanta resident thought he had a good shot of finding something quickly. Two months later, he's still looking.

On Tuesday, Tefera's search took him to the Hilton Garden Inn Atlanta North Point, in Alpharetta, to a job fair held by Kohl's department store. The job, should he be offered one, would be in Milton, more than 20 miles from his home, but the prospect of a [paycheck](#) outweighs the [commute](#), Tefera said.

http://www.ajc.com/business/content/business/stories//2009/01/14/kohls_job_fair.html

Ga. housing agencies to get job training grants

By [DONNA WILLIAMS LEWIS](#)

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Ten public housing agencies and administrators in Georgia will receive \$871,536 in federal grants to provide job training for low-income people, officials announced Tuesday.

The largest of the U.S. Housing and Urban Development grants go to the state Department of Community Affairs, which will receive \$355,591, and to the Augusta Housing Authority, which gets \$100,582.

http://www.ajc.com/services/content/metro/stories/2009/01/13/georgia_housing_grants.html?cxtype=rss&cxsvc=7&cxcat=13

Developer wants to build casino at Underground

By [RACHEL TOBIN RAMOS](#), [LEON STAFFORD](#)

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Underground Atlanta is ready to roll the dice.

The operator of the downtown attraction said he has brought a proposal to the Georgia Lottery Board for a casino that would fund the HOPE scholarship and bring millions in tax dollars to the city.

http://www.ajc.com/services/content/business/stories/2009/01/13/underground_atlanta_casino.html?cxtype=rss&cxsvc=7&cxcat=6

Shane Co. Files For Bankruptcy

WSBTV.com

Colorado-based jewelry store retailer [Shane Company](#), has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, saying the business suffered a disappointing holiday season.

The company filed paperwork Monday in U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Denver and asked to be able to continue paying its 542 employees in stores in 14 states, including three outlets in Georgia.

The court filings show the company has between \$100 million to \$500 million in estimated assets and liabilities.

The company said it plans to continue business without interruption while it executes a restructuring plan.

Session '09

Eggs and Issues' breakfast with Perdue, Cagle, Richardson

By [Thomas Wheatley](#)

Creative Loafing

Tuesday morning, Gov. Sonny Perdue, Lieutenant Governor Casey Cagle and state House Speaker Glenn Richardson, speaking before a banquet room filled with business heavies, lobbyists and fellow lawmakers, outlined their legislative agendas for the session at the Georgia Chamber of Commerce's annual "Eggs and Issues" breakfast at the Georgia World Congress Center.

There, over plates of eggs, sausage, and some hashbrown-stuffed tomato concoction, the elected officials said that, even with the state nearly \$2 billion in the red, progress would take place.

<http://blogs.creativeloafing.com/freshloaf/2009/01/13/eggs-and-issues-breakfast-with-perdue-cagle-richardson/>

Eggs and Issues Served on Day Two

By Nelson Mullins

Gold Dome Report

Lawmakers returned to the Capitol this morning for Day 2 of the Legislative Session after attending the Georgia Chamber of Commerce's Eggs and Issues Breakfast at the Georgia World Congress Center. At the Breakfast, Governor Perdue, Lt. Governor Cagle and Speaker Richardson provided a few remarks about their respective goals for this year's Session. Otherwise, both the House and Senate had very short days today with neither body taking up any Committee action. While the Senate has named its Committees, the House is still in the process of finalizing appointments to Committees. More on the Breakfast remarks are noted below.

Governor Perdue noted the increase in Georgia's high school graduation rates. Those rates have improved since his tenure in office to more than 75%, up from around 63%. While this increase is an improvement, much work is left to be done. Governor Perdue made clear this morning that improving education was crucial, but the State could not let the local school boards "hamstring" the State. Acknowledging the role that leadership plays in schools, Governor Perdue announced he would like to incorporate a performance bonus of \$10k to school principals who improve their schools' graduation rates, SAT scores and End of Course Tests. This improvement would be based on the school's most recent three-year average. Another education initiative that Governor Perdue will push in his agenda will offer incentives to attract more math and science teachers to the State. New fully-certified math and science teachers will receive the same pay grade as fifth-year teachers. Another \$1,000 annual bonus will be given to elementary school teachers who increase their proficiency in the math and science areas.

http://www.nelsonmullins.com/news/nelson-mullins-newsletter_detail.cfm?id=D253C4CA-0F6D-FDE6-FEAAF4F07992EE85&CFID=132190&CFTOKEN=b11d9f88fa33c529-5EEC5DC1-FFCB-10A1-1812949036497A34

Perdue lists priorities for 2009 session

By Chuck Williams

Columbus Ledger Enquirer

Education, transportation and additional tort reform were on the menu when Gov. Sonny Perdue addressed state business leaders Tuesday morning in Atlanta.

Greater Columbus Chamber of Commerce Chairman Russ Carreker said a proposed statewide transportation plan and proposed sales tax to fund it is intriguing.

