

Importance of attendance recognized



Students, school and county officials gathered Tuesday to recognize the importance of attendance with a proclamation signing.

Organized by Director of Student Services Shelley Cantrell, the event recognized Pickens' great state ranking for attendance and how attendance is the key to

scholastic success.

Cantrell said the system has an overall 95 percent attendance rate, which they are "very happy with."

Speaking at the large gathering in the county's administration building, Superintendent Carlton Wilson said schools must prepare students for the work

world and emphasizing attendance is a top priority.

Good attendance at school is "establishing a habit for the rest of your life," Wilson said.

The proclamation officially marking September as National Attendance Awareness Month was signed by Commission Chair Rob

Jones. The proclamation stated National Attendance Awareness Month supports a growing movement of school leaders looking beyond average daily attendance and truancy numbers to identify and address the challenges that keep students from getting to school every day.

The proclamation stated

that missing 10 percent or more of school days for any reason is a proven predictor of academic trouble and dropout rates. Chronic absence predicts lower third-grade reading proficiency, course failure and eventual dropout.

"It weakens our communities and our local econ-

omy," stated the proclamation.

The proclamation ended with, "We hereby commit to focusing on reducing chronic absenteeism to give all children an equitable opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive academically, emotionally and socially."

How the beefsteak got so beefy: the complicated tale of taking tomatoes from tiny to tremendous



Professor Esther van der Knaap—who has spent much of her career working to understand the genetic shifts that occurred between ancestral, wild tomato varieties and modern, cultivated tomatoes—has helped to pinpoint another gene that regulates the size of the tomato's individual cells, which in turn helps to regulate the size of the overall fruit.

Ever wonder how that slice of tomato on your summer BLT got to be so perfectly bread sized?

Geneticists at the University of Georgia have found the gene variants that control a tomato's size. They published their findings recently in the open-access journal PLOS Genetics.

Professor Esther van der Knaap — who has spent much of her career working to understand the genetic shifts that have occurred between ancestral, wild tomato varieties and modern, cultivated tomatoes — has helped to pinpoint another gene that regulates the size of the tomato's individual cells, which in turn helps to regulate the size of the overall fruit.

"The knowledge of the gene will now open up avenues of research into how fruit size can be increased further without negatively

impacting other important qualities such as disease resistance and flavor," said van der Knaap, a professor in the department of horticulture and the Institute of Plant Breeding, Genetics and Genomics at UGA.

When humans first began cultivating the wild tomato in the Andean mountain regions of Ecuador and Northern Peru, they continually selected plants that produced larger fruits.

Now, thousands of years later, tomatoes on the market can weigh 1,000 times more than the fruits of their ancestors. Van der Knaap and her research team investigated a gene they named Cell Size Regulator, or CSR, that boosts fruit weight by increasing the size of the individual cells in the fleshy part of the tomato.

Compared to wild tomatoes, domesticated varieties carry a mutation in the CSR

gene that affects the way tomato cells develop before they ripen and fall off the plant. The variation originated in the cherry tomato but now appears in all large cultivated tomato varieties.

The new study expands on previous research that had identified the location of CSR at the bottom of chromosome 11 as only a small genetic contributor to tomato weight.

The transformation of the tiny, berry-like fruit of wild tomatoes into the beefsteaks or Roma tomatoes grown by farmers today involved the development of a new mutation to support the change in function of the CSR gene. Large fruit required many more mutations in other genes to allow the plant to carry and support its new bounty.

"There was slow selection for large fruit by people because, of course, if the tomato fruit grew too big for the plant, it would collapse the plant and that would be a dead-end plant," said van der Knaap. "If the fruit is too large for the plant then it can only make that one fruit before it collapses. Any farmer would say, 'That's no good, and toss it out.'"

It took thousands of years for farmers to breed tomato plants to produce the fruit we know today because they were selecting plants not only for large fruit but also for the structure needed to support the fruit. Van der Knaap and other researchers are still looking for the genes that contributed to the mutations that led to plants that could support larger tomatoes.

"For fruit weight, I think we have just scratched the surface — there's still a lot that we don't know," van der Knaap said.

Van der Knaap's team's journal article in PLOS Genetics is available at <http://journals.plos.org/plosgenetics/article?id=10.1371/journal.pgen.1006930>. Other collaborators are graduate student Qi Mu; postdoctoral scholars Zejun Huang, Manohar

Chakrabarti and Eudald Illa-Berenguer; visiting research scholars Xiaoxi Li and Yanping Wang; and graduate student Alexis Ramos.

(Merritt Melancon is a news editor with the University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. The staff of PLOS Genetics contributed to this release.)

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SPECIFICATIONS AND CONTRACT DOCUMENTS

CITY OF JASPER PROJECT NO. 2017-003 ASPHALT PAVING PROJECT

NOTICE TO BIDDERS

Separate sealed Bids for the construction of PROJECT NO. 2017-003 ASPHALT PAVING PROJECT will be received by the City of Jasper, 200 Burnt Mountain Road, Jasper GA 30143, until 1:00 pm local time on the 2nd day of October 2017 at said place publicly opened and read aloud.

The work to be done consists of cleaning, tacking and placing an asphaltic overlay, on 21 streets in the City of Jasper in approximate length as follows: Appalachian Trail 696 ft., Pioneer Industrial Blvd. 1280 ft., Don Westbrook Ave. N. 632 ft., Don Westbrook S. 547 ft., Oakmont 1367 ft., Fernwood Court 196 ft., Castlewood Court 619 ft., CC Pritchard St. 516 ft., Frontier Rd. 3436 ft., Rhododendron Dr. 533 ft., Linda Court 283 ft., Racheal Dr. 924 ft., Rebecca St. 3235 ft., Laurel Lane 134 ft., Settlement Rd. 1152 ft., Crystal Creek 1808 ft., Crystal Creek Way 598 ft., Crystal Creek Court 152 ft., Piney Ridge Rd. 1903 ft., Brer Rabbit Trail 1257 ft. and Piney Woods Court 501 ft.

The winning bidder will be required to do the following:

1. Provide a performance bond equal to the amount of the bid or a five (5%) deposit of the total bid.
2. Provide the City a copy of certificate of insurance with the City as additional insured.
3. After the award of the contract and before the start of work, you will be required to attend a pre-construction conference with representatives of the City. The conference will serve to acquaint the participants with the general plan for the paving of the streets and to discuss any special conditions that the City may have that may alter the original bid price.

No bids will be received or accepted after the above specified time for the opening of Bids. Bids submitted after the designated hour will be deemed invalid and returned unopened to the Bidder. The City of Jasper has the right to refuse any and all bids presented by all contractors.

Copies of Bidding Documents may be obtained on our website www.jasper-ga.us or at the City of Jasper located at 200 Burnt Mountain Road, Jasper, GA 30143 phone no. (706) 692-9100.

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