



around town

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FEBRUARY 2016

Couple Invents Emergency System for Police Pursuits

Ex-assistant sheriff, wife create resource to warn public of high-speed chases

originally published in The Greenville News on January 17th by Ron Barnett

During a 37-year career in law enforcement, Tim Morgan saw more than his share of high-speed police pursuits that ended badly. It was one of the aspects of the job that bothered him the most, especially as a supervisor. Morgan, who was assistant sheriff for Pickens County until 2012, had long had a nagging feeling that there must be a way to warn the public when a chase is on other than a blue light and a siren.

“We have warning systems for flood, lightning, tornadoes and hurricanes. Yet more people are killed annually in pursuits than all four of those combined,” he said, citing statistics from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. He’d had an idea bouncing around in his mind for several years on how that could be done, but he didn’t know how to go about turning it into a product. Until he met with Mark Reid Davis, director the Pickens Innovation Center, a new entrepreneur resource center in Pickens.

With help from Davis, Morgan and his wife, Trish, have developed that idea into a working system that’s in the beta testing phase. They plan to unveil it in March and have it on the market by summer. “We think it’s a tremendous need and something that’s potentially life-saving,” Morgan said.

Market Demand

It’s also something that could find a huge market. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says an average of one death a day can be attributed to police chases. The agency counts a total of 11,506 chase-related deaths since 1979.

But a USA TODAY review last September of police reports and internal documents, court records, police-car videos and news accounts based on police statements found that the NHTSA overlooked at least 101 such deaths in 2013 – understating the total by at least 31 percent.

The number of injuries is likely triple the number of fatalities from police chases, Morgan said. There’s no requirement that law enforcement agencies report chases, he said, which makes calculating the total cost in lives and damages difficult.

Pickens Revitalization Association is dedicated to the enhancement, preservation and sustainable growth of Pickens’ historic downtown area.

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LOCAL NEWS

Police Pursuits cont'd

You don't have to look far to find pursuits that have ended in disaster. A lieutenant with the North Greenville Fire Department was killed last September in a wrong-way crash involving a suspect who was running from deputies. On Christmas night 2014, 22-year-old Taylor Miller of Simpsonville died when the car in which he was a passenger was hit by a Highway Patrol trooper who was in pursuit of another vehicle that had sped through a safety checkpoint on State 124 near Woodside Avenue. In April 2014, a 70-year-old man in Travelers Rest was killed when an SUV driver hit speeds of at least 100 mph going through Travelers Rest as he was fleeing from police.

The state Department of Public Safety pursuit policy allows vehicle pursuits "only when the necessity of the apprehension of a suspect outweighs the risks created by the pursuit." But sometimes that's difficult to judge. Morgan nearly lost his own life in a pursuit years ago. He and another deputy were chasing suspects in a home break-in along a mountainous road when their patrol car ran off the road around a hairpin curve. "Had it not landed exactly right between two trees, we would have gone another 150 feet down the embankment," he said. "My arm is still crooked from the injuries of that."

The financial costs of police pursuits are enormous as well, Morgan said. "It's in the billions, with property damage, financial payouts to survivors with lost wages, with disability, with hospitalization. It's a huge payout," he said. It's not a problem in the United States only. Deaths in police pursuits have tripled in the United Kingdom over a four-year period, and it's also a major issue in Japan, Malaysia and other countries, Morgan said. So he's expecting a worldwide market. Based on research by patent attorneys and graduate students working with the Morgans, there's no product like theirs on the market, Trish Morgan said.

Public Safety Focus

Concern for the public out on the highways when a pursuit is underway is what's driving Morgan's business plan. "There's no good pursuit, just like there's no good war," he said. "But you're going to continue to have both." "It's something that nobody really knows what to do with," he said. "The pursuits are deadly, they're bad. You continue to try to regulate them as best you can but you can't outlaw them. "This is hopefully a way to better manage them and notify the public." A big part of the challenge is the unpredictability of a police chase. "They're unpredictable, they're fast and they're deadly. So you just have to monitor them as close as you can," Morgan said.

But the system the Morgans have come up with – details of which are being kept under wraps until March – promises to solve that problem. The idea involved using five different pieces of existing technology to create a system that would be free for the public to use, said Davis, who is helping with the product development. The product the Morgans have developed unifies these tools and makes their use seamless, "and it saves lives," Davis said. "That's the beauty of what the two of them have done."



Tim Morgan, former Pickens County Assistant Sheriff, and his wife Trish have invented a way to warn the public of police chases. Through connections at the Pickens Innovation Center, the project has been developed and will be unveiled in March.

