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FRIDAY

DECEMBER 20, 2013

The Times

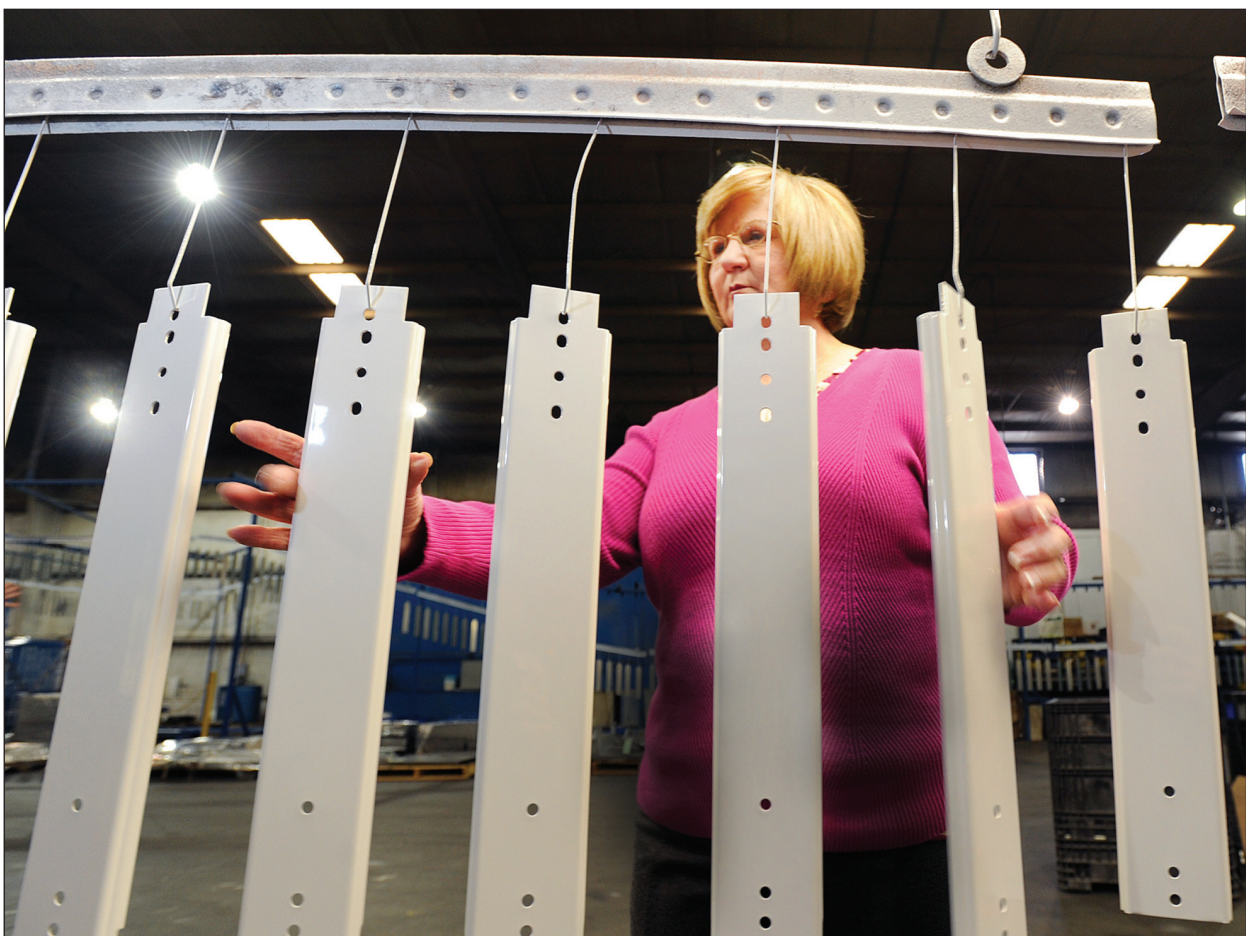
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50 CENTS
GAINESVILLE, GEORGIA

Rebuilding American pride



Photos by NAT GURLEY | The Times

Georgia Powder Coating quality control lead Louise Eubanks pulls powder-coated parts from the line to test for adherence and durability.

Local company coats panels for One World Trade Center

BY SAVANNAH KING
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Two years ago, Dallas Cooley walked past the construction of the One World Trade Center Tower while visiting New York City.

As vice president of sales for Georgia Powder Coating, based in Gainesville, he took an interest in the business behind the historic construction.

"I had a thought, 'Somebody is doing work and deals and business on buildings like that,'" Cooley said. "It was just a thought. ... Two years later I'm in my office and an existing customer calls me, and he says 'I'm working on this really cool project.'"

