

The Oconee Enterprise Business

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Wesley Scott
Financial Focus

ETFs can spell a unique opportunity

Mutual funds offer investors a chance to own shares in dozens of companies, as well as bonds, government securities and other investments. But you might be able to broaden your portfolio further by owning another type of fund — an exchange-traded fund (ETF).

An ETF, like a mutual fund, can own an array of investments, including stocks, bonds and other securities. Many ETFs are passively managed in that they track the performance of a specific index, such as the S&P 500. In this respect, they differ from most mutual funds, which tend to be actively managed — that is, the fund managers are free to buy and sell individual securities within the fund.

Another difference between ETFs and mutual funds is that ETFs are traded like stocks, so shares are bought and sold throughout the day based on the current market price, whereas mutual funds are traded just once a day, at a price calculated at the end of the trading day. Whether this ability to make intra-day trades is meaningful to you will likely depend on how active you are in managing your own investments.

For some people, the main attraction of ETFs is their tax advantages. Because many ETFs are index funds, they generally do much less buying and selling than actively managed funds — and fewer sales mean fewer taxable capital gains. These ETFs are somewhat similar to index mutual funds, which are also considered to be tax-efficient, as opposed to actively managed funds, which constantly buy and sell investments, passing on taxable capital gains to you throughout the life of the fund. (Keep in mind, though, that mutual funds that trade frequently may still be appropriate for your financial strategy. While taxes are one element to consider when evaluating mutual funds, or any investment, other factors, such as growth potential and ability to diversify your portfolio, are also important.)

ETFs typically also have lower operating costs than mutual funds, resulting in lower overall fees. Part of the reason for these lower costs is that actively managed mutual funds, by definition, usually have larger management teams devoted to researching, buying and selling securities. By contrast, passively managed ETFs may have leaner, less-costly management structures.

But while most ETFs may share the same basic operating model, many types are available. You can invest in equity ETFs, which may track stocks in a particular industry or an index of equities (S&P 500, Dow Jones Industrial Average, and so on), or you can purchase fixed-income ETFs, which invest in bonds. ETFs are also available for currencies and commodities.

Of course, as with all investments, ETF investing does involve risk. Your principal and investment return will fluctuate in value, so when you redeem your ETF, it may be worth more or less than the original investment. Also, liquidity may be an issue. Some ETFs may be more difficult to sell than other investments, which could be a problem if you need the money quickly. And because it's so easy to move in and out of ETFs, you might be tempted to "overtrade" rather than following an appropriate long-term investment strategy.

A financial professional can evaluate your situation and help you determine whether ETFs are suitable for your needs.

At a minimum, they represent another investment opportunity that may prove useful as you work toward your financial goals.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.

Edward Jones, Member SIPC

Wesley Scott is a Financial Advisor with Edward Jones in Watkinsville. Opinions expressed are those of the writer.

Ashford Manor approved for special events

BY CAITLIN FARMER

The Watkinsville City Council last week approved a conditional use permit for special events at what is known by many as Ashford Manor.

The current owners, William Ashford and his wife, Kalen Ashford, purchased the house from Mario Castro and the late Dave Shearon, who used it as a bed and breakfast for 22 years until 2019.

"It used to be... a big part of the community for many, many years," William said. "I think they had more than 1,200 weddings there...[and] numerous other smaller events."

William said it has been their primary residence, but they are ready to open the home back up to the public.

"We're thinking probably five to six small, medium-sized weddings per year, as well as possibly some other very small events like birthday parties, ladies' lunches and things like that scattered throughout the year," William said. "So not nearly the same scale or operation that the previous owners were doing."

William said the manor will continue to be their primary residence.

"The manor, I think, is a staple of downtown Watkinsville," he said. "This gives the public a chance to get back in there and enjoy the property."

The property where the Ashford Manor sits was bought in 1881 by Alexander Woodson Ashford, according to a previous listing from



Ashford Manor, located at South Main Street and 5 Harden Hill, will host small and medium-sized events. [Photo by Caitlin Farmer]

Corcoran Classic Living.