LOCAL NEWS

Police Pursuits cont'd

Business Background

Although he worked for the Sheriff's Office for most of his career, Morgan started out in business management at Milliken after earning a business degree at Erskine College. "It was a good organization, it just wasn't fulfilling," he said. So after a year, he left for the Sheriff's Office, starting out as a deputy. He took a cut in pay to do it, but said he felt a calling. "It just felt like something I wanted to do or needed to do," he said. He left the Sheriff's Office after an unsuccessful run for sheriff in 2012, when his longtime boss, C. David Stone, retired. Since then, he's been working for Blue Ridge Security, which he says has been "very supportive" of his entrepreneurial venture.

Davis believes Morgan's background as a pilot helped in his ability to envision his product. Morgan has been flying since the 1970's, often transporting prisoners who have been extradited. "He sees everything in a dashboard. All the complexities of the aircraft are right in front of him as a pilot," Davis said. "That's what he's done with his business. He's set up a business where all of the components are right in front of him. "So he's piloting this business as he's piloted aircraft. It doesn't matter how dangerous something is behind you, like a prisoner or whatever. He still has control of the aircraft. And I see him doing the same thing with his business."

His wife, Trish, who has been actively involved in the development of the product, also has a background in business. She owns a store in Easley called Home Decorators Warehouse. Before that she worked in sales at the Reserve at Lake Keowee and also has been in pharmaceutical sales. "I've been involved since the beginning with our team," she said. "And going forward, I'll be out selling the product." "Actually going forward, Trish will most likely be running the show," her husband said. The couple has a provisional patent on the product and is doing beta testing this month. Testing will be expanded in February and the product unveiling is set for March 7.

They've developed a week-by-week strategic plan through 2017 that calls for them to set up a storefront in Pickens this November. The Morgans credit Davis and the Pickens Innovation Center with bringing their idea to life. "We wouldn't be here had it not been for the center," Tim Morgan said. "Because this is something we've bounced around and talked about with different people for the past five or six years and it just never got traction because the people didn't have the connections."

They hope to use a local company on a contract basis to manufacture the product, in keeping with the center's goal of fostering synergy between local entrepreneurs and existing businesses. "This is not a cure-all," Tim Morgan said of the police pursuit warning system. "Hopefully it will prevent some injuries. "If it saves some lives, that's the good part about it," his wife said.



Commercialization Day at Pickens Innovation Center

Monday, March 7th

11am - 1pm

107 Court Street, Pickens

Showcasing our first four companies and products
out of the Pickens Innovation Center!
Come join us for the announcement!

LOCAL NEWS

The Rensing Center a Haven for Writers, Artists

originally published in The Greenville News on January 26th by Charles Sowell

The Rensing Center, at its heart, is a place apart where writers and artists can come to practice their craft in isolation and stillness, a place where the beauty of nature is celebrated. The center itself is internationally known. To be perfectly frank, it is a place in the country isolated a couple of miles out Mile Creek Road, west of Pickens, with sweeping views of a small valley and forest beyond that has played host to New York Times writers and folks from nearly every civilized country on earth.

It is also the homeplace of Ellen Kochansky and Evelyn Rensing Kochansky, for whom the center is named. They are a mother daughter pair of artists trained in New York City with big reputations that are well known in the local arts community and beyond. Ellen started the center and named it for her mother in honor of her career as a teacher and artist. Evelyn is nearly 95 now and is legally blind. Her upcoming birthday will be a big event at the center.

It is not much to look at, as seen from Mile Creek Road, just an old, small, white building with a hand-painted sign on it and a small mailbox with 1165 on it. In the numbering the sign is hard to make out—the numbers are all black, except for the six which is a light yellow and almost invisible. They don't worry about signs at the center. They do worry, very much, about growing closer to nature and learning to make do with what they have, which is why most of the main buildings use well-designed passive solar heating. Most were put together on sight with materials that were available.

Ellen Kochansky lives in a small gray house near the entrance, just down the hill from her mother's home. It is an artist's paradise with lots of her own art as well as some done by her mom. It also has passive solar heating, the walls in places are made from old tin sheeting from roofs. There is a massive glass wall on the eastward-facing wall — overlooking a large pasture and the woods beyond — that heats most of the building.

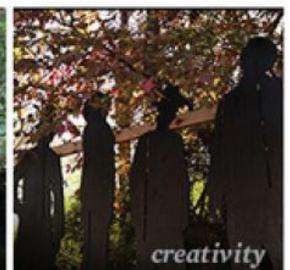
It is a pleasant place, one that is filled with memories. In her bedroom Ellen keeps an award-winning dressing screen that is made from filmy cloth and strips of old letters written by her parents during World War II. "Mom said she couldn't stand to read this again and cut the letters into strips. So I took the some of the strips and made this piece. It won an award at a local showing."

