

April-May 2025



Paralyzed Veterans of America

Southeastern Chapter



President Linda Hutchinson, NSO Jennifer Ammons, and Charlie Norwood VAMC Director Dr. Robin Jackson met on March 17, 2025 to discuss PVA issues.

PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA SOUTHEASTEN CHAPTER (PVASE)

4010 DEANS BRIDGE ROAD

HEPHZIBAH, GA 30815

706-796-6301

706-796-0363 (FAX)

Hollis L. Bush, Jr. – Executive Director

Evett Williams – Administrative Assistant

PVASE OFFICERS

President – Linda Hutchinson

Vice President – Frank Dewayne McGowan

Secretary – Marco Bungert

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Board Member – Jason Dills

Board Member – Frederick “Rick” Evans

Board Member – Justin Hall

Board Member – Charles Outlaw

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Sports and Recreation Director – Frederick “Rick” Evans

Government Relations Director – Justin Hall

Women’s Veteran Empowerment Coordinator – Linda Hutchinson

Membership Director—Michael Bishop

Chapter Newsletter Editor – Amy Dotson

Volunteer Coordinator – Evett Williams

VAVS Representative – Alan Washington

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Office: 615-695-6383 & Email: nichellee@pva.org

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Office: 336-251-0836, Cell; 202-416-1078 & Email: marka@pva.org

President's Report

Linda Hutchinson



The last two months have been remarkably busy for our chapter. As you are aware, on March 5th the National EC voted to take our Chapter off monitoring. We could not have achieved this without the diligent work and guidance provided by our interim BOD, Chairman Bill Lawson, Charles Brown and Tom Wheaton, and our Vice President Liaison, Tammy Jones. I want to thank them all sincerely. On April 16th, we are celebrating the swearing in of our officers and board members, and are

incredibly happy to have our friend, and past national president Bill Lawson to administer our oaths.

I have been working closely with our hospitals NSO, Jennifer Ammons about ongoing issues, such as housekeeping and the frequent shortage of pillows in the outpatient clinic. We also teamed up for our short presentation during the Hub & Spoke training session. We had the regular scheduled meetings with Dr. Mwamba, and Dr. Jackson. Dr. Jackson is on temporary reassignment, and Mr. Oscar Rodriguez M.S. has been assigned as the Acting Director.

We are still working to build attendance at our membership meetings and have been seeing improvement in that direction. I have enjoyed several outings with the SCI patients in rehab over the past couple of months, including bowling, and visiting the Augusta History Museum. It is especially important that those of us who have lived with our SCI/D for quite some time help those in their rehab learn how they can have full lives following their SCI/D. In that respect, the Chapter is asking PVA to help us set up a Peer Mentoring training session for our interested members. Please look forward to future updates on this.

I am happy to report that our Charter will have five members representing us this June at the Legislation and Advocacy Seminar, and Push on Capitol Hill. That includes Rick Evans, Justin Hall, Charles Outlaw, Amy Dotson, and me.

I would like to thank all the members of this Board for all your support, I cannot effectively represent our chapter without it!

Executive Director's Report

Hollis Bush



Southeastern Members,

The Chapter continues to improve each month. One reason for significant accomplishments is the hiring of Ms. Evett Williams as the Administrative Assistant. Please review her impressive biography on page 7. The Chapter is fortunate to have Ms. Williams on our team.

After hiring Jordan Trotter as the Chapter's Commercial Real Estate agency, it is with great pleasure to inform the members that they are two potential buyers of the Chapter's headquarters building. This is important so the Chapter can relocate closer to


the Charlie Norwood Veterans Administration Medical Center Spinal Cord Injury Unit in Augusta, Georgia. Once the headquarters is sold and the Chapter relocates, members will be informed through Constant Contact email, newsletter and letter mail for members without an email address. I encouraged members without email address to contact the Chapter and provide an email address at 706-796-6301 or paravet@comcast.net.

Financial affairs are in great order with the Finance Committee members conducting monthly reconciliations. It is a pleasure to inform members that monthly reconciliations are current and all expenditures were preapproved by two members of the Finance Committee to ensure oversight of contributions.

