

# WINNERS



Bob Weatherford, left, joins the Cobb Board of Commissioners, Sam Olens of east Cobb is re-elected as state attorney general and Susan Thayer joins the Cobb Board of Education after Tuesday night's elections.

**1B**

More results  
▶ 4A, 5A, 5B



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WEATHER: 70 | 58 MOSTLY CLOUDY > 8D **GUEST EDITORIAL:** EXPECT MORE 'CITIZEN RESPONSES' AGAINST 'CITIZEN JIHADISTS' > 6A

# SPLOST sails through



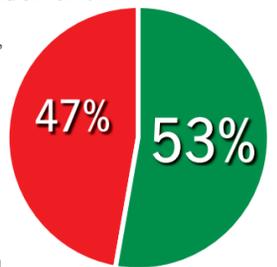
Cobb Commission Chairman Tim Lee, right, and Justin O'Dell, co-chairman of Secure Cobb's Future, standing next to Lee, look at the latest wave of results late Tuesday evening that pushes the SPLOST referendum into the lead. The tax measure passed, giving Cobb six more years of the 1 percent special purpose local option sales tax. / Staff-Kelly J. Huff

Special tax renewed for six more years, to collect \$750 million

By Ricky Leroux  
rleroux@mdjonline.com

**MARIETTA** — The voters have spoken: Cobb County's special 1 percent sales tax will remain in place until the end of 2021.

With all 145 precincts reporting, 110,903, or 53 percent, voted to extend the special purpose local option sales tax for another six years, compared to 99,012, or 47 percent, voting against the renewal.



The county estimates it will collect \$750 million in revenue from the tax over its six-year life, which it will use to fund a variety of transportation, parks and recreation and public safety projects.

"I'm very appreciative of the voters and the people that helped support it," Cobb Chairman Tim Lee said after the results of the vote became clear. "I'm so grateful and humbled. It seems to me that the folks believe that we're heading in the right direction."

Justin O'Dell, co-chair of the SPLOST-advocacy group Secure Cobb's Future, said

SPLOST, 3A

## U.S. SENATE

# GOP keeps seat with Perdue win

By Christina A. Cassidy  
Associated Press Writer

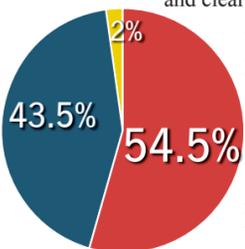
**ATLANTA** — Businessman David Perdue has kept Georgia's open U.S. Senate seat in GOP hands, beating his Democratic challenger on the strength of white voters in the reliably Republican state.

Democrats hoped Michelle Nunn, the daughter of a popular champion of bipartisanship, former Sen. Sam Nunn, would enable them to pick up a seat in an otherwise dismal midterm election.

But Perdue overcame repeated attacks on his business record

by arguing that Nunn would be a rubber stamp for President Barack Obama. "I think Georgia made it loud and clear tonight that we are going to stop the failed policies of President Obama and Sen. Harry Reid," Perdue said in his victory speech. Earlier Tuesday, he said "people who really love America" would decide the election.

Perdue won 54.5 percent of the vote to 43.5 percent for Nunn with 96 percent of precincts reporting. Exit polling showed Nunn won more than half the female vote



PERDUE, 5A



David Perdue



Gov. Nathan Deal

## GOVERNOR

# Deal wins big in re-election bid

By Kathleen Foody and Kate Brumback  
Associated Press Writers

**ATLANTA** — Gov. Nathan Deal won big in a re-election victory Tuesday after a bruising campaign, defeating Democrat Jason Carter despite shifting demographics in the Republican stronghold of Georgia and the family pedigree of his opponent.

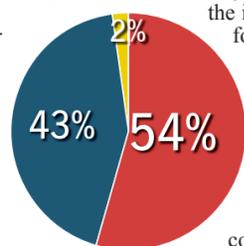
Democrats had hoped that Carter, a state senator and grandson of former President Jimmy Carter, could build a coalition of voters who typically sit out non-presidential races and take

down Deal.

The incumbent was part of a Republican takeover of the state's constitutional offices in 2010. But Deal's relentlessly optimistic take on the state's economy proved effective, and Carter didn't make the impact he needed by focusing on the state's high unemployment rate and cuts to education.