The white building is a library, workshops and living space for residents. It started out about 100 years ago as an old shop structure and is still undergoing reconstruction. Workmen have uncovered some of the building's old oaken beams, making the place a bit drafty, but it should be ready for occupancy again by the time more residents arrive.

On the road up to Evelyn's house is a small house used by residents as a full-time dwelling. It has two small bedrooms and is quite popular. At the top of the property is the center's main building, which uses passive solar for most of its heating. It also has an earth-buried wall and skylights that enhance the naturally produced heat. Most interesting in all of this are the narrow columns built behind an eastward-facing glass wall. The roof is built so that the columns are open to the sun during the winter months and shaded during the summer.

The center is also near the start of a trail system that leads down to a waterfall and the woods on the backside of the place. It is also home to the center's annual meeting and other communal get togethers. Ellen's cloth-filled studio, where she designs modernistic quilts is on the lowest level of Evelyn's house near a door leading out to a glorious view of the pasture with a half-dozen white goats.

For a visit, contact Ellen Kochansky at 864-380-1267 or rensingcenter@gmail.com. Learn more at www.rensingcenter.org.



FEATURED PROMOTIONS and EVENTS

Arthur Miller's

THE CRUCIBLE Auditions

Date: FEBRUARY 11th & 12th

Time: 5:30-8:00 pm

Location: Enrapt Annex at The Easley Loft
(319 Gentry Memorial HWY, Easley)

Be prepared for a cold read from the Crucible script. You are encouraged to be familiar with the script before coming in to audition. We are looking for a few children and teens to fulfill roles but mostly adults (17 and up).

Directed by:
Breann Griffin Nicholson
bgriffin@enrapt.org | 864-419-0046

Enrapt Theatre and Arts Center
118 Theatre Company



Grand Opening & Ribbon Cutting

Saturday, February 6th
10am
710 W. Main Street

Gathering ON Appalachian Life in Historic Pickens



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27TH

8:30am - 4:30pm

Hagood Community Center
129 Schoolhouse Street, Pickens

Join us for a fun day of learning about life in the Southern Appalachian Mountains. Glimpse how our ancestors worked, played, and lived in this area. Learn how to cook, play music, sing, dance, do fiber arts, learn about your family's genealogy and history of Native Americans in our area, and on and on. Spend a day with us enjoying the Pickens way of life!

★★ www.cityofpickens.com/goal ★★

FEATURED PROMOTIONS and EVENTS

Deep Winter Blues at Hagood Mill Historic Site

It has been cold and bleak outside, so to heat up things come out for a day of fun on **Saturday, February 20th** as the Hagood Mill presents “Deep Winter Blues.” The site is open 10:00am until 4:00pm with music from 11:30am until 3:00pm.

Upcountry South Carolina is a historical Mecca for the Blues. Throughout the 1920's and 30's the streets of Laurens County, Greenville, Spartanburg, & Anderson reverberated with the music of bluesmen/street-preachers as they were strolling with their tin cups extended. Many of these musicians became famous on the streets of New York City in the folk revival of the 50's and 60's. It is this tradition that we celebrate each February at Hagood Mill.

This year's lineup features Jean Laney Harris Folk Heritage Award winner & bluesman Steve McGaha with finger style picker and country bluesman David Donar playing some red hot tunes. In addition to music, David is a cartoonist and illustrator whose favorite subject matter are all the various musicians who perform and jam at the Hagood Mill throughout the year.

Hear the old music that made upstate South Carolina a famous “roots environment” for the Piedmont Blues... some tunes primitive in nature and others coming from the sweet soul of the South Carolina bluesmen of long ago.

There will be lots of other things to see on February 20th as Hagood Mill hosts a variety of folk life and traditional arts demonstrations. There will be blacksmithing, bowl-digging, flint knapping, chair-caning, moonshining, broom-making, basket-making, pottery, quilting, spinning, knitting, weaving, woodcarving, metal-smithing, bee keeping, leather-working and more! You can ask questions of the artists and make a purchase of their Traditional Arts to take home.

As always we encourage visitors to bring their favorite old time instruments and join in on the “open jam” which takes place throughout the day under the ancient cedar beside our beloved 1791 log cabin. The Centerpiece of the Hagood Mill historic site is the water-powered 1845 gristmill. It is one of the finest examples of nineteenth century technology in the Upcountry and operates just as it has for the last century-and-a-half. The mill will be running throughout the day. In the old mill, fresh stone-ground corn meal, grits, and wheat flour will be available. In addition rye flour, Basmati rice flour, oat flour, oatmeal, popping corn meal, and grits, organic yellow corn meal and grits, and buckwheat flour are produced and may be available. Hagood Mill cookbooks and a variety of other mill related items are also available.