Volunteers are still needed to fill critical positions in the Chapter. The Chapter is seeking members to work with the Membership Director, Michael Bishop as Membership Leads in Birmingham, AL, Montgomery, AL and Columbia, SC. Also, the Chapter is seeking members to work with Justin Hall, Government Relations Director as Advocacy/Legislation Leads. As all members know, providing information to members is one of the most important functions of the Chapter. Since the chapter has members in five states, (AL, TN, NC, SC and GA), Advocacy/Legislation members are needed to properly support this requirement in all five states. Informing locally elected officials at the federal and state level about access and disability legislation issues is imperative. Building a relationship with legislators ensures disabilities are coordinated and worked by our representatives. Please contact the office to get involved.



Remember, this is your Chapter. Your support and voice are needed to make the Paralyzed Veterans of America Southeastern Chapter a chapter that cares and supports its members and improves their quality of life.

**SWEARING-IN of the PVA Southeastern Chapter Officers
& MEMBERSHIP ZOOM MEETING**



JOIN US via Facebook
April 16th @ 10:15 a.m.

**Swearing-In Ceremony
of the PVA Southeastern
Chapter Officers**

 **LIVE**  @pvasoutheastern



Paralyzed Veterans of America
Southeastern Chapter



Southeastern Chapter Meeting

APRIL 16TH @ 1:00 P.M.

MEETING ID 840 6430 0212

SCAN to join our Zoom Meeting



Paralyzed Veterans of America Southeastern

Newsletter Advertising Pricing & Deadlines

Effective May 2024

(Each publication is mailed to approximately 2,500 unique address throughout the southeast)

AD SIZES	ANNUAL RATE	SINGLE ISSUE RATE
BUSINESS CARD	\$110.00 B&W \$132.00 color	\$27.00 B&W \$33.00 color
QUARTER PAGE	\$220.00 B&W \$265.00 color	\$38.00 B&W \$46.00 color
HALF PAGE	\$330.00 B&W \$395.00 color	\$60.00 B&W \$72.00 color
FULL PAGE OTHER	\$550.00 B&W \$660.00 color	\$115.00 B&W \$125.00 color
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HALF PAGE \$99.00 B&W \$119.00 color

FULL PAGE \$155.00 B&W \$185.00 color

NEWSLETTER SCHEDULE

DECEMBER/JANUARY

FEBRAURY/MARCH

APRIL/MAY

JUNE/JULY

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER/NOVEMEBER

AD COPY DUE DATE

NOVERMBER 15th

JANUARY 15th

MARCH 15th

MAY 15th

JULY 15th

SEPTEMBER 15th

Evett Williams

Administrative Assistant

Paralyzed Veterans of America, Southeastern Chapter



Evett Williams, a resident of Augusta, Georgia, is thrilled to join the Paralyzed Veterans of America Southeastern Chapter as its new Administrative Assistant. With a strong background in administration, leadership, and community service, Evett is eager to contribute her skills and passion for supporting others to this important mission. Her goal is to help make a meaningful impact on the lives of veterans by providing exceptional administrative support and assisting the team in achieving its goals.

Evett is a Cum Laude graduate of the Medical College of Georgia (MCG), where she earned a Bachelor of Science in Medical Technology. She also holds a Master of Theology degree. Over the years, she has gained extensive experience in healthcare, pharmaceutical, and marketing industries, as well as in higher education, having worked as the High School Coordinator at Augusta Technical College, Assistant Director of Student Affairs at East Georgia State College Augusta, and Office Administrator at JH Cleveland Construction. This diverse background has equipped her with valuable administrative and organizational skills, which she is excited to bring to the Paralyzed Veterans of America team.

Evett serves as an Elder at Christian City of Praise in Augusta and is an active member of her community. Currently, she serves on the Augusta-Richmond County Zoning Appeals Board (past Chairman) and the Family YMCA's Metro Board of Directors. In the past, she has served on the Columbia County CTAE Advisory Board, Brown Girls Code Board of Directors (President) Pine Hill Middle School Council, Richmond County Technical Magnet School Advisory Committee, and the Greater Augusta Arts Council to name a few. She is a graduate of Leadership Augusta and Leadership Georgia.

