

# County debuts new firefighting equipment

By Charles Duncan  
TOWNS COUNTY HERALD  
charlesduncan@brmemc.net

Towns County is now blessed with some new high-tech firefighting equipment at a bargain price of almost \$305,000.

The Towns County Fire Department recently put three new pieces of equipment to use combating fires within the county's borders.

According to Fire Chief Mitch Floyd, the three new trucks represent the first phase of a program to upgrade and modernize the department's firefighting fleet.

"We needed this equipment," Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall said on Monday. "Our goal is to make our ISO rating go down and allow homeowners to realize a significant decrease in their homeowners' insurance."

The equipment includes a new tanker/pumper equipped with a 1,500 gallon water tank, a 1,250-gallon per-minute pump, and a full compliment of hose, nozzles, self-



L to R Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall, Fire Chief Mitch Floyd, Assistant Chief Harold Copeland, Firefighter James Coward, Firefighter Cory Ledford.

contained breathing apparatus and other various pieces of firefighting equipment.

"The new truck replaces a 1986 model that had limited water and pump capacity," Chief Floyd said.

The new truck is assigned to Fire Station 1 in Hiawassee, Chief Floyd said.

The county's 1,800-gallon tanker received a new chassis that replaced a 1997 model with more than 200,000 miles

on its odometer. Additional compartments were added along with ladders and a new swivel dump chute to offload water more efficiently.

That truck is assigned to Fire Station 2 in Young Harris.

The Quick Attack/Rescue truck received a new Ford F550 chassis and the addition of a 300-gallon water tank and diesel powered auxiliary fire pump, equipped with a Class A Foam system. Extra com-

partment space also was added for equipment storage.

That truck is assigned to Fire Station 1 in Hiawassee.

The equipment was purchased through a competitive bid process with the low bidder being Southern Fire Service and Sales in Jasper, for a total price of just over \$304,000.

"Great buys, great vehicles," said Assistant Fire Chief Harold Copeland. "It's really been a blessing."

## Tourism meeting

The Towns County Tourism Association is sponsoring the 2nd Annual Georgia Mountain Moonshine Cruize-In on Aug. 12-14 at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds. The event was a huge success in 2009 bringing more than 5,000 visitors here.

## Development meeting

The City of Hiawassee and City Planning Committee will host a Community Meeting on Downtown Development and renovation of the Hiawassee City Square on Thursday, February 11, 2010 at 12:00 noon in City Hall. This is an important public meeting to review plans for improvements to the Hiawassee City Square.

Mayor Barbara Mathis stated, "At this meeting, Chip Wright, Historic Preservation Planner, Georgia Regional Commission, will present plans, concepts and strategies related to the City Square and seek input and comments from the community."

All Hiawassee City Council Members and mem-

bers of the City Planning Committee are invited to attend and participate. City Manager Rick Stancil added, "It is very important that we have participation from our community leaders, downtown business and property owners. All interested parties are invited".

"This is a joint effort with our business community to outline a design and plan for our downtown and to preserve and restore the character and history of Hiawassee."

For more details or to be added to the Downtown Development Mailing List, please contact City Manager Rick Stancil, Hiawassee City Hall, 229 Chatuge Way, Hiawassee, Georgia 30546 or call (706) 896-2202.

## City approves Jack Rabbit project

By Charles Duncan  
TOWNS COUNTY HERALD  
charlesduncan@brmemc.net

The City of Hiawassee has completed negotiations with the U.S. Forest Service to provide water and sewer services to the Jack Rabbit Campground area in North Carolina.

City Council members approved a contract with the U.S. Forest Service for the city to provide water and sewer services to the federal Jack Rabbit Campground.

Councilman Junior Chastain made the motion to approve the project. Newly-elected Councilman Stephen Smith seconded the motion that was approved unanimously.

Steve Lohr, a representative of the U. S. Forest Service, met with council members dur-

ing their October meeting to discuss the proposal. City Manager Rick Stancil and the city engineer provided additional details to council at the time.

The campground borders Towns County and has become a premier designation site for campers, hikers and mountain bikers. The U.S. government has undertaken recent upgrades to the campground and improvements are expected to continue.

The region, including Towns County, has already benefited from the economic impact from facility improvements, including the recent addition of the mountain biking trails.

The U.S. Forest Service will provide funding to the city to extend water and sewer service from the city through Towns County to the Jack

Rabbit Campground.

Federal dollars have already been budgeted to replace an aging sewer plant now located next to Lake Chatuge. These funds will be contracted to the city for sewer service expansion as an alternative to replacing the current facility.

The city will receive almost \$1 million in federal funds to expand the city's sewer infrastructure.

Additionally, service fees from new water and sewer billings will generate immediate income to the city enterprise funds.

The sewer line expansion also will provide for improved protection and clean up of Lake Chatuge.