There promises to be lots to do and lots of fun! There is a \$5.00 parking fee for the day but admission is FREE to the Hagood Mill Site as well as the Hagood Creek Petroglyph Site. All proceeds from parking go to help the Hagood Mill. So, head on out, grab a plate of great food on site from the Gatehouse Restaurant and enjoy a special day at the Hagood Mill.

The Hagood Mill historic site is open Wednesday through Saturday from 10:00 am until 4:00 pm all year long. The Mill operates, rain or shine, for a special festival the third Saturday of every month. The Hagood Mill is located just 3 miles north of Pickens off Highway 178 or 5 ½ miles south of Cherokee Foothills Scenic Hwy 11 just off Highway 178 at 138 Hagood Mill Road. “Music in the Mountains 2016” is sponsored by a private benefactor. For additional information, please contact the Hagood Mill at (864) 898-2936 or check out our website at www.visitpickenscounty.com/calendar.

FEATURED PROMOTIONS and EVENTS

THE GREATER PICKENS
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

and

PICKENS REVITALIZATION ASSOCIATION

present the

2016
ANNUAL

BANQUET

The Greater Pickens Chamber of Commerce and Pickens Revitalization Association invite you and your guests to join us for a night of dining, dancing and fun with the Jake Bartley Band

MARCH 4, 2016

Social Hour at 7 pm
Dinner to follow

THE LIGHTHOUSE RESTAURANT

1290 Doug Hollow Road
Seneca, SC 29672

The banquet cost is \$40.00 per person OR you may wish to be a table sponsor at one of the levels listed below:

Platinum • 16 banquet guests: \$600.00

Silver • 4 banquet guests: \$200.00

Gold • 8 banquet guests: \$320.00

Bronze • 1 banquet guest: \$60.00

All table sponsors will receive special recognition at the banquet and in the event program.

Reservations for the banquet are due by February 26, 2016 at the Chamber office.

Checks should be made payable to the Pickens Chamber of Commerce and mailed to:

PO Box 153, Pickens, South Carolina 29671

OR you can register online at www.cityofpickens.com/banquet

Name of Business or Organization

Sponsorship Level

Address

Individual Name and Number of Guests

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FEBRUARY

6th

Healing Skills Workshop

presented by the Rensing Center

9:30am - 2pm; 1165 Mile Creek Road, Pickens
RSVP to rensingcenter@gmail.com

11th & 12th

The Crucible Auditions

5:30pm - 8pm; Enrapt Annex at the Easley Loft
email bgriffin@enrapt.org for more information

20th

Deep Winter Blues

10am - 4pm; Hagood Mill
visit www.visitpickenscounty.com for more information

27th

Gathering on Appalachian Life

8:30am - 4:30pm; Hagood Community Center
visit www.cityofpickens.com/goal for more information

MARCH

4th

Chamber/PRA Annual Banquet

7pm; The Lighthouse Restaurant
visit www.cityofpickens.com/banquet for more info

7th

Commercialization Day

presented by the Pickens Innovation Center

11am - 1pm; Pickens Innovation Center

APRIL

15th - 16th

Pickens Azalea Festival

All Day; Downtown Pickens

28th - 29th

Electrify Your Strings Authentic Tour

Pickens High School Auditorium

THANKS MEMBERS!

Alexander Law Firm	Brock's	Corner Drug Store	Pizza Inn
Cannon Memorial Hospital	City of Pickens	Great Oaks Dental	Pace & Reeves
Pickens Senior Center	Edward Jones	Lindsay Oil Company	State Farm
Pickens Dental Associates	Stockade Antiques	American Legion	TD Bank
Town & Country Florist	Pickens Savings & Loan	Nestfeathers	Shabby & Chic
Behavioral Health Services	Flowers By Virginia	GateHouse Restaurant	Mark Kaiser
East Main Treasures	Foothills Gun and Pawn	Roper Law Firm	9 Round
Pruitt Health	Blue Ridge Electric Coop	TTI/OWT, Inc.	Durham Greene
Oh Joy!	Pickens Federal Credit Union	Pickens Rotary Club	Domino's
South State Bank	Cornell-Dubilier	Buddy & Cisco's Bistro	Enrapt, LLC
Pickens Azalea Festival	Southern App. Outdoors	Appalachian Ale House	Morris on Main
Martha's Marvelous Munchies			