GSRA Newsletter

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2026 Annual Meeting
"It Was a Great Meeting!"

By Allan Hill

On October 5-6, over 220 enthusiastic GSRA members and friends gathered at the Hatcher Conference Center in Macon for our 19th Annual Meeting. After the Westside (Macon) High School Air Force ROTC presented the colors, Charlotte Moody of Visit Macon once again greeted us, followed by a welcoming address by President Judy Bryson. Of the four candidates for Governor and Lt. Governor that we had invited to address the meeting, only one appeared. Two – Keisha Lance Bottoms (candidate for Governor) and State Senator Greg Dolezal (candidate for Lt. Governor) - provided video presentations, while Rick Jackson (candidate for Governor) provided a written statement. All three expressed support for our cause and promised to work toward providing appropriations for a meaningful COLA and for the ERS fund.

State Senator Josh McLaurin, candidate for Lt. Governor, appeared in person. He spoke to us for over 30 minutes, giving us his position on some of the most pressing issues of the campaign, including income and property taxes, health care, and his support for our ongoing efforts at obtaining a COLA. Senator McLaurin was serious, personable, engaging, and well spoken. A video of Senator McLaurin's address, as well as the videos from Ms. Bottoms and Senator Dolezal and the statement from Rick Jackson, can be found on the GSRA Facebook page.



Figure 1: Lt Governor Candidate Senator McLaurin and spoke more than 30 minutes to the attendees.

After Senator McLaurin's talk, Chris Lawrence, PhD, Professor of Political Science at Middle Georgia State University, delivered the keynote speech. Dr. Lawrence presented an in-depth look at the upcoming election, focusing on both the

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U.S. Senate race between Mike Collins and Jon Ossoff, and the Gubernatorial race here in Georgia. He focused on the different approaches to the issues of the candidates and emphasized how close the polling showed the election was.

The GSRA Legislative Team, Chuck Freedman and Chuck Clay, then gave the Legislative update. Chuck and Chuck celebrated the successes we had this year during the General Session, the connections GSRA has made with all the candidates and with key members of the General Assembly, and the path forward for the future. Chuck Freedman gave a rousing speech; he was passionate, spirited and upbeat. He led the crowd in cheering on what GSRA did this year and what we're going to do next year.

Once the general session was over, the attendees moved on to one of five workshops: **Crime and Personal Safety** - Protecting Yourself in the Real World; **Breast Cancer/Prostate Cancer** - Signs, Symptoms, and Treatment and What You Need to Know; **Legal/Financial Affairs** - Wills, Trusts, Advanced Directives and Estate Planning; **Think Before You Click** - AI, Online Safety, and Protecting Yourself in a Changing Digital World; and **What AMBA Can Do for You**. All the workshops were relevant, important and very informative. The workshops all had terrific presenters.

Then we gathered on the front steps for a group photo. Afterward, we all moved to the Opening Reception, where we enjoyed some heavy hors d'oeuvres, wine, beer, and the mellow music of Josh Carson.



Figure 2: GSRA members enjoyed an informative and enjoyable annual meeting.

Tuesday morning brought the second round of workshops, and then a presentation by Jim Potvin, Executive Director of the ERSGA. Jim gave us very positive update on the status of the ERS fund and an optimistic outlook for the future. He seemed as excited about the awarding of our COLA as we were about receiving it. Following Jim, Louis Amis, the Executive Director of SHBP, provided an update on open enrollment. He reported that there will be no changes in coverage this year and stressed that retirees need to do two things: 1) review your current coverage and determine if any

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changes need to be made, and 2) do not enroll in any other Medicare Advantage Plan other than what is offered by SHBP. If you do not want to make any changes to your coverage next year, you do not need to take any action. If you enroll in any other Medicare Advantage Plan not offered by SHBP, you will lose your SHBP coverage and may not ever get it back.

It was then time for lunch. The Hatcher Center Catering staff prepared a wonderful Classic Southern Buffet, with fried and baked chicken, and all the sides and fixings for a great lunch.

The next item on the agenda was the reason for the Annual Meeting – the Annual GSRA business meeting. Secretary Dan Coffee presented the minutes from last year's Annual Business meeting, Treasurer Harold Grindle presented the Annual Financial Report, and Vice President Robert Riddle presented the results of the election of officers and members of the P&O Board. All GSRA members had a chance to vote on those items online before the meeting; the results of the voting were accepted by acclamation by the members present. The results of the election were as follows:

- President – Dan Coffee
- Vice President – Becky East Kennedy
- Treasurer – Harold Grindle
- Secretary – Sam Shepherd
- P&O Board Members – Lindia Moore, Donna Donahue, and Melissa Belk

Thank you to all of those who volunteered to serve as officers and Board members. GSRA could not continue without those who are willing to offer their time and talents.

