

Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thur: Showers	62 38
Fri: Cloudy	60 41
Sat: Showers	57 43
Sun: Showers	54 38
Mon: Cloudy	54 30
Tue: Cloudy	50 29
Wed: Sunny	54 31



Upstream Elevation Predicted 02/01/12	
Lake Chatuge	1918.00
Lake Nottely	1761.48
Blue Ridge	1670.13

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Remains Update

The Georgia State Crime Laboratory could release details this week about human remains found in southern Towns County on Jan. 15.

At press time, those details were unavailable, although it's likely word will be available this week.

Food Pantry

The Towns County Food Distribution is scheduled for Tuesday Feb. 7 from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. All that are in need of food assistance are encouraged to attend. If you are unable to pick up your food, please contact The Pantry at (706) 896-4783 prior to distribution day. All clients and inquiries are kept confidential.

Johnson Update

Fort Pierce, Fla. Police await word on remains found Jan. 17 that could be that of a man missing from Harbortown Marina in Florida.

Scott Johnson, missing since Nov. 12, is the son of U.S.N. Retired Chief Petty Officer Bud Johnson, of Hiwassee.

Bud Johnson said that he expects to find out more details this week from Fort Pierce police. "They've been wonderful the entire time," he said.

Travis Tritt

Tickets to the St. Patrick's Day performance at Anderson Music Hall by Travis Tritt go on sale Friday at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds.

Tritt is scheduled to return to Towns County March 17.

For more details about ticket prices for the event, call the Fairgrounds at (706) 896-4191. Remember, Feb. 3rd, Travis Tritt tickets.

'Road to no where' threatens historic church

Five-lane, 1.1 mile project's cost is \$16 million; part of regional TSPLOST vote on July 31st

By Charles Duncan
Towns County Herald
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For 106 years, Woods Grove Baptist Church has served the Towns County community.

Generations upon generations have attended the "the little White Church on the Lake."

The historic church, located at 2224 North Highway 17, is facing its biggest challenge to date: a proposed 1.1 mile, five-lane highway connected to the regional projects approved by the Regional Roundtable for the Transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax.

The news of the potential fate of Woods Grove Baptist Church was brought to light during a meeting organized by the Towns County Chamber of Commerce.

Doug Callaway, executive director of the Georgia Transportation Alliance, an affiliate of the Georgia Chamber of Commerce, spoke to a crowd at Brothers Restaurant at Willow Ranch last week. The "Eggs and Issues" breakfast was all about educating locals about the merits of the TSPLOST.

According to the Georgia Chamber of Commerce, the Alliance's mission is to help make sure that Georgia has the infrastructure necessary to attract and retain jobs and grow the economy. Transportation is one of the biggest issues on the table.

"This (TSPLOST) is the best option on the table," Callaway said. "Is it perfect? No. Is it the best thing going? Absolutely."

Come July 31, voters in the 12 Georgia Mountain

See TSPLOST, page 7A



Woods Grove Baptist Church, established in 1906, could be lost if the July 31st Transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (TSPLOST) passes. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

New bridge for Brasstown Creek

\$3.6 million project one of five new bridges scheduled for Towns County

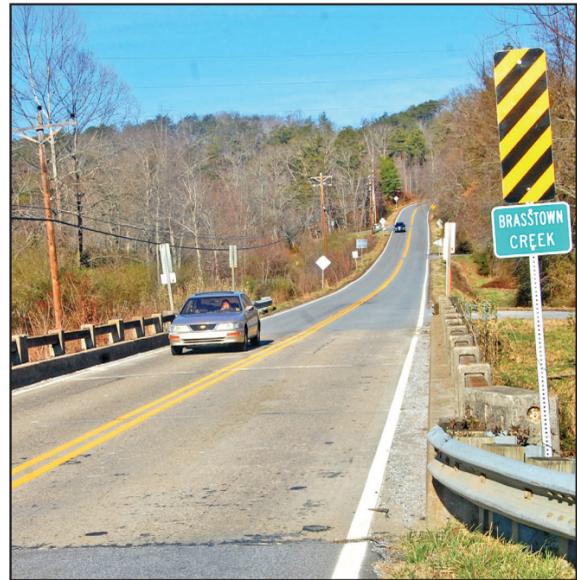
By Charles Duncan
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Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall said its about time that the 72-year-old bridge over Brasstown Creek on Georgia 66 was going to be replaced.

On Tuesday, Georgia Department of Transportation officials met with local residents and officials at the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC office to discuss the particulars of replacing the antiquated bridge.

The schedule for the project is to begin right of way acquisition in Fiscal 2014. There are 19 parcels needed to complete the project. The estimated right of way acquisition costs are \$600,000. Construction is scheduled to begin Fiscal 2015 at an estimated cost of \$3.6 million.