The customer, a metal products company based in Kennesaw, was involved in providing metal guards for the construction of the atrium inside the 104-floor high-rise. The building stands at a symbolic 1,776 feet, 49 feet taller than the original twin towers, according to the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

The metal guards were to be placed in front of the building's heating and air conditioning vents to prevent birds from getting swept into the systems.

Georgia Powder Coating, which specializes in powder-coated, electrostatic painting, coated approximately 600 of the specially designed panels. Powder coating has a higher resistance to impact, moisture, chemicals, sunlight, climate and other extreme weather conditions that can diminish paint quality.

■ Please see PROJECT, 4A



Juan Lara, left, and Esteban Lopez pull masking material from the line of powder-coated refrigerator drawer slides at Georgia Powder Coating on Zander Drive. The finished slides, which will go in commercial refrigerators, are more durable than painted surfaces, said Dallas Cooley, vice president of sales.

Student places in state video contest

BY CARLY SHAREC
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A video competition has placed North Hall High School sophomore Seth Watkins in the state spotlight.

"It originally started out as a school project that we had to do in my video production class," Watkins, 16, said. "I ended up being the only person who did mine, so I pretty much represented the school."

The Stop the Drop video contest, sponsored by Georgia Public Broadcasting, asked high school students to develop 30-second public service announcements aimed at preventing their peers from dropping out of school.

Enlisting his older brother's help as the actor, Watkins' commercial begins with

a person accidentally knocking over a vase.

"And it says, 'Don't you ever wish you could rewind time?'" Watkins said. "And eventually everything starts rewinding (and) the vase gets rebuilt."

The commercial then cuts to a person walking out of North Hall High School. He has just dropped out, and throws his book bag on the ground. The screen shows information that reads 8,100 students drop out every day.

"The idea was I wanted to compare something like a vase to something larger



Watkins

like a high school education," Watkins said. "If you wanted to rewind time and fix your problems, you can't actually do that. You make one mistake and it can ruin your life forever."

The field of around 140 entries was narrowed to 10, with Watkins being one. The winner, determined by the number of people who liked the video on YouTube, received \$1,000.

Though Watkins did not win, his commercial has been airing on Georgia Public Broadcasting, including during the airing of the state football championships. He even got to travel to the Georgia Dome and be interviewed on live television.

■ Please see VIDEO, 4A

Spike in neglect cases is a 'crisis'

Foster homes needed to battle record influx

BY EMMA WITMAN
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Child welfare advocates called the current foster parent shortage a "crisis" as unprecedented numbers of kids are being taken into emergency care.

"We need more foster homes — it's really a crisis right now," said Connie Stephens, executive director of Hall and Dawson counties' Court Appointed Special Advocate program.

CASA volunteers are appointed — by law — through the juvenile court system to represent the best interests of children from homes being investigated for abuse or neglect.

"It's a staggering increase," Stephens said. "It's just overwhelming right now, the number of children we're seeing."

Susan Boatwright, communications director for the Department of Family and Children Services, framed the statistics.

"For the year 2012, the total year, there were 35 children. In December, we've almost — and the month is not over — had as many children coming into care as we brought in all of 2012," she said.

■ Please see CRISIS, 4A

Fire tagged as suspicious

BY EMMA WITMAN
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An early Thursday fire that destroyed a vacant home has been labeled suspicious, fire officials said.

Hall County Fire Marshal Scott Cagle said firefighters responded around 3:15 a.m. to the "fully involved" blaze in the 2400 block of Spring Road off McEver Road in Hall County.

Cagle reported neighbors said the 1,500-square-

foot structure had been used as a church, which the county marshal confirmed.

"We've made a little progress," Cagle said of the investigation. "We found who the owner was finally. It evidently had been signed over from one family member to another family member."

"That's what we've been trying to do today is find the owner, and see if they know anything."

Investigators have

■ Please see FIRE, 4A



NAT GURLEY | The Times

An early morning fire Thursday in the 2400 block of Spring Road in Gainesville burned an unoccupied building down to the floor joists.



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WEATHER 2A



High Low

60 51

Lake Lanier level: 1,071.59 feet
Down 0.20 feet in 24 hours

DEATHS 2B

Gail Delois Childers, 58
Milton L. Hite, 91
Joe Robert Holt, 82
Minnie Hesling Kilpatrick, 88
Katherine Victoria Lively, 61

Rose M. Paris
Lawrence Dawson Ragsdale, 62
Lorraine Madeline Begin
Swanson, 88



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