

Franklin Forum

Our View ▶

In times like these ...

On Friday at 10:25 a.m., a community-wide prayer will be held on Facebook live. (To participate, look up "Community-Wide Prayer" on Facebook.)

Such an effort is just what Franklin County, the state of Georgia, the United States and the world needs right now.

The emergence of the coronavirus has clouded the present and near future in uncertainty.

State and federal leaders are advising people to stay home as much as possible, not to hold events that will draw large crowds and to socially distance themselves from others.

The precautions are being taken to try to stop the spread of the contagious virus that

can be fatal to the elderly and those with low immune systems.

But those precautions are sacrificing not just interaction with our fellow man.

Students will be out of school until at least the end of the month, and potentially much, much longer.

That could mean the delay, postponement or cancellation of a great number of important events and the memories that go with them.

Local sports are on hiatus, with questions about when and if seasons will continue.

Restaurants, nursing facilities, senior living homes and local governments are restricting access by the public.

Local events are being

scrapped or rescheduled.

The impact on local businesses, particularly small businesses, is a big concern.

To put it mildly, there is a lot of uncertainty.

In times like these, it is good that we live in the community that we do.

Small communities like Franklin County are filled with people who care for each other, who turn to God for guidance and who band together to face challenges.

We will need to remember and practice those traits in the next couple of weeks.

No one knows how long the fight against coronavirus will last.

We do need to remember that every time we avoid a



crowd or buy groceries for an elderly neighbor, we could be saving the life of a loved one.

Let's take comfort in that

and work to face this challenge together.

— Shane Scoggins

Your View ▶

GRP official's statements just not true

In the *Franklin County Citizen Leader's* last guest column, the new president of GRP, Steve Daily, tries to calm the fears about his biomass plants in Franklin and Madison.

He begins by acknowledging some of the problems the startup of these plants has faced, but then pivots saying the real problem is people do not understand how the plant functions and its partnership with the community.

Seems to me, that at least the people who live near the plant understand all too well how the plants function and how they adversely affect peoples' quality of life.

Then, incredulously, Daily states that "I believe we were clear at the onset about the types of fuel we intended to burn-information that is included in our permit applications on file...."

Mr. Daily, there are public records that show this statement is an outright lie.

At a public hearing Sept. 22, 2015, a representative of GRP, Terry Williams, told the Franklin commissioners that GRP already had proper permits from the Georgia DOT as well as federal permits and that this plant "is strictly a cleanwood plant" and that this plant "will burn untreated wood products."

In fact, GRP got their permits amended later behind the scenes without informing the people or asking for their input

about the changes of what additional wood products could be burned.

Daily goes on to make the claim that abundant research shows that burning crossties "in properly controlled plants like ours has a virtually negligible impact on surrounding air quality."

In my research of the issue, the only people who make this claim are the propagandists and lobbyists for the biomass companies.

All of the leading health organizations argue that burning biomass in general and creosote specifically poses a grave threat to the health of those who come into contact with the emissions.

Burning creosote for fuel was banned in the United States and most European countries until 2016, when the EPA bowed to lobbyists from the wood treatment industry and allowed it to be burned.

Finally, Daily makes the preposterous statement that "I strongly believe that the Franklin County plant is a positive contributor to both the environment and the local community."

Truly a masterpiece of Orwellian doublespeak.

Yes, right is wrong and wrong is right, and the diminished lives of people living around the plant is a good thing.

In conclusion, during the whole process, almost everything that GRP has told the commissioners and the people who are affected by the plants has been distortions and lies.

They were told the plant

would make no more noise than a chicken house fan, that the plant would only burn clean wood, and that the plant would have no effect on noise, water, and air quality.

But now after all these broken promises, Mr. Daily would have us believe that his company really cares about our local community.

Shame on you Mr. Daily.

John H. Beasley,
Lavonia

Are you listening Mr. Dailey?

What a difference 45 days doesn't make.

In the Jan. 30 edition of the *Madison County Journal*, Georgia Renewable Power's President Steve Dailey tried his best to make the GRP plants in Madison and Franklin counties sound like the best thing that has ever happened there.

He failed miserably.

It was not difficult for the citizens of both counties to see through Mr. Dailey's GRP pep talk.

When it comes to operations at the GRP plants all they have to do is look, smell and listen to know the truth. Obviously Mr. Dailey realized he hadn't achieved his goal so I guess that's why he wrote another letter.

In Dailey's letter, which appeared in the March 12 editions of the *Madison County Journal* and *Franklin County Citizen Leader*, he tried again to sway public opinion.

This time though he departs a little, very little, from his glowing self-serving review of how great his plants are.

He reluctantly admits that there may have been some misunderstandings.

Mr. Dailey states that, "I am concerned that we have not done enough to educate people about our operation."

He follows this statement with a series of half truths and misinformation designed to make us believe that if we knew the facts, his facts, all the misunderstandings would just disappear.

On top of that, he attempts to dazzle us with the large amounts of money they have spent to make GRP a good neighbor.

To make things sound even better he throws in the large tax revenues paid to "the residents" of each county.

After all this, if we're still not "educated," he invites us to just stop by the plant for one of his weekly informal "open door" events.

"I will attend each of these sessions personally to make sure people are getting answers to their questions."

If you go, be prepared for more half truths and misinformation served "over refreshments."

The Madison County Clean Power Coalition (MCCPC) has information available on our website that can help everyone learn the truth about GRP.

Here's just one example.

On our site, you can see a copy of GRP's original 2015 permit application which did not

include creosote railroad ties.

There is also the July 2018 permit amendment in which allowed them to burn rail road ties treated with creosote.

That change is followed by another amended permit, December 2019, which would allowed them to burn all four types of chemically treated rail road crossties.

The dates on these permit amendments show that Mr. Dailey's claim, "I believed we were clear at the outset about the types of fuel we intended to burn," is just not true.

The changes were only posted on an EPD website.

If you're not signed up to receive these permit notices from the EPD you would not have any way of knowing about the changes.

GRP never bothered to mention these changes to the Franklin or Madison Board of Commissioners, to the IDA or to the citizens of both counties.

Our website addresses many other half truths and misinformation provided by GRP.

Take the time to visit MCCPC's web site, madisoncleanpowercoalition.com.

Read what's there and know the facts about GRP before you sit down with Mr. Dailey for answers served "over refreshments."

I'm sure you'll find that knowing the truth can be very refreshing. Mr. Dailey may say he hears us but he's certainly not listening.

Sincerely,

Drago Tesanovich,
MCCPC Co-Chair

Franklin County
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Denise Matthews
Editor emeritus

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Citizen Leader

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CONTINUING OBJECTIVES FOR FRANKLIN COUNTY

The *Franklin County Citizen Leader* will advocate for these issues in opinion columns and editorials and do stories on each issue.

Our priorities:
1) A museum of Franklin County history;
2) Passage of a special purpose local option sales

tax to be used solely for the improvement of roads in Franklin County (T-SPLIST);

3) County-wide animal control enforcement;
4) Improved interchanges on state highways in Royston, Lavonia and Franklin Springs.

The *Franklin County Citizen Leader* is published with pride for the people of Franklin and adjoining counties by Community Newspapers Inc. of Athens. We believe that strong newspapers build strong communities. Newspapers get things done.

Our primary goal is to publish distinguished and profitable community-oriented newspapers. This mission will be accomplished through the teamwork of professionals dedicated to truth, integrity, loyalty, quality and hard work.