Evett is excited to bring her leadership, organizational skills, and passion for service to the Paralyzed Veterans of America Southeastern Chapter. She looks forward to working closely with the team and contributing to the chapter's efforts to support and advocate for the veterans it serves.

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Evett enjoys playing golf, riding her Trek road and trail bike, reading, traveling, public speaking, and spending time with her husband (Lanzy Williams Sr.), family, and friends.

Smyrna Thrift Store supports Southeastern Paralyzed Veterans!



Your donations of clothing and household items to this charity provide funding to support their many programs to enrich the lives of those veterans who have dealt with paralyzing injuries during and or after their service in the military.

Smyrna Thrift Store offers a wide variety of used merchandise including clothing, household items, kitchen utensils, wall hangings, furnishings, yard equipment, tools, sporting goods, fishing equipment and more.

**Stop by at 3150 S. Cobb Dr, Smyrna, Ga
to see what great deals you can find!**



PVA Southeastern: Where the Action Happens



PVA Southeastern: Where the Action Happens



PVA Southeastern: Where the Action Happens



Rocks
Strikes
Spares

PVA Southeastern: Where the Action Happens



Sport/Recreation

Rick Evans, Sports/Recreation Director

We are excited to be preparing for the NVWG in Minneapolis. We hope you all are working hard to ensure that we stack up on the metals again this year. Please stay in tune with your emails via constant contacts from the chapter with updates on our team, our date for booking rooms deposits and requirements for attending. Please keep up with the due dates for deposits for rooms and final payments for (solo) single rooms. Again, continue to check your PVASE emails for opportunities to get out and enjoy this busy and exciting summer with our southeastern chapter.

Hunting: David Bayne had nothing new from the last newsletter's article. Please use the same as the last newsletter for Hunting

Bass Fishing: Didn't hear back from Mark S. but it's probably the same. Other than I have seen and updated fishing schedule.

National Director

Rick Evans, National Director PVASE

As you all may have heard we are off monitoring and back doing business as a full chapter. We are working together as a team to keep you all informed about changes that are coming to us from our government. But as a chapter we will not waiver in our efforts to fight for benefits and care that we all deserve and earned after our service to this country. Please, have no doubt that the National organization is continuously engaged with the department of veterans' affairs of our concerns during this time. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or concerns.

National Director's Report

Rick Evans, National Director PVASE

- ◆ National Directors training with group A via zoom on Bills.com and how PVA pays for travel.
- ◆ We are preparing for the Convention in Texas in May. We have a lot of work to do in the coming year with all the changes within the Government.
- ◆ We are looking forward to hearing what our mission will be like when we get to Capitol Hill in June. Hopefully that information will come available soon.
- ◆ We will continue to try and share updates on changes within the government as they come available to us.
- ◆ Nationally we are working hard to bring in new corporate sponsors. We have launched our partnership with Lancome (pva.org/pva-lancome) for more information on that partnership.
- ◆ As always please reach out to me via phone or e mail for any questions you may have about what's going on the national level and continue to follow our email chain for more current updates.
- ◆ As a chapter, we are off monitoring and work- in progress. Let's continue to work as a team to keep this chapter moving forward.

Sports/Recreation Report PVASE

Rick Evans

Sports/Recreation Director PVASE

- ♦ We had (4) PVASE members attend a basketball tournament in Myrtle Beach at the end of March.
- ♦ Sponsored 12 tickets purchased for SCI patient outing to the Augusta Museum for 8 patients and 4 staff.
- ♦ Dublin VA athletes train weekly for the NVWG's attending their practice as time permits.
- ♦ We had our 1st PVASE sports and recreation shirts worn by our pickleball team at a competition March 28th in Augusta.
- ♦ We are working on bowling training before the NVWG's.
- ♦ It appears we have at least 30 athletes registered for the NVWG.
- ♦ We continue to get information about the games and our policy for funding. I think having zoom membership meetings has been a huge success in getting information out to the teams.
- ♦ We had 3 members attend the winter sports clinic this year from our SCI.
- ♦ Our goal is to continue to fund our members upon request for any adaptive sports event within reason and budget this year. As well as recreation outings to local events movies, restaurants dinner with caregivers etc. For recreation purposes.
- ♦ Lastly the pickleball tournament in June. I would like to assist at least 3 of our members to attend this PVA National event in June. I have budgeted an amount for this event. As we get closer to the event with registration and host hotel cost. We will have a better read on what we can do to assist. I have requested