Unofficial tallies showed Deal winning more than 54 percent of the vote Tuesday with about 96 percent of the expected vote counted.

His next term will be devoted to bettering Georgia, Deal told supporters gathered Tuesday night at the College Football Hall



DEAL, 4A



# SPLOST

From 1A

opposition to the tax has been working to confuse people and the margin of victory would have been larger had it not been for the "misinformation."

Still, O'Dell said Cobb voters were able to make an informed decision about the tax.

"I think it shows that Cobb County still has a very informed, very educated voter base," he said. "People make informed decisions, and they were able to see it for what it was, not what the other side wanted it to be."

Lance Lamberton, chairman of the Cobb Taxpayers Association and one of the leading voices against the tax, said his organization, which also opposed the 2005 and 2011 SPLOST referendums, faced an uphill battle in trying to defeat the ballot measure.

He said the pro-SPLOST camp has "saturated" mailboxes with fliers and phone lines with robocalls on Election Day, which affected the decisions of undecided voters.

"The main reason that it won is because of the disproportionate amount of money that was available on their side to advocate for their position," Lamberton said. "That really is the reason. There's no doubt in my mind that if the resources were anywhere closer or more balanced between what we had and what they had, then we would have won, perhaps in a landslide."

According to campaign disclosure reports filed Oct.



Above: Anti-SPLOST activists Tommy Clayton, left, and Lance Lamberton review early voting results during election night at the Rose and Crown. / Staff-Katherine Frye

23, Secure Cobb's Future has received more than \$85,000 in contributions, while the Cobb Taxpayers Association has received only \$3,193.

The Town Center Area Community Improvement District donated \$50,000 for "voter education" on the SPLOST, while the Cumberland CID gave \$150,000 for education efforts. The CID contributions were given to a separate education organization called Cobb Issues Education Forum, Inc.

"What we are always dealing with is the outsized resources of the proponents, and that's always a huge hurdle," Lamberton said.

The SPLOST measure passed by about 11,000 votes, which is different from past years since SPLOST has a history of small margins of victory in the county.

In 2005, 19,947 citizens voted yes on SPLOST, compared to 19,833 who voted no, a difference of 114 votes. And in 2011, the margin was even smaller: 21,552 citizens voted yes and 21,462 voted

no, a difference of 90 votes.

However, both the 2005 and 2011 SPLOST votes were in specially held elections.

O'Dell said critics of the tax have used this fact against the pro-SPLOST group in the past.

"That's always been their challenge," he said. "They always said we hold it in a special election to affect the outcome and they dared us to hold it in a general election, then a vote in the general election passes by a wider margin. It shows that the people in Cobb County understand the issue and support it."

Lee said the narrow passage of the 2011 SPLOST renewal was due to the economic environment at the time.

"At least the last one I was involved in, the economy was having some rough times, and I think that reflected on the tightness of the race as well," he said. "And it's a big, complicated issue to get a grasp on, so some-



Above: Justin O'Dell, the chairman of Secure Cobb's Future, is congratulated by Cobb County Chairman Tim Lee after the second round of results hit the video screen Tuesday evening for the 2014 SPLOST vote at The Strand. O'Dell campaigned with his group to show the positives of passing the measure. / Staff-Kelly J. Huff

times people default know on that. But I believe we have an educated electorate and they evaluate and make the right decision."

Lee said the most significant challenge faced by the campaign to renew the SPLOST was making sure citizens knew what the tax means to the county.

"I think the biggest thing is understanding how important it is to our mix of revenue to be able to deliver the level of services that we do that are so important to the quality of life that we enjoy," he said.

Lee said he hoped county voters would look at the projects accomplished with the 2005 and 2011 SPLOSTs and decide to continue the tax. He also touted the benefits of keep-

ing the tax in place.

"It keeps taxes low," he said. "It keeps the cost of doing business in the county low. It significantly enhances the quality of life and enables us to continue to reinvest in our infrastructure to make sure that its top notch."

Lamberton said voters are so used to paying the tax they most likely voted to maintain the status quo. The pro-SPLOST camp argued Cobb has a low millage rate and a low sales tax compared to other metro counties, Lamberton said, but this is a mixed message.