"In 1893 A.W. was enjoying financial good fortune, and it was at this time that he built both Ashford Manor and The Ashford Memorial Methodist Church," according to Corcoran Classic Living. "The Victorian home and the Gothic style church were built by Nathaniel Richardson, who is credited with building many Watkinsville homes."

William originally requested conditional use for 5 and 20 Harden Hill Road, but 20 Harden Hill Road didn't

apply.

William said he purchased 20 Harden Hill Road from Mario Castro about one month ago and that it not being approved will not affect the events they plan to host at 5 Harden Hill Road.

During the public hearing, citizen Patrick Lucas raised questions about parking for the events on behalf of Ashford Memorial Methodist Church.

"We are not in opposition of this request," he said. "We had not been

approached about this request and are here primarily for informational purposes."

William apologized for not reaching out to Ashford Memorial Methodist Church sooner and said he'd like to discuss renting the parking lot and that parking behind the Oconee County Courthouse could be used for Ashford events.

"I'm excited that it's getting opened up again to the community," said Post 4 Council member Christine Tucker. "Personally, I went to quite a few events there back in the day and it's absolutely beautiful so I'm in full support."

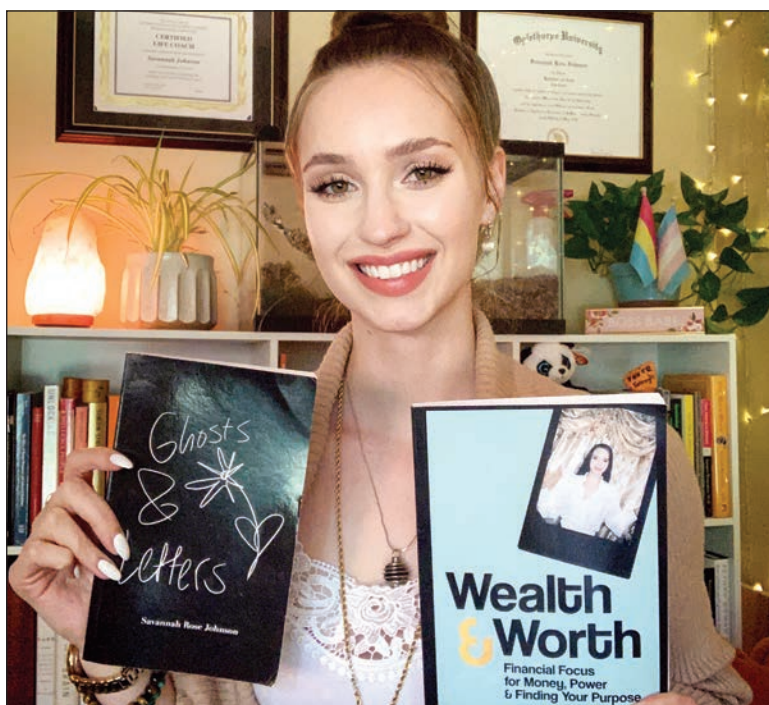
Watkinsville Mayor Brian Brodrick asked Post 1 Council Member Chuck Garrett if he had any comments on the special use permit request.

Garrett said he was excited but wanted to ensure that the noise ordinance would be followed.

Brodrick said the Ashfords acknowledged the ordinance in their application and should adhere to it.

"It's exciting to have you guys back in the family house and taking great care of it," Brodrick said. "And it's also good to have our friends from Ashford [Memorial Methodist Church] here tonight. Y'all also are stewards of one of our most beautiful historic buildings."

The conditional use permit was approved unanimously.



Savannah Johnson is a Watkinsville native who has started a life coaching business and has published several books. [Submitted photo]

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Oconee native launches life coaching business

BY MICHAEL PROCHASKA

Watkinsville native and life coach Savannah Johnson has launched her holistic life coaching business Eclipse Evolution, LLC.

A 25 years old, she operates out of Cobb County but has cultivated a global audience. Before graduating from college, Johnson published her first book, a poetry collection called "Ghosts & Letters." She earned her life coaching certification in September 2019 and Rapid Transformational Therapy license in April 2020.