Government Relations Report

Justin Hall

Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) National President Robert Thomas is rallying support for a petition to present to Congress, emphasizing the urgent need for robust care for individuals with spinal cord injuries and disorders (SCI/D). This effort is part of PVA's ongoing mission to ensure veterans receive the highest quality healthcare and resources.

As part of this advocacy, the Roll on the Hill event will take place in Washington, D.C., from June 9-12. This annual gathering brings together PVA members and leaders to meet with lawmakers, share personal experiences, and push for policies that improve the lives of those with SCI/D.

PVA Southeastern will be well represented, with five chapter members attending to advocate for critical issues and show their support for the petition. Their participation underscores the importance of strong legislative action to protect and enhance SCI/D care.

Stay tuned for updates on this crucial event and ways you can get involved in supporting the cause!

Women's Empowerment

Linda Hutchinson

Our Chapter offered our first Zoom meeting to all the women of the Southeastern Chapter on 27 March 2025. We will be sending another email with the next date, time and Zoom link. This is our time to get together and talk about the issues, and our concerns as women veterans living our lives with SCI/D. We can also talk about our hobbies, and things we would like to try. Do you enjoy sports, fishing, photography, or travel?

I am getting to do more traveling this year, seeing very familiar and some new places. I love fishing and hunting, but I also love photography. I recently started to crochet again and anticipate starting to knit and relearning the art of embroidery. I find these activities to be very relaxing.

Are you actively contacting your members of Congress, or would you like to start doing this? You can be incredibly involved in helping protect our healthcare system and benefits from your own home.

Please join me for our next Zoom meeting on 23 April, at 3pm so we can come together and have your needs and opinions heard as the strong women veterans that we are.

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Dependents Educational Assistance

David Ray. Senior NSO, Orlando, Florida

Spring is in the air! As we approach spring break and the end of the school year some parents have children that are about to graduate. For parents of children transitioning into adulthood it is important to give them as many opportunities to succeed as possible. The Dependents Educational Assistance program (DEA) is a valuable resource available for some of our members' families.

The Department of Veterans Affairs offers DEA for the dependents of veterans who have died from a service connected condition or have permanent and total disabilities as established by a rating. The dependent child can use this program to go to school or to pursue job training programs that are approved by the VA. The rate the VA pays is based upon the type of training pursued and the course load of the pursuit. Since most of the children will end up pursuing either college or technical schools we will focus on those rates. For the 2024-2025 years, they will receive \$1,536 for full time enrollment, \$1,214 for three quarters of enrollment and \$890 for half-time enrollment, for both college and technical schools. The dependent child is eligible to receive the benefit between the ages of 18 and 26 in most instances, however, that 8-year window can be extended in some circumstances such as their own military service. The student may have up to 36 months of eligibility and the VA will pay the benefit directly to them. If the tuition and supplies needed for the training are less than the benefit rate, the student can pocket the difference. Additionally, if they were to find another funding source for any educational or training expenses (such as scholarships or grants), they can keep the entirety of the DEA benefit. However, students must maintain a good standing in their program of training to continue to receive the benefit.

The spouse is also eligible for DEA. The rates are the same for the spouse or the child. But the eligibility period for the spouse is different. Historically the spouse had 10 years from the rating to use the DEA benefit, however, since August 1, 2023, there is no longer a time limit to use the DEA benefit. Furthermore, in the event that the spouse divorces the veteran, the spouse's entitlement will be terminated. If the veteran dies and the spouse gets remarried prior to the age of 57, then the spouse would also lose their eligibility while married to the new spouse.

