

# *Sky Valley Times*

## **Administration**

The City of Sky Valley now offers the ability to pay your bill online.

<https://skyvalleyga.governmentwindow.com/start.html>

Fall Fest planning has been going on for a few months. The Hay Bale Trail will be back this year, so get your cameras ready. Vendors are registering and we have booked Derek Andrew as our entertainment for the event. Shuttles will be provided from parking areas by Bennett Transportation which provide heated and air-conditioned vans for your enjoyment. As always, the food vendors will be tempting us with their favorable treats. New t-shirts are being ordered and we will let you when they are available to purchase.

A special thank you to Maureen Platt & Chief Estes for hard work and dedication to the National Night Out held on August 6, 2019. Our turnout was great, and everyone enjoyed the event.

The 2020 Budget has begun, and a schedule of workshops will be sent out soon.

The final step of codification is underway and will be ready to be rolled out once complete. This will allow everyone to type in a word and research ordinances much easier.

The Rabun County Comprehensive Plan meetings are still ongoing, and the goal is to have a five-year plan by the completed by end of October.

The new signs have been ordered for the Sky Valley visitor center to located at the timeshare office. And directional signs for the location of the visitor center.

The following have qualified for upcoming November 5, 2019 General Election:

Mayor: Mike Commons & Hollie Steil

Council Members: Ed Morley, Bill Oliver, Al Piontkowski, Maureen Platt, Bruce Turner & Paul Wheeler

## **Public Works**

The following roads have been patched by the Public works department:

Forest Court – 2 water leaks

Tahoe Lane – 2 water leaks

Southern Breeze – from water leak

Ridgepole Drive – Valley View

Alex Mountain – just past 1137 & hill past Mockingbird Lane  
Mockingbird Lane – 2 patches  
Cedar Lane- Cul-de-sac work done by Howard Construction  
Rescue Lane  
Evergreen Lane  
Rebel Circle – 2 patches  
Schonberg  
Drive Lane

Water meter register changeout are almost complete. All residential meters have been upgraded and the commercial meters are in the process of being changed out.

Trimming is underway on the right of ways.

A new leaf vacuum has been ordered from Southern Vac.  
A new Dodge 1500 has been ordered from Duval.

Knob Drive Culvert has been replaced and the road is reopened.  
An application was submitted to GDOT for LMIG- EEE funds and we have received a letter from GDOT with a commitment for funds.

The compactor on Overlook now has two cameras that should allow us to see violators who put anything besides household garbage into the compactor.

## **Police Department**

The remodel and repairs at the Police Department are coming to an end. The mold and mildew have been removed and we hope to complete the work soon.

The Sky Valley Municipal Court has been being held in the old visitor's center. We have received good reviews from the Judge, staff and public. The extra space has allowed attendees to come inside and promotes a more professional environment.

We are continuing our efforts to deal with bears, raccoons, hogs and coyotes. The number of encounters began to rise during the summer, but efforts were increased and now we have much lower rate of occurrences. We all must work together in order to maintain a safe and friendly environment for both humans and wildlife.

Officer Highlight:

On Thursday, August 22, 2019 Chief of Police Vaughn Estes received a call from Sky Valley Citizen. The Citizen was calling in response to an incident that occurred that morning. The Citizen told Chief Estes that the Citizen callers wife had a blow out on her vehicle and that she was unable to get her jack to operate. SVPD Officer Casey Brown came by to assist. Officer Brown was able to use his own jack and assist in changing the tire on the vehicle. According to

the Citizen Officer Brown went above and beyond the call of duty in his actions and exemplified pure professionalism. The Citizen caller wanted to make sure that the City was aware of the quality and professionalism Officer Brown portrayed.

It is not every day that we hear the "good" that the police do in our community and Chief Estes just wanted to make sure that we acknowledge and appreciate our officers for all that they do and the risk that they take every day.

Thank you, Officer Brown, for all that you do, you make us all proud and thankful that you are there to answer the call for service.