President Judy Bryson then gave the State of the Association Address, which was, again, very positive and optimistic. We had a great year, with numerous legislative achievements, including a COLA, a bonus payment, strengthening of the ERS fund, and the selection of Past President Jim Somerville to the ERS Board. Membership continues to climb, and our partnership with retired law enforcement has been extremely productive. Our new President Dan Coffee addressed the membership, sharing his vision, hopes and goals for 2027.

And of course, the Annual Meeting cannot end without the door prize drawings, and we had some great door prizes. Thanks to all the local chapters who donated prizes.

Putting on a great meeting takes a lot of work from a lot of folks, so thanks to everyone who helped. To the GSRA Annual Meeting Committee who put it all together. To the members of the Macon/Middle Georgia chapter who helped on Sunday with final preparations. To Cheryl and Frank Johnson, who once again were our door prize coordinators. Special thanks to our Annual Partners, Anthem and UnitedHealthcare, and our vendor Senior Medicare Patrol. Thanks to the great staff of the Hatcher Center, and to our friends at Visit Macon. The Annual Meeting Committee is already working on next year's meeting.

Be sure to check out all the photos from the meeting on www.mygsra.com.

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Candidate for Governor Met with GSRA

By Chuck Freeman

As published in previous newsletters, GSRA requested meetings with all candidates. The meeting with gubernatorial candidate Rick Jackson can be found in the May/June 2026 GSRA Newsletter.

Keisha Lance Bottoms, Democratic candidate for governor, met with four representatives of GSRA on Oct. 1. Ms. Bottoms gave us her full attention, asked pertinent questions, and kept copious notes. She asked for time to consider our requests and stated that she will be sending a video to play at our annual meeting. Shown in the image below, the attendees were a staff person for Ms. Bottoms, GSRA legislative liaison Chuck Freedman, Ms. Bottoms, law enforcement retiree group representative Keith Golden, and incoming president Dan Coffee. Not shown is GSRA's lobbyist Chuck Clay.



Figure 3: GSRA representatives met with gubernatorial candidate Keisha Lance Bottoms.

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AMBA/GSRA Webinars

By Allan Hill

GSRA and AMBA offer monthly webinars that provide members with a wide range of important information, including financial, health, travel, recreational, lifestyle, and safety topics. The webinars are held on the third Wednesday of every month at 10:00 A.M., except in December, when it's the first Wednesday. All webinars are free to join, but registration is required. The webinars last between 30-45 minutes.

Join us for the next webinar on November 18, 2026, "Caring for Loved Ones While Protecting Yourself" with your host Jon Green of AMBA. All members will receive an email from "GSRA Webinar" in early November with details and instructions on registering.

Looking ahead, the December 10, 2026, webinar will be "Holiday Savings and Member Benefits".

If you've missed any of the previous webinars, you can find recordings of all of them on the GSRA homepage at www.mygsra.com.

See you at 10:00 on November 18, 2026!

Note: On the October 21 webinar, "Medicare Made Easy – Your Guide to Open Enrollment," host Jon Green did an excellent job providing comprehensive, easy to understand explanation of the "ABDs" of Medicare. Catch the recording of it on www.mygsra.com. .

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From the Banks of the Chattahoochee River

By Judy Bryson

Hello GSRA Members,

We have much to celebrate! Coming from a successful annual conference, we find ourselves amid an exciting and competitive election season for our state's top leaders. This is an important moment to recognize how far we have come, and to prepare for the work ahead.

Together, we have achieved meaningful gains for state government retirees: a higher cost-of-living adjustment, the earlier release of one-time payments during a period of rising living costs, and consumer representation to the ERS Board. These accomplishments reflect the strength of our collective voice and the persistence of our advocacy.



Even as we celebrate, we must keep the momentum going. We have met with the candidates for governor and lieutenant governor, as well as other emerging state leaders. In every conversation, we have voiced our concerns clearly and responsibly, helping them understand what state retirees have contributed and continue to contribute to our state.

Now we must return to the rooms where decisions are made, not simply to be heard, but to help shape the conversation. Each of us should become familiar with the next tasks and steps required to advance our priorities, strengthen our relationships with state leaders, and sustain our advocacy.

The work remains! Let us get to it together!

Take care,

Judy

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Local GSRA Chapter News

East Metro Chapter

The East Metro Chapter was pleased to have our own Chuck Freedman as guest speaker at the September 11 meeting in Covington. Thirty-four members and guests including the speaker were present, and we had six renewals.