"If that's a good thing, then why wouldn't it be better for (taxes) to be even lower?" he said.

Lee said he doesn't think outside issues, such as crit-

icism of the deal to bring the Atlanta Braves to Cobb County or the pending ethics complaint against him, influenced voters when they cast their ballots.

"I really think this is what folks have asked for: a vote up or down on the issues that are important to them and their quality of life," he said. "And I think in the end, they will make a decision on that rather than other issues."

O'Dell agreed, saying he did not understand this line of reasoning.

"I think those people will be sad to learn that what will happen is all of the projects and figuring out how to pay for them will go right back to the commissioners that they just said that they didn't like or trust," he said.

## AP ■ CIVIL RIGHTS

# Groups question election leaders after some issues

ATLANTA — State and national civil rights groups say issues some voters faced when they went to the polls Tuesday reinforced their skepticism toward Georgia elections officials and voter registration efforts.

Diamond Walton, an 18-year-old college student in Columbus, said she called the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights and the New Georgia Project after being told to cast a provisional ballot because she wasn't on a list of eligible voters. Walton said she presented her registration confirmation and officials found her name on an alternate registration list.

"It was pretty overwhelming and a little discouraging because I thought my vote wouldn't even matter," Walton said late Tuesday afternoon.

Several groups have accused Georgia elections officials of not processing applications quickly enough. A state judge in late October declined to act in the dispute, saying the groups didn't prove elections officials weren't doing their jobs. Georgia Secretary of State Brian Kemp has said forms from every eligible voter were processed.

Leaders of the New Georgia Project said Walton was one of more than 50,000 voters who didn't show up on official voter lists by late October. The group's leader, Democratic Rep. Stacey Abrams of Atlanta, said Walton initially registered in Fayette County and filed a form to change her address so she could vote in Muscogee County where she attends college.

"A registered voter changing her address required a team of national lawyers to be able to vote," Abrams said. "That should not be happening in the 21st century in Georgia."

Voters in other areas of the state also faced

hassles at polling places Tuesday and some were linked to elections staff errors.

DeKalb County Elections Director Maxine Daniels told WSB-TV some voters at a polling place had to use paper ballots because machines were incorrectly programmed and featured names for the wrong candidates.

Simon Says...



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*A Glass of Water (Winnwood Wisdom)*

## My Favorite Orator

By: John P. Rauls, Columnist

As I have expressed in past articles I am a slight admirer of President Ronald W. Reagan. Whether you agreed with Reagan's policies or not, his Edison-like wisdom is undeniable. In the 1980's this Democrat turned Republican had a strategy for our energy crisis, and a foreign affairs policy of "peace through strength" that would ultimately defeat the Soviet Empire. I have a small piece of that torn down Berlin wall in a shadow box behind my desk at Winnwood. It's an ever present reminder of the dangers of man's walls. Reagan knew that governments that built walls would lead to its people having limited to no voice.

Through my own avid studying of world history plus adding Reagan's knowledge of our country's forefathers, I have developed a real appreciation for the fundamentals of our former President. I believe one of Reagan's most applaud-able beliefs was his crystal clear ideology encouraging limited national government, while at the same time demanding that politicians work for the people, not the people working for a bigger government. Is this the case now?

I remember watching countless hours of Reagan speaking on C-Span with my grandfather and father. Grand dad would say, "Now that's a good man!" When referring to President Reagan. As a young man I was fascinated with Reagan's ability to reach people through his deep convictions, laser-like word choice and powerful inter-constitution anchoring his personal belief system. He was quick witted, stern yet displayed a grand sense of humor and confidence! One of his most memorable statements was while lying on the operating table after an assassination attempt on his life. {Reagan looked up at all the doctors and nurses and jokingly said, "I sure hope all of you are Republicans." They said, "We are today Mr. President; we are today!"} By all accounts history shows the Secret Service and the medical team at the hospital saved Reagan, but I will unequivocally say that his bride, wife and soul mate Nancy ultimately saved the man and made him the one we would hail as President. Today, Nancy Reagan is 93 and still sharing anecdotes and wisdom that inspires generations. God Bless Nancy! Thank You for sharing your husband Ronnie with us!

John.  
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