***Georgia Chiefs of Police Association President Frank Rotondo AJC article on traffic enforcement***

*I am writing in response to the recent article in the AJC regarding speeding tickets and general traffic enforcement.*

*There are three major concepts associated with traffic safety: Engineering, education and enforcement. The engineering aspect is handled by proper highway construction and appropriate traffic flow measures. Education is accomplished by published laws and regulations, traffic signs and public service communications. Enforcement is utilized when problems are identified that cannot be addressed effectively through engineering and education.*

*I do not dispute a small number of agencies have abused the system in the past. However, once the specific agency has been addressed appropriately, the focus should be on the majority of agencies that use speed detection devices (radar and laser) properly to protect the public.*

*Traffic enforcement in general, including speed enforcement, is focused on safety, not financial gain.*

*It is not appropriate to compare a city's population with its traffic enforcement citation numbers. Areas with major traffic corridors must be viewed in a more comprehensive context. The true enforcement activity picture can be seen only when citation statistics are compared with the number of vehicles that use the roads. There may be a significant difference between the population and the average annual daily traffic count collected by the Georgia Department of Transportation.*

*It is also important to note that a driver may be issued multiple citations during a single traffic stop. For example, a driver stopped for speeding may also be cited for improper lane change, reckless driving or driving under the influence, thereby increasing the overall numbers. Additional citations may be issued, for example, for a non-working taillight, which is canceled with proof of correction.*

*The Oct. 18, 2014 Atlanta Journal-Constitution article cited Doraville as an "aggressive" police force that issued "an average of 40 tickets a day." As noted above, this number is easily misinterpreted. A review of 2013 traffic flow data collected by the GDOT counted an average of*

*45,820 vehicles passing through a half-mile stretch of road within Doraville each day. Therefore, traffic citations were issued involving less than one-tenth of 1 percent of vehicles.*

*Significant variances in traffic fines and fees exist among jurisdictions. Local governing authorities have the responsibility to establish their own fine schedules, within reasonable parameters, for most violations. Therefore, fine and fee amounts are not a law enforcement issue; they are a function of local government. Funds collected from traffic citations are not deposited into a law enforcement agency's account. These monies typically go into a city or county general fund.*

*I would also like to address the notion of "speed traps." Speed limit designations are not set by law enforcement; in most cases, GDOT is responsible for setting safe speed limits for each road within Georgia. Law enforcement is tasked with enforcing that speed limit based on GDOT's analysis of what is safe and appropriate.*

*"Speed trap" implies a driver has been **tricked** into speeding so he can be fined for violating the law. This is simply misleading. When a driver is stopped for speeding, it is a result of the driver going faster than the safe speed for that area. Except for the Georgia State Patrol, enforcement agencies using speed detection devices such as radar or laser are generally not permitted to cite drivers traveling less than 11 mph over the posted speed limit.*

*In closing, the AJC article appeared to show law enforcement in a poor light with respect to the enforcement of traffic laws. Should the focus not be on the fact that so many Georgia drivers are operating their vehicles in excess of posted safe speeds or committing other unsafe traffic infractions?*

*As of this writing, there have been 290,393 traffic accidents resulting in 1,000 fatalities in Georgia in 2014; in most of those fatal accidents, a traffic violation was a contributing factor. I submit that a directed focus on encouraging drivers to obey traffic laws in the interest of safety would provide more benefit to the public as a possible means of saving lives on our roads, than to cast blame on today's centurions for doing one of their appointed lawful assignments.*

Frank Rotondo is executive director of the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police.

Based on the statistics recorded on Ga Hwy 246 in Sky, Valley Georgia we average:  
Total vehicle count of 08/01/2019 to 08/26/2019 was 13,418 with number of speed limit violation being 10,444 and only 71 tickets were written.

The Sky Valley Police Department was proud to be the host for the 2019 National Night Out. The event was a great success and had approximately 200 attendees and dogs. The event featured the following:

Sky Valley Police Department  
Scaly Mountain Fire/Rescue  
Rabun County Sheriff's Department  
Rabun County Fire/EMS

Rabun County 911 Center  
Dillard Police Department  
Helen Police Department  
Hiawassee Police Department  
Georgia Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Division  
Georgia Bureau of Investigation Region 8  
Georgia Bureau of Investigation Internet Crimes against Children  
Southern Linc  
Ga Mountains Lodge Fraternal Order of Police  
Sky 96.3 WRBN Radio, live broadcast team  
Clayton Tribune

In September we will have a Sky Valley Watch meeting as our relaunch of our community watch efforts.