

# Winter storm...continued from page 1

A glimpse outside Sunday night and nothing in Hiawassee; not one snowflake to be seen anywhere. So where was this highly anticipated "epic" winter storm that was expected to paralyze the Northeast Georgia Mountains?

At 12:01 a.m. Monday, the first snowflake fell in Hiawassee. Within 45 minutes, the city looked like a shaken snow globe; snow everywhere and it was coming down hard. Once again, the National Weather Service had hit the nail on the head.

A winter storm, predicted to be of epic proportions arrived here after midnight. Within an hour, it was 23 degrees and almost two inches of snow was on the ground.

The snow kept coming. Winter storm warnings were posted from east Texas

to the Carolinas, including the entire state of Georgia.

The storm traveled south to north, coming up the state from a system generated from a front that developed in the western Gulf of Mexico. Much of Metro Atlanta had four inches of snow prior to the storm's arrival in the Northeast Georgia Mountains.

Even before the frozen precipitation arrived here, schools and businesses closed operations for Monday. They kept their fingers crossed for the days ahead. Doctors' offices called patients advising them that their Monday appointments would need to be rescheduled.

The closings were right on the mark as the National Weather Service had alerted the entire state days in advance of the winter storm.

At 5 p.m. Sunday,

outgoing Gov. Sonny Perdue declared a statewide state of emergency because of the pending storm system headed this way, his final act in office.

Gov.-Elect Nathan Deal canceled all outdoor activities surrounding his inauguration, scheduled for Monday in Atlanta.

Georgia's 82<sup>nd</sup> governor told supporters and well wishers to stay indoors and watch the ceremony at the State Capitol on Georgia Public Broadcasting.

"Personal safety is much more important than trying to get to Atlanta in the middle of a snow storm," Gov. Deal said in a released statement. "Don't travel unless you have to."

GDOT readied for the storm by focusing on the Metro Atlanta area as most communities, including Towns

and Union, were dealing with a shortage of sand and salt due to snow and ice in December and early January.

Mainly local road crews worked feverishly throughout the night to clear main thoroughfares in the mountains for emergency crews responding to emergency medical calls and fire calls.

A Colwell Construction grader cleared many side roads as best they could.

At 1:40 a.m. on Monday, Towns County Fire and Rescue responded to a chimney fire at Ramada Inn. Braving the frozen pathways, firefighters quickly resolved the issue with little fanfare.

The snow kept coming; four inches of snow on the ground at 2:45 a.m. Monday.

The final totals aren't in yet, but brace yourselves for a cold, frozen week ahead.



Scenes from around Towns County show this snow packed a wallop as it spread throughout the county. Many families became shut-ins, afraid to travel on county roads or venture into Hiawassee or Young Harris. Photos/Sherri Behrens and Lowell Nicholson

## Award... continued from page 1

Statewide Accountability System awards.

"Test scores fluctuate, particularly for a school our size," Principal Perren said. "We're going to have years when our scores are high and we'll have years when our scores are low. We're very proud to earn this award."

The school met all three criteria for a platinum award regarding the greatest gains category in student achievement.

For the seventh consecutive year, the school met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as it relates to the federal No Child Left Behind Act. The requirement was three

consecutive years of meeting AYP.

Also, at least 35 percent of the school's students exceeded standards in all test areas as measured by state assessments, Bryant said.

Finally, the school placed in the 98<sup>th</sup> percentile statewide in greatest student achievement gains, according to Bryant.

"As you well know, it takes the collaborative effort of teachers, principals and parents working with students to reap this level of success," Bryant said. "We applaud your entire school community for this impressive accomplishment."

"We wish your school

continued success and extend our best wishes to your entire school community as we work together to help all children achieve at high levels," Bryant said.

Principal Perren said he was caught by surprise both years that the school has won Governor's Cup honors.

"The first time we won, I'd never heard of the award," he said. "Yes, these honors caught me by surprise."

Principal Perren said the students are excited.

"However, when we get together to celebrate this, we'll have a better understanding of just how proud they really are."

## Food distribution

The monthly mobile food distribution for families in need will be held at No. Mt. Zion Church of God on Friday, January 14 from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. This outdoor food distribution will be held in the rear parking lot of No. Mt. Zion Church of God on Scataway, rain or shine. If you are picking up food for another family please bring an authorization from them. Thank you and we look forward to seeing you there! TJan12,F1)SH

## United Community Bank collects gifts for Christmas



Back row L to R: Katie McConnell, Camille Guss, Rocasane Tabularin, John Henry Hobbs, Corbin Giffilian, Jaythan Burrell, Kyle McConnell. Front row: Nora Sutton, Jordan Moss, Alexa Arencibia, Chris Holloway.

United Community Bank employees and Junior Board of Directors at the Hiawassee location participated again this year in their annual Angel Tree Project to collect Christmas gifts for Foster Children in Towns County. Each child's

wish list was fulfilled with toys and fun gifts as well as requests for clothing items, shoes and warm coats. Once all the gifts were collected, they were loaded up and delivered to the Foster Children's Christmas Program collection site for

distribution to the families.

The staff and Junior Board at United Community Bank would like to thank all the many people who purchased gifts or made generous donations toward this project.

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