Importantly, \$1 million in new federal funding will reduce future costs to local governments and to city water and sewer customers, Stancil said.

may choose another project that no one has entered and still compete in the District Competition.

The competition is paid for by Towns County 4-H and students bear no cost. Parents and guardians are welcome to attend either event. For more details, call the 4-H Office at (706) 896-2024.

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## Legislation...from page 1A

money. It is also why taxpayers deserve the right to know how their hard-earned money is spent.

"Businesses have long practiced the move from paper to paperless and have seen real cost savings," he said.

"There is no reason state government should not do the same to not only promote the financial savings found in reducing the entire printing process, but also to lessen environmental impact. At the end of the day, our goal is for the state's checkbook to be open and available to taxpayers, who provide our ultimate accountability."

These bills come from recommendations expected to be included in the final report from the Budget Task Force, which is comprised of experienced business leaders and accounting professionals who will provide recommendations to the state Senate regarding both short and long-term budget solutions. The solutions include consolidation of services, greater efficiency and cutting unnecessary spending.

The group was tasked with identifying new ways to balance the budget without drastic cuts to essential services or raising taxes in this economy. Lt. Gov. Cagle and

Senate leadership announced the task force in early January and expect a final report in later this month.

The Transparency in Government Act will expand the public information Web site open.georgia.gov to include all three branches of government, any regional education service agency, all local boards of education, federal pass through dollars and contracts and expenditures made by the General Assembly. With this legislation, the General Assembly, will be included in the auditing and tracking functions of open.georgia.gov, run by the Department of Audits and Accounts.

This bill ensures all fiscal actions of the entire legislative arm of state government are available for the general public to find. The Paper Reduction Act is a directive to save time and money, and increase efficiency.

It will mandate electronic distribution and publication in state government, unless printing is necessary by a legal standard.

This will provide easier, more instantaneous access to government information as well as cut costs of printing, paper, and mailing.

## Floodplain...from page 1A

data is imperative in the preparation of a revised Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map for Towns County," Commissioner Kendall said.

"This accurate data will replace the grossly inaccurate data used by FEMA and Georgia Department of Natural Resources officials to prepare their present proposed Floodplain Maps. These proposed maps put our residents' property in the floodplain that is many feet above the 1,929 Lake Chatuge contour 100-year floodplain."

Commissioner Kendall said that examples of proposed floodplain map errors included

Macedonia Church, sitting high on a hill and the entire knoll behind the church is in the proposed floodplain. Other properties misidentified in the proposed floodplain maps include Highway 288 at Wayne Sprinkles' home, the BF Goodrich Station, Charlotte Ledford Realty, and all homes around the lake in the City of Hiawassee. The proposed revised floodplain maps by DNR and FEMA also included the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC parking lot in Young Harris, and hundreds of homes around Lake Chatuge that would inaccurately be placed under in the proposed floodplain map.

## Learn to Que at Brasstown Valley

By Jessica Keaton  
TOWNS COUNTY HERALD  
jessica.tcherald@brmemc.net

cluding eight Grand Championships, seven Reserve Grands, countless category wins, and is consistently ranked in the Top 20 on the KCBS circuit out of 4,000 teams.

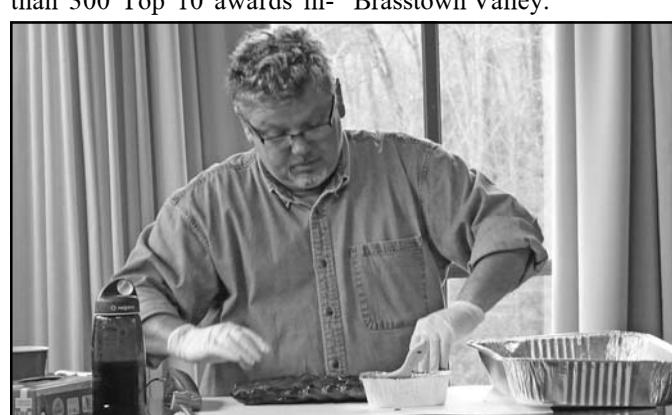
Chef Black is adamant that anyone can win a BBQ contest on any given weekend. His class has been developed to teach techniques and methods that will help Weekend Warrior barbecue chefs become consistent winners and to help them become a team to beat. No matter the competition level, participants walk away from his class with invaluable tips that will help them become a better competitive BBQ'er.

His zeal for both barbecue and the industry has taken Troy on an incredible journey from writer to cook to well-known barbecue personality.

Check out the BBQ school offerings, where you can learn how to barbecue like the pros.

For more details on Chef Black and future events, please visit learn2q.com.

This is a limited class with only 15 rooms available at the \$119 rate. Pre-registration is required for upcoming classes at Brasstown Valley.



Chef Troy Black works his professional magic on a rack of ribs on Saturday at Brasstown Valley Resort. Photo/Jessica Keaton