Facing the Challenges of Growth in Bryan County – Leaving a Footprint

By Evelyn Fallon
Bryan County News

Ben Taylor, county administrator, husband and father of three, has spent the last 14 years devoted to public administration. As a boy, Taylor grew up in Sylvester, Georgia with his brother and parents, both teachers. It was the influence of his father and his involvement in local politics that really sparked the public administration interest for Taylor, who now leads an estimated 300 county employees.

He said he accepts the challenges ahead and is looking forward. "We have the opportunity to make Bryan County a better place and we know it in a great family atmosphere. We look at school systems all over the coast, Richmond Hill and Bryan County. By working with the schools we have, we can see thatour kids would have been in private schools," said Taylor.

After graduating from the University of Georgia in 2000 with a degree in political science, Taylor transitioned to Georgia Southern University, where he firstly took a master's in public administration. As a boy, Taylor grew up in Pembroke in Bryan County, where Taylor initially brought my attention to it. Not every place in Georgia, especially Southeast Georgia, has the economic opportunity that we have here. He and Sarah, his wife, stayed in Ashburn. Our kids would have been in private schools," said Taylor.

"Sarah has been around since the beginning," Taylor said. "To be honest, this is our first move here. She is my rock and so is my family. In the community and in this county, we are lucky to have the commissioners we have. They have been a great support system too. They initially saw a need, cast the vision they wanted and sat this into motion," Taylor said.

By the time they moved to Bryan County he was looking at a growing and rapid record pace. Taylor believes all of the work that Bryan County is doing is a retirement workforce, transportation, and schools quickly reaching capacity.

"We want to meet the expectations of our citizens," Taylor said. "Our greatest challenge is growth. How are we going to pay for infrastructure, where is our economy and where are our kids going to go? We are being very busy. We have a lot of projects over the next few years, we are going to be very busy. It is a very important time, the team we develop and direction we go is crucial for the county as we move forward," Taylor said.

The administrator's office is responsible for the implementation of all policies, programs, contracts, ordinances, and resolutions as approved and drafted by the Bryan County Board of Commissioners. This office performs the administrative functions of the government, which support the activities of the commissioners. Bryan County's day-to-day operations are overseen by the Administrator who is appointed by the Commission. The administrator directs the staff of Bryan County to effectively perform all responsibilities of government under his or her control, in order to fulfill the mission of our county government. The administrator is also responsible for the preparation of the annual operating budget, and various capital budgets, which fund projects provided by the Board of Commissioners and many elected Constitutional Officers.

Bryan County is working to put plans in place to make the flow of traffic and how it impacts one's ability to navigate through town. Change is coming, and those in the community already see a change to supply new data on the usage of roadways in the area. Those in the community already see a change in flow of traffic and how it impacts one's ability to navigate through town. Change is coming, and the county is working to put plans in place to make the growth as smooth as possible.

"We want to meet the expectations of our citizens," said Taylor. 2017 is going to be a big year with ESPLOST renewal voting coming up in November and a TIPLOST vote in 2018. Both will impact the ability to focus on transportation and schools. One of the great challenges faced by the county is the assembly of the right team. Human resources have been involved in identifying where we need talent has been a new and key component to the process. "We now have a really good plan, we are able to conceptualize what we need and implement it," Taylor said.

Chairman Carter Infinger along with commissioners Noah Covington, District 1; Wade Price, District 2; Steve Myers, District 3; Brad Brookins, District 4; and Rick Gardner of District 5 decide policy. One of the greatest blessings for Taylor has been that the county has been working on a base to leave a footprint. "Being able to create something out of nothing is a blessing. My big goal is that we get the base of the community to come together and meet the demands upon us. We have a lot of projects over the next few years, we are going to be very busy." It is a very important time, the team we develop and direction we go is crucial for the county as we move forward." Taylor said.

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Q: How have you seen your leadership impact the county?
A: Ben has a master’s degree and this is one of the reasons we hired him. He’s quiet, but he is always listening and trying to solve the problems in the county. His experience as a city manager also makes him an asset because he can help both Richmond Hill and Pembroke, when needed to help the whole county solve issues. Under Ben’s leadership the future of Bryan County is in good hands.

Q: What makes County Administrator, Ben Taylor an asset to the future of the county?
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Q: What is your name and current job title?
A: Carter Infinger, Chairman of the Board, Bryan County Commissioners

Q: When did you first meet Ben Taylor?
A: I met Ben during our search for a new county administrator.

Q: How new have you seen his leadership impact the county?
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