This is a very brief overview of the DEA program. Keep in mind that there may also be state benefits available as well. Moreover, many schools typically have a veteran representative who will assist the student in completing and submitting the application, which enables the process to move much faster. For a more complete explanation or assistance obtaining this benefit, please reach out to your Paralyzed Veterans of America National Service Officer.

A Memorable Experience at the Carolina Wheelchair Basketball Tournament

I'm excited to share my experience at this year's Carolina Wheelchair Basketball Tournament in Conway. As always, the event was an incredible opportunity to reconnect with old friends, form new connections, and, of course, compete in a sport I'm passionate about.



While my team, the Miami Heat, came up just short of the championship, securing second place was a reflection of our hard work and dedication. The competition was intense, and despite not winning, we played at a high level. We're already reviewing our performance and strategizing for next season, with a renewed focus on improving.

The team's enthusiasm for next year is palpable, and we're all eager to continue training and preparing for the next tournament. On a personal

note, I'm thrilled to announce that I was selected for the Class Two D3 conference team. This recognition drives me to sharpen my skills and set even more ambitious goals for the next season.

I also want to take a moment to express my sincere appreciation to Southeastern PVA for their continued support of adaptive athletes. Their commitment is vital to our community. A special thank you to Chapter President Ms. Linda Hutchinson and Sports Director Mr. Rick Evans for their exceptional leadership and tireless dedication. Your efforts truly make a difference, and we're deeply grateful for all you do.

Thank you for your ongoing support!

Eric Turman

Southeastern PVA Member

I want to thank Southern PVA for helping me get to my basketball conference in Myrtle Beach S.C. Although our team, Columbia Heat, came in 3rd place, it felt like 1st place! We played our hearts out and only lost by three points!!

Centra Ce-Ce Mazyck

Southeastern PVA Member

Membership Update

Total Membership: 1,474

Period of Service Total

World War II: 1

Korean Conflict: 21

Vietnam Era: 582

Peacetime : 807

Gulf War: 380

Iraqi Freedom: 180

War in Afghanistan: 212

Age Range Total

25-34: 17

35-44: 64

45-54: 154

55-64: 355

65-74: 468

75-84: 353

85-94: 60

95 and Over: 2

Not Available: 1

Service Connected Total

Yes: 777

No: 697

NEW MEMBERS

Elliott E. Wiggins

Mark L. Lawson

Sondra Fritz

Irwin Tripp

DECEASED MEMBERS

Neil R. Morrison

Edward A. Tessaro

Timothy A. Affolter

Alonzo Todd

TRANSFERRED OUT THE CHAPTER

None

TRANSFERRED INTO THE CHAPTER

None

COUNT BY STATE:

AL: 71

GA: 678

NC: 175

SC: 343

TN: 58

Southeastern Chapter Membership Leaders

Chapter Membership Director: Michael Bishop

Membership Leads:

Asheville, NC: Dewayne McGowan

Atlanta, GA: Jason Dills

Augusta, GA: Michael Bishop

Birmingham, AL: Ron Glass

Charleston, SC: Joseph Gethers

Columbia, SC: Joseph Gethers

Dublin, GA: Keith Thompson

Montgomery, AL: Ron Glass

Mountain Home, TN: Dewayne McGowan

Salisbury/Charlotte, NC: Charles Outlaw

Johnson City, TN Membership Meetings

December 4, 2024

April 18, 2025

August 22, 2025

December 5, 2025

Time: 12:00 noon—2:00pm

Location: Golden Corral, 3104 Browns Mill Road, Johnson City, TN 37604 423-854-9400

Asheville NC meeting has been suspended until future date.

PVA Southeastern: Where the Action Happens

PVA Southeastern Members participated in the Wilson Family YMCA Drive Drop Dink Pickleball event on 28 March 2025. All had a great time and look forward to the event next year!!

This was a success for the Wilson Family YMCA Pickleball event incorporating a Wheelchair Pickleball Division.