Figure 4: Thirty-four were in attendance for the October East Metro meeting.

After lunch, Chapter Secretary Janis Tidwell introduced Chuck, highlighting portions of his biography including his years of dedicated service and some of his many impressive contributions to GSRA. She also noted that Chuck was one of the founders of GSRA and has served as a volunteer lobbyist for years, relentlessly pushing our agenda and needs forward for two decades. As Legislative Chair he has worked tirelessly meeting with leaders in State Government and advocating for retirees.

Chuck's presentation was very informative and lively with members being very engaged. Spoiler Alert! Chuck was a big hit! He discussed the many iterations of COLAs, or lack of meaningful COLAs and the continuing push for an annual 3% as well as affordable health care.

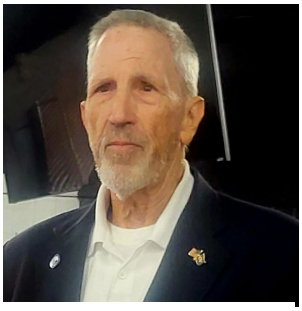


Figure 5: Chuck Freeman, GSRA Founder and guest speaker

Chuck also mentioned the importance of contacting mid-term candidates now. He also noted that GSRA has gained the respect of and recognition by Legislators, Committee Chairs and other State leaders of as a reputable organization. He also discussed some of the legislative goals for 2027, which can be found on Facebook and the GSRA website. A question was asked about funding sources and Chuck elaborated on this.

He pointed out that this was a very successful year for GSRA, but there is still work for all of us. As noted previously, members were engaged and enjoyed Chuck's lively presentation. President Taylor ended the meeting with a thank you gift for Chuck and door prize drawings.

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Tift Area Chapter

The GSRA Tift Area Chapter met at the Georgia Department of Transportation in Tifton on Thursday, September 17th with a total of 19 in attendance, consisting of retirees and others.

Wendy Bryan and Amber Turpen provided information about the All Ways Caring HomeCare branch in Tifton, which serves six counties: Ben Hill, Coffee, Irwin, Tift, Turner, and Worth. The organization offers in-home support including light housekeeping, personal hygiene assistance, full meal preparation, errands, and transportation to medical appointments. Their services are funded through Medicare (about 60%), VA benefits, private pay, and out-of-pocket options. They also support long-term care needs for individuals living in community housing.

They provide Respite Care for veterans and their spouses, ranging from 6 to 40 hours per week. They also offer Veterans Care Coordination, which provides dedicated funds for veterans and spouses to receive needed home-based support. Many of these VA programs are underutilized simply because people don't know they exist.

Debbie Scarborough provided an update on AMBA's newest Short-Term Care options. Aetna's Recovery Care Choice now includes enhanced riders that closely mirror Long-Term Care benefits. She also introduced Guaranteed Trust Life, a newly endorsed plan offering expanded Home Health Care coverage. Debbie reviewed several retirement-protection updates, including AMBA's fixed indexed annuity options: 3.75%, 3%, and 2% guaranteed, along with a 4.25% fixed account for 10 years with no broker fees.

Southwest Georgia Chapter

The GSRA Southwest Georgia chapter met on October 14th at Albany State University's West campus. Our program was on Data Centers-Myth Buster.

Don Porter, Area Manager for Georgia Power Company delivered a very interesting and informative presentation on data centers. His discussion included topics such as:

- What is a data center?
- Will data centers make my power bill go up?
- Do data centers increase the risk of the risk of blackouts?
- Do data centers bring benefits to communities?

Several members who attended this year's GSRA Annual Meeting in Macon provided an overview of the meeting and discussed major takeaways from the meeting.

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Figure 6: Southwest Georgia Chapter members received timely information about data centers.

Attendees were reminded about SHBP's Open Enrollment deadline and were encouraged to vote.

Our next meeting is scheduled for January 13, 2027.

ABC of Douglas Chapter

The ABC of Douglas Chapter met on 10/19/2026 at the Covered Wagon in Douglas, Georgia. Guest speakers were Angie Osteen, State Representative, and Debbie Scarborough, AMBA representative. Ms. Osteen informed the group of her background and the importance of relationships. She answered questions and encouraged recommendations. Ms. Debbie Scarborough gave AMBA update, discussed new annuity, and other supplement plans. She answered questions. We thanked her for providing today's lunch.



Figure 7: Guest speakers were Angie Osteen, State Representative, and Debbie Scarborough, AMBA representative.

