

Coming SUNDAY: Why the drought has been good for one Georgia crop

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WEATHER Pg. 2

55/32

Mostly sunny and slightly warmer.



Today's artist: Brelanda Stafford, 5th grade, West Point Elementary School

Community

Check out scenes from last week's annual debutante ball of LaGrange Cotillion Club at Highland Country Club. PAGE 3

County may preserve old bridge

By Joel Martin
Senior writer

Troup County may preserve the Salem Road bridge over Flat Shoals Creek, the county's only remaining steel truss bridge, although it must be replaced because of structural deficiencies.

The state Department of Transportation has proposed demolishing the narrow 1908 bridge in southeastern Troup County and replacing it with the standard reinforced concrete design. The federal government would pay the estimated \$1.1 million construction costs, while the county would be responsible for right-of-way acquisition and utility relocations for an esti-

mated \$87,000.

The bridge is inspected every two years and it's "definitely not a dangerous bridge," county engineer James Emery said. "The load limit has only been reduced slightly. We've not anywhere near having to close the bridge for a long time."

Commissioner Buck Davis said Friday that he favors building the bridge on a new alignment, allowing the steel bridge to be preserved for historic purposes. Such was the case with the old bridge on Young's Mill Road, which was made into a park. The project could be funded with a grant under the federal Transportation Enhancement Act

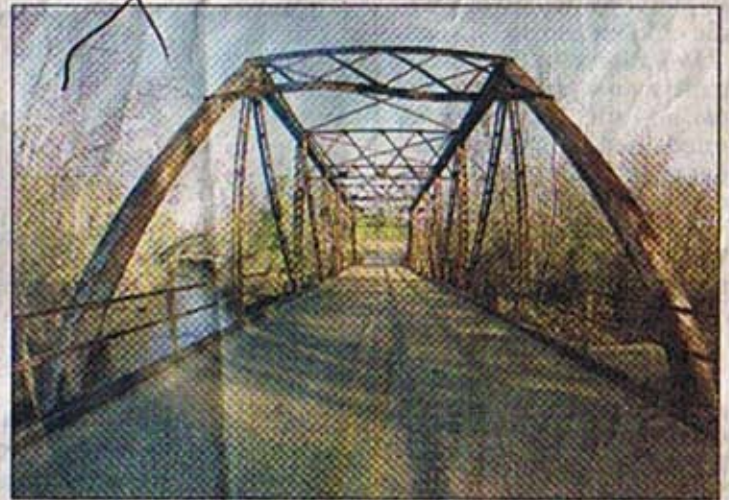
program.

Emery is meeting Monday with the DOT at its district office in Thomaston to discuss the options. Emery said he'll go into the meeting with "a bias toward preserving the bridge, and the natural beauty and scenic qualities of the area."

One option, if it's not too expensive, would be replacing the bridge with another steel truss design, Emery said.

"Everything is conceptual now and will be for a long time," he said, noting that the bridge project not on the DOT schedule until 2011.

SEE BRIDGE, PAGE 2



Matt Jones / Daily News

The Salem Road bridge over Flat Shoals Creek was built 99 years ago and needs replacing, but Troup County may try to preserve it.