<http://www.ledger-enquirer.com/news/story/577891.html>

Education

Perdue pushes higher pay for educators

By [JAMES SALZER](#)

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Gov. Sonny Perdue on Tuesday called for lawmakers to support bonuses for principals of schools that show consistent improvement and for merit pay for top teachers.

During a speech to business leaders, Perdue also promised higher pay for new math and science teachers in hopes of getting more students to prepare to teach those subjects.

http://www.ajc.com/metro/content/metro/stories/2009/01/13/perdue_education.html?cxntlid=homepage_tab_newstab

Perdue plan: Merit pay for teachers

By [James Salzer](#)

Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Gov. Sonny Perdue wants the state to reward top principals and teachers, as well as those who teach science and math.

The proposals got mixed reviews from teacher groups, who have heard similar promises from politicians before.

Perdue announced his plan to lawmakers and business leaders Tuesday. Today he is expected to release spending plans that will include more than \$2 billion in cuts.

<http://www.ajc.com/services/content/printedition/2009/01/14/legeggs.html>

Governor: More pay for best teachers, principals

By Travis Fain

Macon Telegraph

Gov. Sonny Perdue on Tuesday called for more pay for better trained and better performing Georgia teachers, higher pay for math and science teachers and \$10,000 bonuses for the state's best high school principals.

Perdue, who spoke to more than 2,000 business people at the Georgia Chamber of Commerce's annual Eggs & Issues Breakfast in Atlanta, said he will propose 10 to 15 percent salary increases for teachers who meet certain requirements. That would include hitting "student achievement" goals as well as more stringent training criteria.

<http://www.macon.com/741/story/585997.html>

Georgia may limit access to public colleges

By [GAYLE WHITE](#)

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

As student populations surge and budgets shrink, Georgia's public colleges may have to limit enrollment to maintain quality, Chancellor Erroll B. Davis warned the state Board of Regents on Tuesday.

"We will recommend to you that we restrict access before we knowingly allow quality to degrade," Davis said in his annual State of the University System address.

http://www.ajc.com/metro/content/metro/stories/2009/01/14/limit_college_enrollment.html

Health

Georgia's trauma drama

Augusta Chronicle

It's the No. 1 cause of death among Americans ages 1 to 44. In Georgia, its occurrence is 20 times more likely than the national average.

It's trauma death -- from accidental falls, bullet wounds, severe burns or automobile crashes. And the state still hasn't come up with a way to make its statewide trauma care network even remotely adequate. That's one of the biggest issues

-- some would say the biggest issue -- facing the Georgia General Assembly this term.

http://chronicle.augusta.com/stories/2009/01/14/edi_507538.shtml

For all our sakes, it's time for a state trauma system

By John Rogers

Atlanta Journal-Constitution

I was a surgeon in Macon for several years before dedicating myself to emergency medicine. It was my privilege to have been one of the original members of the trauma service when the Medical Center of Central Georgia first established it in the early 1990s. Over the years I saw and cared for many injured people from babies to grandparents. There are some of these trauma victim's stories that I will never forget and will share with you. Then I shall ask you to urge the Legislature to create a statewide trauma network in Georgia.

I remember three small boys whose throats were slashed by their father because he was mad at their mother, and the young woman who had been beaten with a crow bar and then run over by her jealous boyfriend. She broke both arms, both thighs and her pelvis.

<http://www.ajc.com/printedition/content/printedition/2009/01/13/rogersed.html>

Drugmaker immunity is a poison pill

Atlanta Journal Constitution

Here are four compelling reasons why Gov. Sonny Perdue's proposal to create a liability-free haven for drugmakers threatens the welfare of Georgians — Vioxx, Rezulin, fen-phen and Bextra.

Perdue proposes to grant drug companies immunity from legal action if the drug in question was approved by the federal Food and Drug Administration. Vioxx and the other three drugs all had FDA approval. All were later pulled from the market after being linked to sometimes fatal problems, including hypertension, stroke, liver failure, severe allergic skin reactions and cardiac failure.

http://www.ajc.com/opinion/content/opinion/stories/2009/01/14/assemblyed_0114.html

Crime/ Judicial

Smith reappointed to chair Senate Judiciary Committee

Rome News Tribune

State Sen. Preston Smith, R-Rome, was reappointed Tuesday by Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle to chair the Senate Judiciary Committee, a position he has held since 2005.

Smith was also appointed by Cagle to serve on the powerful Rules Committee, which is responsible for determining which bills will be scheduled for a vote by the full Senate.

<http://news.mywebpal.com/partners/680/public/news944148.html>

On Legislature's 1st day, House bans cell phones

By Walter C. Jones

Morris News Service

Legislators haven't passed any of the bills in recent years that would make it illegal to use cell phones while driving, but on Monday, members of the House enacted a rule that prohibits them from using cell phones while making laws.