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President Jenny McIver discussed membership, 2026 annual meeting and handed out programs, open enrollment, and we elected officers. Next meeting is set for January 18, 2027.

CSRA-GSRA Chapter

The CSRA-GSRA chapter met on October 20 at the Columbia County Health Department in Grovetown. Members enjoyed refreshments, and three lucky members won gift cards.



Figure 8: CSRA-GSRA members enjoyed fellowship, refreshments, and door prizes.

Several members attended the Annual Conference in Macon and presented synopsis of the workshops they attended, providing those that were unable to attend with many good tips regarding AI safety, personal safety, wills & trusts, and more.



Figure 9: CSRA-GSRA chapter members attended the Annual conference.

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Our chapter president spoke to us about the state of the ERS funds and what GSRA hopes to accomplish in the future.

The next meeting will be held on December 1, 2026, at 12 noon at the Cracker Barrel, 460 Parkwest Drive, Grovetown (next to I-20). All are welcome to attend. So put us on your calendar for the first day of December and kick off the season with a little Christmas ambiance and camaraderie with your fellow retirees.

Coosa Valley Chapter

The Coosa Valley Chapter held its quarterly meeting on October 20, 2026, in Rome at the Floyd Co DFCS Office. Rob Gross, Chapter President, presided over the meeting. There were 17 members present.

The guest speaker was Chad Petty, Assistant Chief, GA Dept. of Community Supervision. He has been with this department for almost 14 years. For much of his career he worked with those with mental health and substance abuse diagnoses. Chad explained the difference between probation and parole. He also discussed the many community resources such as counseling, educational programing, and other assistance available to individuals under supervision to assist in changing behaviors to become more successful in their day-to-day lives.



Figure 10: Guest speaker Chad Petty, Assistant Chief, provided interesting information about the Department of Community Supervision.

Jan Hardeman, Outreach Coordinator, reported that since our last meeting, she has sent 13 postcards recruiting recently retired state employees in our area to join GSRA and the local Chapter. This gives a total of 37 postcards sent this calendar year.

Six Coosa Valley members attended the Annual Meeting in Macon, and all had positive comments about the meeting, speakers, and small group sessions. The Chapter's two door prizes of $100 cash each were very popular.

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Figure 11: Seventeen Coosa Valley GSRA members enjoyed the October meeting.

The next Chapter meeting is scheduled for 01/21/2027 at 10:00 AM in Floyd County DFCS office.

Savannah Coastal Chapter

The Savannah Coastal Chapter met on October 22 at the offices of the Chatham County DFCS office. Twenty-seven members attended to listen to a presentation from Lee Ann Welch, a real estate attorney with McManamy Jackson Hollis. Lee Ann gave a very informative explanation of a Transfer On Death Deed (TODD), a law recently passed by the General Assembly, in which a person can execute a deed to transfer property to another (child, heir, etc.) while alive that becomes effective upon his/her death. Lee Ann explained that this simple deed will allow the recipient to avoid probate on the property, usually the homeplace. The TODD is not appropriate in every situation but can be useful for people with estates that are straightforward. Lee Ann also discussed Advanced Directives and Durable Powers of Attorney, very important information for seniors.



Figure 12: Twenty-seven members attended the October meeting.

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After Lee Ann's presentation, President Allan Hill gave a recap of the Annual Meeting, including the Legislative Report, and the outlook for GSRA in 2027. After the business meeting, the attendees joined together for lunch catered by Chick-fil-a.

Tri-County Chapter

The Tri-County Chapter held its fourth quarterly meeting of 2026 on October 26th at Doodlum's Barbecue & Fruit Stand in Woodbury with thirty-eight (38) members in attendance. Joy Evans, Chapter President, welcomed everyone and thanked them for their participation. GSRA activities and updates from the Annual Meeting were shared with the group. Everyone enjoyed a delicious lunch and social time together.



Figure 13: Thirty-eight Tri-County GSRA members attended the October meeting.

The first quarterly chapter meeting in 2027 is planned for Monday, January 25th at 11:30 AM back at Doodlum's Barbecue Restaurant in Woodbury. The guest speaker will be Renee Smith, a local pharmacist, on pharmacy expenses, drugs and fraud.

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August-Sept 2026 New GSRA Members, Welcome!

