

# Officials gear up for

BY GREG OLIVER  
THE JOURNAL



DAWSON POWERS | FOR THE JOURNAL

All-American running back Travis Etienne and the Clemson Tigers will kick off the 2019 season at home Thursday night against Georgia Tech. With a weeknight kickoff, the game is expected to create more issues than usual around the area.

CLEMSON — If the opening game of the 2019 Clemson football season weren't enough, the Tigers are defending national champions and the preseason No. 1 team in the nation.

Combine that with the season-opening first game scheduled on a weeknight, and city traffic is expected to be even more hectic than usual.

But officials are already at work to make sure things go as smoothly as

## Clemson football opener

**'The biggest issue** is going to be the additional traffic with folks getting off work and trying to get through the city to get home. That will no doubt create additional traffic we normally do not deal with when games are on Saturdays.'

**Jimmy Dixon**  
Clemson police chief

possible when the Tigers kick off Thursday night against Georgia Tech.

"We have had Thursday night games in the past, and preparations are still the same as with any other game," Clemson

Police Chief Jimmy Dixon said. "The biggest issue is going to be the additional traffic with folks getting off work and trying to get through the city to get home. That will no doubt create additional traffic

we normally do not deal with when games are on Saturdays."

Whereas College Avenue is typically closed to vehicular traffic on Friday

SEE FOOTBALL, PAGE A5



# FOOTBALL: Metal detectors will be used at

FROM PAGE A1

nights prior to Saturday home football games, Dixon said it won't be closed Thursday since it is a weeknight contest.

Clemson public works director David Conner said garbage and recycling routes that normally take place Wednesday and Thursday will all be handled today.



Conner

"That will allow us to concentrate on gameday preparation for putting out extra garbage cans and preparing for the influx of people coming into town," Conner said.

Conner said public works employees will also be working the downtown streets to keep garbage under control due to the number of people expected to frequent restaurants and bars. Even after the game is over, Conner's crew will still be hard at work.

"We'll have to get downtown ready for merchants to open up their businesses Friday morning," he said.

In preparation for Thursday night, Central Town Hall will close at noon and Clemson City Hall will close at 1 p.m. The Clemson downtown parking decks will close at noon, and any cars remaining in metered and leased spaces will be towed beginning at noon. The decks will then open to leased football parking starting at 2 p.m.

Central town administrator Phillip Mishoe said the decision to close town hall was also made to allow employees to pick up children from schools since all are dismissing early.



Mishoe

"I expect traffic to be heavy, so we do need to close a little early," Mishoe said. "Thursday night games are unusual, and I don't think we need to contribute to the traffic."

School District of Pickens County spokesman John Eby said elementary schools will dismiss at 11:30 a.m., and middle and high schools will let students out at 12:15 p.m.

Buses will operate and lunch will be served prior to dismissal.

"We have two early release days on our school calendar this year, with Aug. 29 intended to alleviate traffic issues expected on U.S.



Eby

Highway 123 due to a weekday Clemson football game," Eby said.

Clemson Area Chamber of Commerce president Susan Cohen said the chamber has been working to ensure everyone is prepared for added

road closures or detours around the area — whether from events or construction.

"We were also asked to have our businesses remind fans to head to the stadium a little earlier than their normal routine



Cohen

prior to the game to allow for extra time needed to accommodate the new security measures that will be in place at all gates this year," Cohen said. "The athletic department learned a lot from their

## all gates this season

tests (of metal detectors) at various gates last year, but this year will be the first time that all gates will be impacted."

Cohen said she has also heard from local hotels that rather than the typical two-night minimum stay for a game, some are seeing reservations stretched into the weekend.

Initially, Cohen heard that some fans would not arrive as early into town Thursday due to having to take a half-day off work,

among other things. Although she still feels some of that will hold true, the chamber president said the fact that the university won't hold classes Thursday coupled with the downtown appearance of the Budweiser Clydesdales tonight has shifted back the arrival time.

"Many are treating it just like a typical Saturday home game," Cohen said.

goliver@upstatetoday.com | (864) 973-6687  
Follow on Twitter @JournalGO