Early voting starts Monday for E-SPLOST

BY REN LEONARD
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Early voting starts Monday for the education special purpose local option sales tax (E-SPLOST).

Spalding County Elections Supervisor Terry Callaway said early voting will be held Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Feb. 23 to March 13. There is no Saturday voting for this election and early voting will continue through March 17. If approved by voters, the tax would be the fifth E-SPLOST, which expires Jan. 30 and E-SPLOST V would start on July 1, and continue for up to five years for the raising of not more than $39 million, though based on current collections, revenue is estimated at $100,000 a month or $4.2 million over five years.

If the reappointment of the E-SPLOST is approved by the voters, each school board will have a say in how the sales tax is distributed. If approved, funds would be distributed to the Griffin-Spalding County School System in the following amounts:

- Griffin Elementary School
- Griffin Middle School
- Griffin High School
- Spalding County High School
- Spalding County School

The estimated cost of these projects is $15 million, with $3 million allocated to each school.

Student returns as a student

BY SHARON DOWDY
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UGA-Griffin retiree returns as a student

William Slaughter retired in 2014, after 30 years as a research coordinator on the University of Georgia campus in Griffin. The Georgia Army National Guard Warrant Officer III, who served two tours of duty in Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan, is completing a Peace Corps assignment in a Christmas tree farm in Sunny Side, Ga. He’s decided to take on another venture — that of a UGA Griffin Campus college student.

Slaughter, 52, is working toward a bachelor’s degree in agricultural education.

“I think this degree will fit well with my experience at UGA-Griffin campus and also my personal agricultural background of operating a Christmas tree farm and having grown row crops and hay in the past as well,” said Slaughter.

UGA-Griffin retiree returns as a student

STUDENT FROM THE FRONT PAGE

Despite his experience in the agricultural field, Slaughter said he’s learning new things through his UGA College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences classes. As an agricultural education, or “ag ed,” student, he’s learning to teach agriculture classes and to work with FFA.

Most ag ed teachers also serve on FFA chapter advisor.

“It’s a totally new learning aspect,” he said. “This is a great experience, and I’m really excited to teach agriculture classes and work with FFA.”

Slaughter isn’t the only new student at UGA-Griffin.

“I told them about UGA programs in teaching, research and extension and about potential jobs in agriculture past high school, I tried to bring awareness to them,” he said.

The Sunny Side native has taken four classes at the school in the past two semesters and has earned an associate’s degree in agriculture studies from Clayton State University in 2009.