"It seemed like divine timing launching [my career], during COVID," said Johnson. "I had no doubt I was meant to help people during COVID. It all lined up to where I felt I could truly make a difference when it mattered most."

Johnson published her second book, "Wealth & Worth: Financial Focus for Money, Power, and Finding Your Purpose," in July of 2020.

Through her podcast, books, one-on-one coaching, Johnson demonstrates her own humanity in building genuine relationships with her clients.

Johnson is an Ayurvedic nutritionist, life coach, Rapid Transformational Therapy practitioner and Reiki practitioner. She is also vice president of Kennrod Incorporated, an educational nonprofit serving students in metro Atlanta through tutoring, college and career readiness prep and family resources. More information at eclipseevolution.com



Long-time ESP'er Dakota Sykora promotes Java Joy, a coffee service for the community. [Submitted photo]

ESP'ers serve coffee

The Java Joy Piedmont Training Center at the Oconee Health Campus is a one-stop shop for families on their drive to school.

In addition to coffee, local customers can enjoy a delicious, mouthwatering Golden Pantry biscuit in a bag decorated by Joyristas Monday-Thursday from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. or Friday from 7 a.m. to noon

Home rentals sought

Athena Studios has opened in Athens and will be in production soon. The Oconee County Visitor's Center encourages Oconee citizens to contact Sarah Cumuze at scumuze@oconee.ga.us if they have a home listed on Airbnb or VRBO and would like to rent to a film crew.

Researchers work to keep produce fresh

BY EMILY CABRERA

Angelos Deltsidis, assistant professor of horticulture in the University of Georgia's College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, specializes in fresh produce postharvest physiology. Despite technological advances, food loss continues to be a problem throughout the U.S., he explained.

Deltsidis' research program focuses on extending the shelf-life of fruits and vegetables and implementing technologies to improve market quality. He said temperature management is critical.

Achieving the optimal storage temperature for produce is more difficult than it may seem, especially in the summer months when produce is harvested in temperatures ranging from 90 to 100 degrees Fahrenheit.

In a collaborative study with UGA Cooperative Extension agent Justin Shealy, the research team performed on-farm trials with brothers Justin and Jared Corbett of Corbett Brothers Farms, one of the top growers of green bell peppers on the East Coast. The goal was to improve upon a decades-old method of precooling to increase efficiency and reduce postharvest losses.

For large-scale producers, forced air cooling (FAC) is the most common and efficient pre-cooling method for harvested produce. Essentially, boxes of produce are stacked on pallets and lined up in front of specialized fans that force cold air through the boxes to pull field heat from the surface of the produce within.

Most modern packinghouses in Georgia have invested in FAC systems to remove field heat from freshly harvested produce, but previously there was no published information on specific time duration requirements. Instead, a standard 45 minutes was suggested, regardless of

the commodity, packaging type, amount of field heat or target temperature.

As a result, field heat from freshly harvested produce is often not sufficiently dissipated, leading to more rapid quality deterioration.

The team experimented with modified box designs and packing strategies to increase ventilation and allow produce to cool more quickly. To assess the results, they monitored internal temperature change over time in one-minute intervals.

The longer it takes to reduce internal temperature, the more water is lost as produce metabolizes its own sugar, he explained. By rapidly dropping the temperature during precooling, metabolic activity dramatically slows, preserving the quality and safety of the produce.

On a large farm, produce is harvested quickly and at a large scale. As new loads of freshly harvested produce come into packing houses, heat is continuously emitted. For many packing operators, it is more economically advantageous to keep the chain of production moving by keeping to a standard 45-minute cooling period rather than wait an additional 45 minutes to reach the optimal temperature.

However, UGA's modified box design and packing strategies give producers a low-cost, low-tech solution to reach target temperatures faster, save on electric bills and lower the risk of rejected shipments due to spoilage.

The research findings also stand to benefit consumers as higher-quality produce with longer shelf-life makes its way to grocery stores.

Emily Cabrera is a writer and public relations coordinator for the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences at the University of Georgia.



CAES researchers and UGA Extension agents hope their research findings will provide updated guidelines for producers to improve precooling efficiency and reduce postharvest food losses. [Submitted photo]