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WEEKEND

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Kevin Price, GPA president, speaks during the annual Georgia Ports Authority State of the Ports on October 14 at the Savannah Convention Center. PHOTOS BY RICHARD BURKHART/SAVANNAH MORNING NEWS

Port of Savannah logs second-busiest month

Evan Lasseter
Savannah Morning News
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Port of Savannah logged its second-busiest month on record in October, the Georgia Ports Authority announced at its Tuesday board meeting.

Savannah's port handled 565,366 twenty-foot equivalent container units (TEUs) last month, second only to September 2022 during the post-pandemic logistics boom. October's volume was up nearly 25% over the same month last year.

Ports leaders said October's success shows GPA's investments, from rail capacity to new roads, are paying off.

"Even when the volume spiked, no one from the outside world knew the difference," Price said. "We ran business as

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A cargo ship steams into the turning basin at the Georgia Ports Authority Garden City Terminal.

BRYAN COUNTY

Ellabell Village plans advance

Commissioners approve a proposed 267-unit rental community

Latrice Williams
Savannah Morning News
USA TODAY NETWORK

Ellabell could soon see a major new residential development after Bryan County Commissioners approved a 267-unit rental community during the Nov. 10 county meeting.

Developer Taylor Smith went before the board last week, seeking to rezone 65 acres from rural residential to multi-family residential for his planned development.

Blitchton Village was designed by Smith who started his own development company less than a year ago after working for another developer. He is now venturing out on his own with the help of his brother, Steven Smith. The brothers collaborated to draw up plans for the community proposed for a site across from Ken's IGA near the intersection of U.S. 80 and Georgia 280.

"It feels like a success," said Smith, who owns Blitchton Village.

Smith told the *Savannah Morning News* that he has a timeline prepared and expects construction to be more than a year away, especially given today's interest rates.

During the meeting Kings Way resident Patti Smith raised concerns about the site's proposed emergency exit, saying traffic congestion on Highway 80 is "unreal."

She said she does not oppose development but questioned why the homes could not be built on smaller lots to preserve the county's rural character.

"Let's get the roads fixed first because you're going to throw 267 units into this with more traffic," she said. "We can't even hardly get out of our roads in the mornings and evenings with the truck traffic, with everybody.

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Can CPS take children without a court hearing?

Sara Tiano
For The Imprint

This story was originally published by The Imprint , a national nonprofit news outlet covering child welfare and youth justice.

Georgia's Supreme Court will soon rule on a case that seeks to clarify when CPS workers can remove a child from home without first allowing parents their day in court.

The case, centered on "emergency removals" involving children believed to be in imminent danger, stems from a 2024 lawsuit against the state's Division of Family and Children Services.

Dayshundra Wilson, an Atlanta mother of five, argued that her due process rights were violated because CPS took two of her children into foster care even though there were no acute concerns about their safety. Wilson's children were returned to her days after their removal.

Her lawsuit alleges that the Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) relies on an overly broad interpretation of when child welfare workers can remove a child, and asks the state Supreme Court to require that courts identify "an objective finding of imminent danger" before allowing an emergency removal.

Wilson's attorneys cite a 1972 case, Stanley v. Illinois, in which the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that under the Fourteenth Amendment, parents are entitled to a hearing on their fitness before their children can be taken from them, except in emergencies.

"Absent further order of this Court, DFCS may remove any parent's child — infringing upon a right described as 'cherished and sacrosanct' — without a hearing and without even alleging that an emergency justifies that removal," Wilson's lawsuit alleges.

Wilson's suit, filed by Atlanta public defenders representing parents, also asks the state's highest court to vacate lower court rulings that found the removal of her children to be lawful. Having this on her record, her lawyer argues, could be used against her in future questions about her parenting, either by CPS or in other custody proceedings.

Attorneys for the state maintain that

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