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SPORTS, 1B

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Construction to start soon in Belmont development



People gather under a tent on Lee Road in North Belmont for a Dedication Celebration of Dixon Village Thursday morning. **BELOW:** Jennifer Davis speaks during the event. MIKE HENSDELL/THE GASTON GAZETTE

Kara Fohner
Gaston Gazette
USA TODAY NETWORK

Habitat for Humanity of Gaston County hopes to begin construction on a 28-home development in north Belmont in August.

The development, called Dixon Village after longtime Habitat volunteer Bill Dixon, will consist of Habitat houses, homes for people in jobs like law enforcement and teaching, and market rate housing. Habitat is in the final stages of getting



ing to be."

In a dedication ceremony at the construction site on Thursday morning, Peninger highlighted statistics that point to the need for affordable housing in the community.

For communities of color in Gaston County, home ownership and economic mobility is at risk, she said.

As of the first quarter of 2021, the national homeownership rate of white households was 74%. Black and Hispanic households have a home ownership rate of 46%, according to the U.S.



Gaston County Schools Superintendent Jeffrey Booker has been chosen by 11 public school districts as the Southwest Region Superintendent of the Year for outstanding leadership. PROVIDED BY GASTON COUNTY SCHOOLS

Gaston County Schools leader receives award

Beatriz Guerrero
Gaston Gazette
USA TODAY NETWORK

Gaston County Schools Superintendent Jeffrey Booker has been named Southwest Region Superintendent of the Year.

Booker's leadership this year has earned him the prestigious award for the second time since 2016-2017.

In addition to Gaston County, the Southwest Region includes Anson, Cabarrus, Cleveland, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Rowan, Stanly and Union counties.

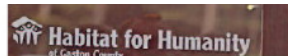
"Since becoming our superintendent of schools in January 2014, Dr. Booker has demonstrated excellent leadership and exemplary vision for Gaston County Schools," said school board Chairman Jeff Ramsey.

approval from Belmont to begin construction, said Executive Director Kay Peninger.

Work on the development may take around two years to complete.

The development will be located on Lee Road, bordering Mount Holly. The property was originally located in an unincorporated area of the county, but it was annexed into Belmont.

Peninger said she is excited about the development, the first of its kind in Gas-



ton County, especially as the housing crisis makes homes unattainable for many working families.

Homeownership, she said, is the foundation of a strong community, "and the more people we can get into home ownership, the stronger Gaston County is go-

Census Bureau, Peninger said.

The discrepancy is worse in Gaston, Peninger said, citing research from the Urban Institute's Housing Finance Policy Center.

Black households in Gastonia have a homeownership rate of 28%, compared to the city average of 60%. Hispanic households in Gastonia have a home ownership rate of 40%.

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In the fall, Booker will compete against seven other regional winners for the A. Craig Phillips North Carolina Superintendent of the Year title, sponsored by the N.C. School Superintendents Association, N.C. Association of School Administrators and the N.C. School Boards Association.

The current State Superintendent of the Year is Valerie Bridges of Edgecombe

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Niece of Geneva Abernathy, Aileen Parker, shows old photos during a Dedication Celebration of Dixon Village Thursday morning. MIKE HENSHELL/THE GASTON GAZETTE

Belmont

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"The area that we live in is one of the fastest growing regions in the United States," Peninger said. "Entry level housing is at historically low inventories, and additional housing can't be built fast enough. The demand for housing, along with supply chain issues and inflation, have caused housing prices as well as basic living expenses to increase dramatically."

Jennifer Davis, the keynote speaker at the dedication and the chairperson of the Carrie E. and Lena V. Glenn Foundation, said in her speech that she was deeply moved by what Habitat is doing.

"I want to tell you, this place makes me want to cry, ... because this is a community," she said.

Davis said that she grew up in the Highland community of Gastonia, which was then "self-contained" and racially segregated.

Her grandmother, who was blind, helped raise her, and Davis said that when her grandmother stepped out of



Habitat for Humanity of Gaston County Executive Director Kay Peninger speaks during the dedication. MIKE HENSHELL/THE GASTON GAZETTE

the house to walk to the store, people from the neighborhood came to help her get there and back home.

She said she hopes Dixon will have a similar sense of community, bringing together people from a variety of backgrounds and "proving that no matter where we come from, we can all get better together."

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Kavanaugh incident could lead to more security for judges

Mark Sherman and Jessica Gresko
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — A man armed with a machete once broke into Stephen Breyer's vacation home in the Caribbean and took \$1,000. Ruth Bader Ginsburg had her purse snatched on a Washington street. David Souter was assaulted by several men while he was jogging.

Supreme Court justices have not been immune to violent crime. But this past week's late-night incident at Justice Brett Kavanaugh's suburban Washington home, where authorities said a man armed with a gun and knife threatened to kill the justice, reflects a heightened level of potential danger not just for members of the nation's highest court, but all judges.

One proposal pending in Congress would provide additional security measures for the justices, and another would offer more privacy and protection for all federal judges.

Round-the-clock security given to the justices after the leak of the draft opinion in a major abortion case may well have averted a tragedy.

But the situation had much in common with other recent incidents that ended with the shooting death of a former judge in Wisconsin last week and the killing in 2020 of the son of a federal judge at their home in New Jersey. Troubled men, harboring a warped desire for vengeance and equipped with guns, turned their threats into action.

"We're seeing these threats increase in number and intensity. That's a sign. That's a signal," said U.S. District Judge Esther Salas, whose son was killed nearly two years ago in the attack that also wounded her husband.

Kavanaugh's would-be attacker is Nicholas John Roske, 26, of Simi Valley, California, authorities said in

charging him with the attempted murder of a justice. Clad in black, he arrived by taxi outside Kavanaugh's Maryland home around 1 a.m. Wednesday.

He spotted two U.S. Marshals who were guarding the house and walked in the other direction, calling 911 to say he was having suicidal thoughts and also planned to kill Kavanaugh, according to court documents. Roske said he found the justice's address on the internet.

When police searched a backpack and suitcase he was carrying, they said they found a Glock 17 pistol, ammunition, a knife, zip ties, duct tape and other items Roske said he was going to use to break into the house. He said he bought the gun to kill Kavanaugh.

Roske told police he was upset by the leaked draft opinion in the abortion case and by the school shooting in Uvalde, Texas, and believed Kavanaugh would vote to loosen gun control laws, according to documents filed in federal court in Maryland.

Last week, Wisconsin authorities said Douglas Uhde, 56, shot John Roemer, a former county judge, in a targeted attack against a judge who had once sentenced him to prison. Roemer was found zip-tied to a chair. Uhde had shot himself and later died.

In July 2020, lawyer Roy Den Hollander showed up at Salas' home posing as a FedEx delivery person. Den Hollander fatally shot Salas' 20-year-old son, Daniel Anderl, and wounded her husband, Mark Anderl. The judge was in another part of the home at the time and was not injured.

Den Hollander, 72, was a men's rights lawyer with a history of anti-feminist writings. He was found dead of a self-inflicted gunshot wound the day after the ambush, when police said they found a document with information about a dozen female judges from across the country, half of whom are Latina, including Salas.