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Social Security office staying open in Union, officials say

JANET S. SPENCER, Staff Writer

GAFFNEY -- Social Security Administration officials said Monday a satellite office in Union County will not close.

And Cherokee County officials agreed to oppose the shutdown next month of the agency's branch location in Gaffney.

Cherokee County Administrator Ben Clary told the County Council that closing the office seemed a callous way of conducting business.

"For Social Security services, you have to either use the telephone, the computer or drive to Spartanburg," Clary said.

Councilman Tim Spencer said the options would be difficult or impossible for some people who receive Social Security benefits.

"It would be kind of hard to get a cab from Gaffney to Spartanburg for some people," Spencer said.

The council agreed to ask its local legislative delegation and congressional representatives to work to keep the Gaffney office open.

State Sen. Harvey Peeler attended the meeting for swearing-in ceremonies of council members Charles Mathis, James Batchler and Bailey Humphries. They were re-elected in November.

He said he was familiar with the predicament of the Union County residents.

Price Atkinson, spokesman for U.S. Rep. Bob Inglis, said in an e-mail that local concerns expressed about the proposed closing of the Union office caused the plan to be withdrawn.

The Social Security Administration will continue providing services on the first floor of the old Union County jail on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

But in Gaffney, at the county offices located in the Peachtree Centre on North Limestone Street, a

sign posted on the door says the Social Security representative will not be available in January.

Peeler said efforts already have been made to keep the Gaffney office open. He asked the council to provide a letter or resolution to show how important it is to maintain a Social Security Office locally.

In other matters, the council recognized the 2006 state football champions, the Gaffney High School Indians, and their leaders, including Coach Phil Strickland.

Team members Malcolm Long and Tyson Petty attended, along with Strickland and coaches Larry Irvin and Donnie Littlejohn, to accept the honors.

Janet Spencer can be reached at (864) 487-7146 or janet.spencer@shj.com.

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