

Group to establish Rabun County H.S. Wall of Fame

Submitted

A group of former Rabun County High School players and coaches is seeking community input to honor outstanding Wildcat athletes of the past in all sports.

Called the RCHS Wall of Fame, the group expects to name its first class of honorees this fall. They will be honored before or at halftime of a Rabun County High School football game.

The plan is to recognize honorees by placing a plaque highlighting their achievements on the wall located on the east end of the football stadium.

The group's mission statement reads: "To recognize and honor players, coaches and teams who had a profound and lasting impact on Rabun County High School athletics and the community as a whole."

Honorees will be broken into two categories: Post-1950 and the Early Rabun Era encompassing 1900 to 1949.

Eligibility: Post-1950: Players must have attended Rabun County High School and have been out of school for 10 years; former RCHS coaches who have not coached at Rabun for at least five years; and boosters and friends of athletic programs who have shown at least 20 years of continued sup-

port.

Pre-1950, known as the Early Rabun Era, players and coaches must have attended or coached at RCHS or attended the Rabun public school system.

Nominations: Members of the public can submit names of players and coaches nominated for the Wall of Honor to Roy Quilliams, RCHS Class of '80, via e-mail at RCHSHOF@outlook.com.

Names must be accompanied by documentation of the nominee's athletic career at RCHS and any post-secondary school achievements.

The Wall of Honor committee will determine the number of selections annually and announce the new members to the public. Inductees will be honored prior to or during an athletic event at RCHS.

"An athletic hall of fame is something that many communities throughout Georgia have done for many years," said committee member Tom Law, RCHS Class of '76, now a resident of Toccoa.

"We really should have formed a hall of fame 30 or 40 years ago. Because we're a bit late to the game, our first class is going to be larger than normal. We're planning on recognizing at least 10 people or teams this first year. In subsequent years we have discussed adding three to five honorees

each year."

The committee believes there will be widespread support for the Wall of Honor.

"RCHS has a long, rich and colorful athletic history," Law said. "We envision the Wildcat athletes of the future reading the plaques on the wall and envisioning how they may possibly achieve the same honor while playing for RCHS. And, we know that athletes of the past, their families and friends, will treasure the memories the wall will trigger."

There are four points the committee wants to emphasize, according to Law.

"One. Athletes in all sports will be honored – not just football, basketball and baseball. All sports, male and female. Two. Entire teams will be included. There are some teams in RCHS history that may not have had wall of fame calibre players, but who, as an entire unit, achieved great success and positively impacted the entire school athletic program.

"Three. This is just the first year of an ongoing program. If some RCHS athletes or coaches do not make the wall this year, there will be future years. They may make the wall in year two, year three or year 15. We envision this program to go on indefinitely – as long as RCHS plays sports.

"And four, this honor is not just about points scored, yards gained or home runs hit. It's also about how individuals and teams effected their teammates, their classmates, the entire community," Law said.

The committee is seeking monetary help to pay for purchase and installation of the plaques. If you would like to contribute to the program, Quilliams, committee member Allyn Stockton (RCHS Class of 1987) or Law.

"We want to stress that we will not build up a nest egg in a savings account," Law said. "We want to raise just enough money each year to pay for plaques which we want to be very nice and ones that can stand the test of time. Once we raise the needed amount, we will cut off contributions each year. Because the first class of honorees will be the biggest, the money needed this year will be more this year

than in coming years."

Committee meetings have been productive, he said.

"We have met five or six times and yes, we have discussed some names and teams that

could be included in the first class. It's been a fun and challenging process. I think followers of RCHS athletics will be pleased and pleasantly surprised at some members of the first class," Law said.



Commissioners approve funding for Forward Rabun

By Megan Broome
Staff Writer

CLAYTON—Forward Rabun has partnered with Rabun County Commissioners to distribute hotel/motel tax funds for tourism development on the county's behalf following a unanimous vote from county commissioners at their meeting on Tuesday.

"A contract between the county and Forward Rabun for them to expend our hotel/motel tax," said Allyn Stockton, county attorney.

Forward Rabun is an umbrella organization that consists of the Development Authority of Rabun County, the Rabun County Chamber of Commerce and Welcome Center and a tourism entity.

Stockton explained that the county and Forward Rabun have entered into a Memorium of Understanding (MOU) contract, and that in exchange for the county leasing them the building at 10 Seed Tick Rd., Clayton, Forward Rabun would administer the county's hotel/motel tax funds.

"We're providing utilities and maintenance on the building," Stockton said.

It was noted that this arrangement is similar to the county's con-

tract with Paws 4 Life, in which a third party provides services to the county in exchange for funding from county commissioners. Such as in the instance that Paws 4 Life provides animal control services to Rabun County.

Stockton said that this is a 12-month contract that renews automatically each year, but that there is language in the document allowing for cancellation under certain guidelines.

He clarified that Forward Rabun is an independent, outside organization separate from the county.

Commissioner Stephen Arbitter spoke about how tourism and economic development are linked together and very important, especially to the economy of Rabun County.

He said he supports this partnership with Forward Rabun.

"This puts all of the stakeholders in one room, face to face," Arbitter said.

Rick Story, director of development, briefly spoke to commissioners and explained the Forward Rabun concept, noting the benefits of working together.

The cities of Sky Valley, Dillard, and most recently Clayton have also agreed to partner with Forward Rabun.

Sky Valley council members voted earlier this year to fund Forward Rabun 100 percent from their hotel/motel tax allocation.

The city of Dillard agreed to provide 50 percent of its taxes to Forward Rabun and 50 percent to Dillard's tourism development committee.

The city of Clayton at their meeting last Tuesday voted to give .75 percent to Forward Rabun and 1.25 percent to the Clayton Merchants and Business Association (CMBA).

Story says that although the tax allocation differs, the cities are in full partnership. "We're in a good place," Story said about Forward Rabun.

Part of the Forward Rabun concept includes a committee of 21 people who are represented by different cities and areas of Rabun County.

Commissioners voted to approve their five board member representatives, who are Brett Edwards, Robert Pittman, Stephen Arbitter, Pam Thompson, and Greg James, who will represent the commissioners.

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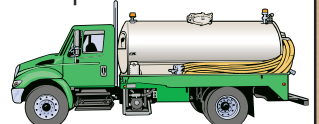
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