



# CHEAP, EASY & DEADLY

Heroin is making a comeback on local streets

By LARRY HOBBS  
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Wesley Greer's path to heroin addiction began in college, back when the smart, friendly, outgoing, big kid had no demons haunting him and only promising horizons.

An injury in a sandlot football game on the campus of West Virginia University in 2007 resulted in a visit to the doctor, who prescribed him narcotic painkillers. That led Greer to opioid addiction, a disease that would plunge him into spiraling desperation. Heroin answered the call of desperation, the gnawing demand that numerous attempts at recovery would not squelch.

Wesley Greer's path to heroin addiction ended on Aug. 19, 2015, in a rental house on Perry Lane Road in Glynn County, where he fell victim to a fatal overdose.

"I love you, Mom," is the last thing he said to Kristy Dyroff before leaving her home on Blythe Island the night before.

"He really was a joy — and we really miss him," Dyroff said of her son, who was 27. "He had every

opportunity. He was raised in a good home. Our son wanted for nothing."

Greer's fatal attraction to heroin might appear improbable to many. But such scenarios ring all too familiar with local law enforcement leaders, as well as those who treat addiction in the Golden Isles.

The drug that once conjured seedy, retro images of grimy streets and dirty needles from the 1970s is making a comeback here in the 21st century. Heroin is thriving in a niche black market created by the sudden scarcity and sky-high prices of prescription opioid pain pills on the street, said Glynn County Police Chief Matt Doering. The drug abuse problem that many authorities are declaring a nationwide epidemic has prompted the multi-agency Glynn-Brunswick Narcotics Enforcement Team to step up efforts at combatting the local heroin trade, he said. There have been heroin-related arrests

recently, Doering said. He declined to provide details, citing an ongoing investigation.

"Suffice it to say that heroin is back," Doering said recently. "It's highly addictive. We have shifted some of our resources because this takes a priority for obvious reasons. It's very dangerous."

Tighter regulations placed on the distribution of prescription opioids from doctors and pharmacists has had the unintended consequence of driving up the demand for heroin on the street.

"It's definitely rising," said Nina Kennedy, the chief clinical officer at Gateway Behavioral Health Services in Glynn County. "More people are shooting up heroin than I have seen in the past 15 years. I think a lot of it has to do with the rising cost of opioid pills on the street."

Perhaps more troubling than heroin itself are the deadly substances dealers are mixing it with to stretch the product. Of primary concern is fentanyl, a powerful prescription pain narcotic that can be deadly on its own. Fentanyl is typically prescribed as a gel enclosed in a patch that is applied directly to the skin to treat long-term chronic pain. Drug addicts often abuse Fentanyl by



Wesley Greer

"Suffice it to say that **heroin** is back."

— Glynn County Police Chief Matt Doering

Please see **HEROIN**, 10A

## DAYBREAK

### Weather

High 86, Low 72 Isolated thunderstorms. 9A

### Worth Doing

Glynn Visual Arts on St. Simons Island, is gearing up for its new exhibit, "What I Did on My Summer Vay-Cay," a summer-themed art show. Local, 3A

### Worth knowing



Navy veteran Keith Post was the recipient of the Ben Bastura National Achievement Award. Local, 8A

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## Storm response given high marks by EMA director

By MICHAEL HALL  
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Jay Wiggins had plenty of rest to catch up on Saturday after spending the three previous days preparing for and responding to Tropical Storm Hermine as it swept over the Golden Isles.

"I got a little bit of sleep last night, but it probably wasn't enough," Wiggins said

Saturday.

With the storm now past Coastal Georgia, Wiggins, director of the Glynn County Emergency Management Agency, had plans to put his feet up and watch some college football Saturday after pulling a few all-nighters.

The previous nights were filled with paying close attention to Hermine, which made landfall on the Florida panhan-

dle as a Category 1 hurricane Thursday night and was later downgraded as it passed over South Georgia. Damage and flooding in towns to the west like Valdosta was worse than what the Golden Isles experienced, but there was still plenty to respond to locally, Wiggins admits.

Please see **STORM**, 5A



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