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CHRIS WHITFIELD/THE DAILY CITIZEN

Dalton State College President Margaret Venable speaks Monday.

Venable wants DSC to be 1st choice

Dalton State College president speaks at Young Leaders event

By CHARLES OLIVER
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Dalton State College President Margaret Venable wants students to think of the college as a “first choice, destination” institute of higher learning. “We want to be students’ first choice, not their second choice, not their backup

plan,” Venable said Monday, speaking to the United Way of Northwest Georgia’s Young Leaders Society at DSC’s James Brown Building. The college had 5,044 students enrolled in fall 2015, up 4 percent from fall 2014, according to data Venable presented. More than two thirds of those students — 67 percent — are first-generation college students. And 40 percent of those students came from Whitfield County, 13 percent from Catoosa County and 12 percent from Murray County. But while the majority of students were from North Georgia, enrollment included students from 43 different nations and 14

different states. As part of an effort to serve those students better, DSC has been expanding and renovating a number of buildings. Venable said renovation of the Pope Student Center, including an improved food service area, should be completed by the fall. Venable was named DSC president by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia in September 2015. She is the fifth president in the college’s history and the first female president.

➤ Please see COLLEGE, 2A

Judge to resign after DUI

Reports indicate Cope was drinking at work on several occasions

By CHRIS WHITFIELD
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Whitfield County Magistrate Judge Kay Cope will resign effective the end of the business day Thursday after her arrest Saturday for driving under the influence. Her resignation announcement came amid the release of the Georgia State Patrol arrest report indicating Cope was drunk Saturday while performing her judge duties at the Whitfield County jail, and revelations of a complaint that Cope was drunk at work in 2015 that the chief magistrate filed with the state Judicial Qualifications Commission. Cope was at the jail Saturday for first appearance hearings for people arrested overnight on Friday, and Whitfield County Sheriff’s Office personnel could smell alcohol on Cope’s breath, according to the report. After leaving the jail, a sheriff’s deputy



Cope

pulled her over for failure to maintain a lane on North Thornton Avenue near the jail. Since Cope is a county employee, the WCSO called in the GSP to take over the case, according to the report. Cope, 60, and a magistrate judge for the past 32 years, was charged with DUI after failing a field sobriety test and admitting to a GSP officer to drinking “Seagrams” before taking the bench that afternoon. GSP was called in to assist at 2:55 p.m., and Cope said she had been drinking approximately one to two hours earlier, according to the report. The report noted Cope’s eyes were bloodshot and watery and her speech was slurred. In performing one of the sobriety tests reciting letters of the alphabet from “d” to “t,” the report stated she became confused after the letter “n” and “would recite letters in no particular order.” She also could not walk in a straight light and had to balance herself on a fence in order to stand on one leg. The Daily Citizen has filed an open records request with the Georgia State Patrol and the Whitfield County Sheriff’s Office for the dashcam video from the traffic stop and the arrest. Cope was booked into the Whitfield County jail at 4:06 p.m. Saturday and was released on a \$2,140 property bond posted by

➤ Please see JUDGE, 2A

SUMMER SPLASH



MATT HAMILTON/THE DAILY CITIZEN

Kaiden Presley, 4, jumps into the Dalton Parks and Recreation Department pool Saturday into the arms of his father Cameron Presley.

92-year-old on coast-to-coast quest runs state

By GABE BURNS
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VALDOSTA — The Ernest “Ernie” Andrus tour has passed through the Azalea City. The 92-year-old wonder is traveling America coast-to-coast. At 9 a.m. Monday, he checked Valdosta off his list. “I’m just running coast to coast, having a lot of fun,” Andrus said. “... I just decided it’s just something I want to do. Seemed like a lot of fun and nobody my age has ever done it.” He said he’s

been told multiple times he’s an inspiration, and “that’s a good feeling.” Arriving in downtown Valdosta accompanied by fellow runners and the fire department, Andrus triumphantly waved the American flag. He met with supporters, the American Legion and media for a few minutes before continuing his quest.



Andrus

Andrus, a World War II Navy veteran, was presented with Mayor John Gayle’s honorary “Mayor’s Coin” and a Valdosta pin. He said Valdosta is the first city in Georgia to express interest in his journey. Regarding health, Andrus offered advice to the young and old alike: stay active and “just keep running.” He mentioned that he stopped watching television 20 years ago. “I’ve got a nice big (television) in my motor home and I’ve never learned how to use it,” he said.

His first long distance run was the 1984 Olympic Torch 10K to open the Los Angeles Olympics, shortly after his retirement as a grocery store manager. But Andrus said a passion for running has always been in his heart. “I didn’t learn how to walk till I was 40. I just ran everywhere,” he said with a smile. “A few thousand people” are expected to greet Andrus at his final destination at St. Simon’s

➤ Please see RUN, 2A

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