The project is only .76 miles long, however, GDOT also is straightening out the road as it approaches the bridge, easing the curve as



Brasstown Creek bridge, built in 1940, is scheduled for an upgrade in 2015, according to GDOT. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

it approaches the bridge.

The bridge also will be raised about nine feet higher than the existing bridge to prevent future flooding situations.

The new bridge will be built about 100 feet north of the existing bridge so the

existing bridge will stay open throughout construction with no disruption to traffic with the exception of a few "rubbernecker" slowing to watch the work.

See Bridge, page 7A

Homecoming is Saturday

By Charles Duncan
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The Homecoming reign of Bradley Swanson and Jordan Moss is about to come to an end.

On Saturday at Bill P. Kendall Gymnasium, the 2012 Homecoming King and Queen will be revealed for those in attendance at the Towns County Indians and Riverside Military Academy contest.

The athletic action begins at 4:15 p.m. on Saturday with a Boys Junior Varsity game. The Varsity game is scheduled for 6 p.m.

As for Homecoming,



The 2012 Towns County High School Basketball Homecoming Court is ready for the big event on Saturday, Feb. 4th at Bill P. Kendall Gymnasium. Photo/James Reese

14 couples – five senior, TCHS Homecoming King and Queen.

See Homecoming, page 7A

D.A.R.E. graduates say 'No' to drugs

By Charles Duncan
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Towns County Sheriff's Sgt. Darren Jones was humbled by the D.A.R.E. class of 2012.

"This has been an amazing and wonderful class of D.A.R.E. students," Jones said Thursday during commencement exercises for the D.A.R.E. fifth graders. "They been a wonderful class to work with, their fifth grade teachers said they were excited about the D.A.R.E. experience."

"I know that they prepared for life's challenges ahead," he said. "I hope that



Essay winners Chase Rogers, Lea Neamy, Janean Barnes and Fernanda Torres are surrounded by their heroes. Photo/James Reese

I have helped prepare them for the challenges they will face in the years to come."

See D.A.R.E., page 7A

Leo Hesson: 'Do not disturb'

TSPLOST would displace Laurel Hills Memory Gardens

By Charles Duncan
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Laurel Hills Memory Gardens is a special place to Leo Hesson.

His beloved wife is buried there. He's purchased plots to see that other family members are buried there in the cemetery's hallowed grounds.

The proposed 1-cent Transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax that voters in regions throughout the state will decide on July 31st weighs heavy on his heart.

If approved by voters in the Mountains Region, TSPLOST would include projects that would damage part of Laurel Hills Memory Gardens via a 1.1 mile, \$16 million road expansion to five lanes to the North Carolina line.

"We the citizens of Towns County do not believe this specific project is in our best interests," Hesson told those attending last week's TSPLOST in-



Leo Hesson and Marilyn Berrong look at TSPLOST benefits as Doug Callaway goes over his handouts. TSPLOST would wipeout Laurel Hills Memory Gardens. Photo/Charles Duncan

formation meeting at Brothers Restaurant at Willow Ranch. "It is like dropping out of the sky down to the Sahara Desert, a five-lane highway going from no where to no where."

"To disrupt, this long

See Cemetery, page 7A

Presidential Primary set

Absentee ballots available for March 6th election

By Charles Duncan
Towns County Herald
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Absentee voting for the March 6th Presidential Preference Primary, better known as "Super Tuesday," is underway.

Towns County Chief Registrar Irma Nichols said that the last day to register to vote in the March 6th Presidential Preference Primary will be Feb. 6th. Absentee mail out ballots for the election are now available in the Office of the Board of Registrars located in the Old Rock Jail.

Voter registration forms also are available on the Secretary of State's Web site.

Early voting in person begins Monday, Feb. 13th. Hours will be Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Nichols said.

"We also will be open Saturday, Feb. 25th, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.," Nichols said. "For more details, or if you have any questions, call the Board of Registrars at (706) 896-4353."

Voters can request an absentee ballot through Friday, March 2nd. Georgia residents must return their absentee ballot to their county election office by close of polls on Election



Registrar Irma Nichols

Day, March 6th. Absentee ballots cast by overseas and military voters must be post-marked on or before March 6th, but will be accepted until the end of business on March 9, 2012. Voters are not required to provide a reason when requesting an absentee ballot.

The name on the Presidential ballot for Democrats will be President Barack Obama. The names on the GOP Presidential ballot will be Michele Bachmann, Herman Cain, Newt Gingrich, Jon Huntsman, Gary Johnson, Ron Paul, Rick Perry, Buddy Roemer, Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum.

See Super Tuesday, page 7A

TOWNS COUNTY HERALD