SCI /D COORDINATORS

Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center, Augusta, GA

SCI Clinic Coordinator: (800)836-5561, ext. 3778 or 3710

SCI Outpatient Clinic Nurse, (800)836-5561, ext. 2245

SCI Home Care Coordinator

SCI Fee B&B: Shavondria Davis, (800)836-5561, ext. 2242

Atlanta/Decatur VA Medical Center

SCI/D Coordinator: Ebony J. Stuckey, 404-321-6111, ext. 202475

Birmingham VA Medical Center

SCI/D Coordinator: Nazaren Hartman, 205-933-8101, ext. 6453

Central Alabama Veterans Healthcare System (Montgomery/Tuskegee)

SCI/D Coordinator: Tammy Davidson, 334-727-0550, ext. 53219

Charleston VA Medical Center

SCI/D Coordinator: Cheryl Jefferson, 843-789-6456 or 843-577-5011, ext. 206456

Columbia VA Medical Center

SCI/D Coordinator: Rosland Sims, 803-869-0122

Dublin VA Medical Center

SCI/D Coordinator: Kierra Allen, 478-274-5459

Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center

SCI/D Coordinator: James Smith, 205-554-3542

Asheville VA Medical Center

SCI/D Coordinator: Amy Pike, 828-298-7911, ext. 15384

Mountain Home VA Medical Center

SCI/D Coordinator: Marcy Fleenor, 423-979-2647 or 423-926-1171, ext. 2746

Salisbury VA Medical Center

SCI/D Coordinator: Alice Gatewood, 704- 638-9000, ext. 3144

2025 National Veterans Wheelchair Games Chapter Financial Assistance Requirement

The Chapter Chairman, Bill Lawson, instituted a policy requiring chapter members seeking financial assistance for the 2025 NVWGs must attend two membership meetings. This guidance has been in chapter newsletters.

To ensure members have the opportunity to attend two membership meetings, the Chapter Membership Director, Membership Leads, and Executive Director are developing a plan to conduct several Zoom Membership Meetings.

More information on these meeting will be sent out on a regular basis.

If you have any questions on membership meetings in your area, contact Michael Bishop via email at paravet@comcast.net.





Membership Application

An individual is eligible for membership by meeting the following criteria: (1) is a citizen of the United States; (2) was regularly enlisted, inducted or commissioned for active duty service in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, or Coast Guard of the United States, or our allies as evidenced by other-than-dishonorable character of service documented by a verifiable DD-214 or DD-215 (entry-level separation not acceptable); (3A) was separated from the service in the Armed Forces under conditions other than dishonorable; or (3B) is on active duty or must continue to serve after the cessation of hostilities; and (4) has suffered a spinal cord injury or disease (such as MS, ALS), whether or not service connected in origin. Membership is free. **Complete and return application to the chapter of choice or by mail/email to: Paralyzed Veterans of America Membership Department, 801 Eighteenth Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006; (E) members@pva.org.** Providing the requested information is entirely voluntary but required for membership with Paralyzed Veterans of America.

Chapter Name: _____

First Name: _____ Middle Initial: _____ Last Name: _____

Date of Birth: ____ / ____ / ____ Social Security Number: _____ ☐ Male ☐ Female

Race/Ethnicity:

☐ Asian/Pacific Islander

☐ African American/Descent

☐ Hispanic/Latino

☐ Native American/Alaskan Native

☐ Caucasian

Address: _____ City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____ Email: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

VETERAN STATUS INFORMATION

Please submit the following with application:

- DD Form 214 showing character of discharge.
- Medical evidence of spinal cord injury or involvement (medical records or physician's statement).

Proof of active duty status must be verified prior to membership approval.

Have you been discharged under conditions that are less than honorable? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please explain: _____

Are you a United States citizen? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you have a spinal cord injury or disease? ☐ Yes ☐ No If disease, specify: _____

Is your spinal cord injury or spinal cord disease service connected? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If Paralyzed Veterans of America is your accredited representative, do you permit PVA Service Officers to provide information to PVA National Membership Department relative to your membership eligibility? ☐ Yes ☐ No

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct, that I have read and meet the qualifications and I understand that my membership could be denied or revoked if any information provided is inaccurate.

Applicant Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Witness Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED
4010 DEANS BRIDGE ROAD
HEPHZIBAH, GA 30815
www.SoutheasternPVA.org