That and other minor rule changes and a few new faces were among the developments when the General Assembly opened for a session that will be marked by a deficit that could approach \$2.5 billion and by Gov. Sonny Perdue's stimulus plan, which is nearly half that size.

http://chronicle.augusta.com/stories/2009/01/13/met_507407.shtml

Half Dozen Meth Labs Found In One Georgia County

WSBTV.com

A half dozen methamphetamine labs have been dismantled in north Effingham County.

The Effingham County Sheriff's office said the labs were discovered Tuesday afternoon and led to the arrest of a man and woman who face multiple drug charges.

Two Clyo residents -- John Michael Ball and Donna Senter, both 25 -- were each charged manufacturing meth, trafficking meth and possession of the illegal drug.

Authorities said an anonymous source provided deputies with information about the meth labs.

Ball and Senter were being held without bond.

<http://www.wsbtv.com/news/18476831/detail.html?rss=atl&psp=news>

Perdue pushes more limits on lawsuits

by [Tom Crawford](#)

The Georgia Report

Gov. Sonny Perdue, who signed a sweeping tort reform bill into law just four years ago, apparently wants more.

The governor said Tuesday in his "Eggs and Issues" speech that he'll push for legislation this session that would put even more limits on the ability of Individuals to file lawsuits against corporations.

Perdue said he'll have a bill introduced that would protect companies with a significant presence in Georgia from lawsuits if their product had already received approval from the federal Food and Drug Administration.

http://www.ciclt.net/garpt/main.asp?Client=garpt&PT=n_detail&N_ID=402710

Transportation

A Lot Of Talk But Not A Lot Of Clarity On Transportation

By Dick Pettys

InsiderAdvantage Georgia

Georgia's top political leaders did a fair amount of talking about transportation Tuesday before a crowd of 2,500 at the Georgia Chamber's annual Eggs & Issues breakfast. But at the end of the talk, there still didn't seem to be a lot of clarity over the troubling issue of whether and how to raise taxes to address backlogged transportation needs.

Speaker Glenn Richardson said he still wants a statewide solution - a one percent sales tax to fund the state's needs. Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle said that probably won't pass the Senate but that a local option transportation sales tax will. And Gov. Sonny Perdue said that while he favors a statewide solution over a regional fix, "it is clear we need a functional, efficient system for delivering value ... (and) once I feel certain we can deliver the transportation value to Georgia citizens, I will support prudent, responsible measures to raise additional revenues."

http://www.insideradvantagegeorgia.com/restricted/2009/January%2009/1-14-09/Eggs_And_Issues1149652.php

Pave the way

Savannah Morning News

Georgia lawmakers should let Chatham and other Georgia counties vote on imposing a regional sales tax to build better roads.

LAST YEAR'S General Assembly was gaveled to a close in Atlanta before lawmakers passed a bill to allow multiple-county regions to band together to levy a transportation sales tax.

This isn't the time for a repeat.

<http://savannahnow.com/node/652378>

Water

Atlanta Mayor Hopes for Truce in 3-State Water War

Associated Press

Mayor Shirley Franklin is hopeful President-elect Barack Obama will make good on a promise to unite Georgia, Florida and Alabama over the issue of water.

In October, Obama said he would call for the states' governors to begin negotiating again on water sharing.

<http://www.myfoxatlanta.com/myfox/pages/News/Detail?contentId=8243214&version=2&locale=EN-US&layoutCode=TSTY&pageId=3.1.1>

Energy

Oil bill has no place in serious legislative session

Athens Banner Herald

A handful of Georgia General Assembly members couldn't wait even one day before putting the state on the road to Laughingstockville.

Georgia is staring down a \$2 billion state budget shortfall in the current fiscal year. Across the state, hands are wringing over the lack of a cohesive state transportation policy. Public utilities and their customers are wondering how the state's water resources can be managed effectively amid the twin challenges of drought and population growth.

http://www.onlineathens.com/stories/011409/opi_377009474.shtml

Georgia Watchdogs Hope To Turn Off Lights On Energy Waste

WSBTV.com

The Atlanta skyline lit up at night is postcard perfect, but do all those energy-draining lights really need to be on all the time?

Channel 2 looked at the Atlanta Federal Reserve Building on Peachtree Street in Midtown Atlanta. On a Sunday night around 10 p.m., there were plenty of lights on in the building. When we checked again on a Thursday at 2 a.m., lights were still on.

Channel 2 learned the Federal Reserve spends about \$117,970 every month on its electric bill. Channel 2 showed that bill to a federal watchdog.

<http://www.wsbtv.com/news/18471370/detail.html?rss=atl&psp=news>

Sunday Alcohol Sales

Backers of Sunday alcohol sales line up heavyweight support

By [JAMES SALZER](#)

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Supporters of Sunday store sales of beer, wine and liquor began their latest crusade Tuesday to end Georgia's blue laws on booze.

As has been the case the past two years, how far they get may depend on whether teetotaling Gov. Sonny Perdue continues to fight their legislation.

http://www.ajc.com/services/content/metro/stories/2009/01/13/georgia_legislature_sunday_alcohol.html?cxtype=rss&cxsvc=7&cxcat=13