

Deal names Swindle to state review board

Carrollton attorney Jason Swindle Sr. has been named by Gov. Nathan Deal to the Sexual Offender Registration Review Board.

Swindle is the senior partner at Swindle Law Group, P.C. He is an adjunct professor for the Criminology Department at the University of West Georgia and represents the Coweta Judicial Circuit on the Board of Governors at the State Bar of Georgia. Swindle earned a bachelor's degree in Business from Georgia Southern University and a law degree from the Walter F. George School of Law at Mercer University. He and his wife, Shea, have two sons and reside in Carrollton.

Swindle has also been named by



Jason Swindle

the State Bar of Georgia to its Advisory Committee on Legislation, which prepares legislation approved by the State Bar Board of Governors for consideration by the Georgia General Assembly. It also monitors all legislation affecting bar members and the practice of law.

The State Bar also named Carrollton attorney Ann-Margaret Perkins of the Perkins Law Firm LLP to the Bench & Bar Committee, which oversees the Judicial District Professionalism Program and works to identify and facilitate solutions to issues of mutual interest between the state's judges and lawyers for the benefit of the public.

Temple officials to discuss zoning, future land use maps

BY KEN DENNEY
THE TIMES-GEORGIAN

The Temple City Council and the city's Planning Commission will hold a joint public meeting this week to discuss a new zoning map and a plan for the future development of the town.

The meeting will be held at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday at the Senior Center, 280 Rome St.

Temple's elected officials and the planning board will review an updated and revised zoning map, as well as a draft copy of a Future Land Use Map that is meant to guide the city's future development.

Hughes-Ray Engineering of Douglasville was commissioned in June to work on the two plans.

The zoning map, which shows the current uses for which property may be used within the city limits, has not been updated since at least 2009, according to City Administrator Bill

Osborne. Although the Three Rivers Commission published an updated map in 2015, it did so relying on old data.

The new map is meant to show an accurate representation of how all the tracts within the city are zoned. During this week's meeting, the officials will review the map to ensure that it is correct, and that all parcels of land are in the correct zoning classification.

Citizens' input is also being requested for this review, Osborne said.

Also on the agenda is reviewing a draft for a Future Land Use Map, also drawn by Hughes-Ray. Cities use such maps to guide the city decades in advance on the future use of parcels of land.

Future Land Use Maps typically divide a city into different areas

where commercial and residential development is to be encouraged, as well as which parcels will be reserved for parks, open space and civic purposes.

During the June 5 meeting at which the council authorized the work, it was noted that the zoning map and land-use map are tasks that are integral to updating the city's comprehensive plan and new service delivery strategy plan.

Another related project is the creation of a development code, which Osborne said in June, is something the city apparently has never had. The code would establish standards for both commercial and residential construction.

The city officials are planning a follow-up meeting in September to review their feedback for the draft proposals.

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Carrollton resident Beck to run for state insurance commissioner

BY KEN DENNEY
THE TIMES-GEORGIAN

Jim Beck, an insurance executive and Carrollton resident, announced Tuesday that he was running for Georgia insurance commissioner.

Beck has served as deputy commissioner for the state, and was most recently was chief of staff for current Commissioner Ralph Hudgens, who announced last month that he would not seek re-election to the post in 2018.

According to the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Deputy Insurance Commissioner Jay Florence and health care provider Shane Mobley, will join their fellow Republican Beck in the race, along with Tomeka Kimbrough, an insurance agent and Democrat.

The office for which Beck and the others are seeking is formally called the Office of Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner, and is charged with regulating the insurance industry in the state. The commissioner also serves as the state fire marshal and regulates the small loan industry.

Beck favors a robust role for the commissioner in helping curb escalating insurance rates in Georgia, which he said has led the nation in rate increases.

"Rates in Georgia have gone up faster than they have in New York and California," he said. "Some of these companies have taken double-digit rate increases; some in the same year."

He said current law can make it more difficult for the state to deny these increases "but it doesn't make it impossible."

"I think there's a lot that can be done within the current framework. Some of the power needs to be given back to the commissioner's office."

Beck has lived in Carrollton since 1979 and started an insurance business while still attending what then was called West Georgia College. He has appeared on several network news shows and currently serves as a guest editor for "Stand Up Georgia," a news aggregate service that, according to a press release, "shares information to help empower and embolden grassroots conservatism in the Peach State."

With respect to auto insurance, Beck said he favors an aggressive step to curb higher rates, which he said often puts working people "in a kind of a trap."

Because the state requires drivers to be insured, those drivers must pay premiums that may sometimes be too high to meet each month. That can cause their insurance to be dropped,



Melanie Boyd/Times-Georgian

Jim Beck this week announced his candidacy for state insurance commissioner.

their tag to be revoked, and their car impounded.

"So you have somebody who couldn't make a \$200 insurance payment now paying \$1,000 in storage fees, towing fees, everything," he said.

Regarding health insurance, he said he would favor a "medical provider unit" that would advocate for medical consumers whose procedures are being denied by their insurance providers.

"One of the major companies says they won't pay if you go to the emergency room — if they deem you should not have gone to the emergency room," he said. "Well, if you're holding a sick child at three in the morning, and you're not a doctor, how do you know whether you should go to the emergency room or not?"

Beck is a critic of the Affordable Care Act (often referred to as "Obamacare"), but acknowledged that uncertainty has been injected in the health insurance market at the national political level.

"Whatever they do in Washington, we'll have to live with in Georgia," he said. "But there's degrees of living with it. You can make it better or worse, it's like anything."

"They need to do something. This idea of just doing nothing about the ACA doesn't work for me as a citizen. I want to see them reach a consensus and make a plan, and then I want to be able to enforce the terms the (insurance company's) contract when it's here in Georgia."