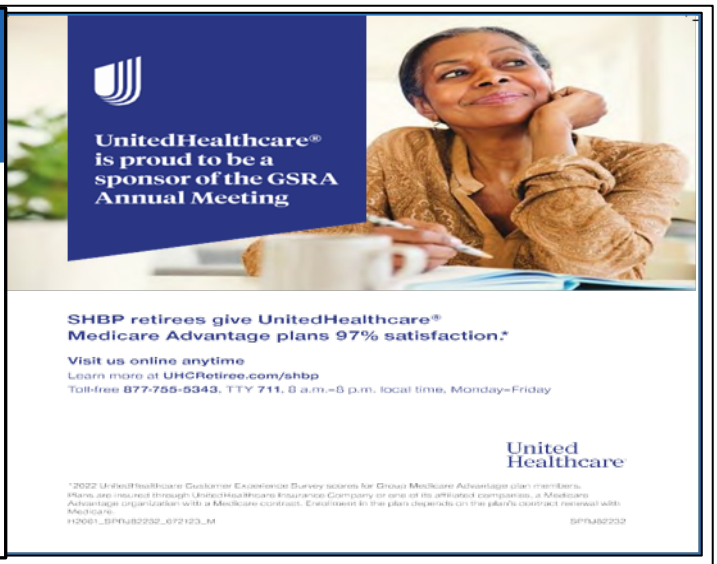
Name-County	Name-County	Name-County
Jason Airman - Cobb	Willene Blackmon - Muscogee	Sandra Carlisle - Fulton
George Cooke - Dekalb	Arthur Gavin, Jr, - Monroe	Norma Johnson - Brooks
Chris Gilmer - Walton	Mary Godwin – Thomas	Luevon Goss - Fulton
Timothy Johnson - Brooks	Rodney Mayfield - Dekalb	Edward McDougle - Lowndes
Chrystal Morgan -Glynn	Chennakesav Nagula - Fulton	Sonya Nieves - Hall
Ruby Reid - Coweta	Robert Rosenbloom - Dekalb	Beverly Staley - Fulton
Kenneth Ward - Cobb	Bonny Adams - Bibb	Lamarte Bell - Bibb
Linda Camp -Douglas	Janet Cochran – Baldwin	Christina Daniel – Peach
Stephen Davidson – Wayne	Daniel Dollar – Cobb	Latisha Flesher – Hall
Latisha Flesher – Hall	Jeanissa Ginn – Fulton	Diana Hartford - Henry
Anjail Ingram – Dekalb	Patti James – Wilkes	Melanie McNeil – Cobb
James Merritt – Bacon	Aaron Newberry – Richmond	Henry Smith Jr – Out of State
Donna Tebought – Henry	Myrna Torres – Lowndes	Jason Waters - Tattnall

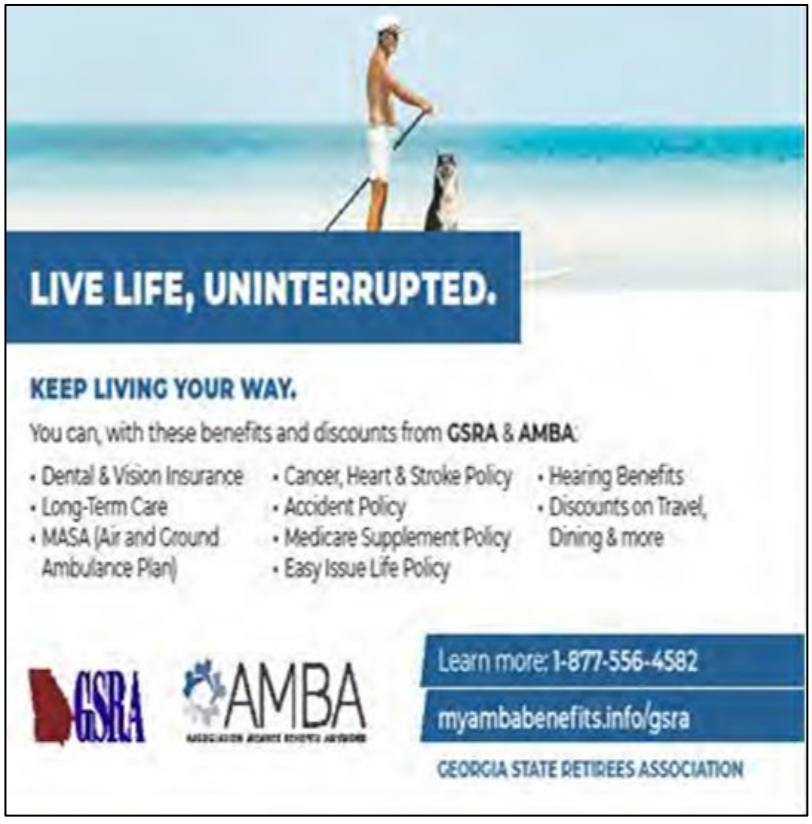
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