

Sweet 16...continued from page 1A

Indians' triumph, just five days after a crushing Region Championship loss to Prince Avenue Christian.

"Congratulations to our Lady Indians basketball team for making it to the Sweet 16 in the state basketball tournament," he said. "The real story is that this could be just the beginning. This is a really young team. I expect the Lady Indians to be strong for years to come. Our ladies basketball program is simply amazing."

Perren said that he's exploring sending a student bus to the game in Norcross on Wednesday if enough interest is sparked by the team's advance to the Sweet 16.

Towns County Herald Basketball Beat Writer Jerry Kendall contributed to this news report.



Lady Indians' Head Coach Jim Melton rallies his troops during a timeout in Saturday's overtime victory over Holy Innocents. Towns County advanced to Class A's Sweet 16 state playoffs. The Lady Indians face Wesleyan tonight in Norcross. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Stimulus funding...from page 1A

he has applied for a \$2.7 million grant to fund a new fire station. The likelihood of Towns County receiving those dollars is slim and none.

That's because there's only \$165 million in federal stimulus out there for firefighting infrastructure projects that include construction costs.

The Fire Department also is seeking a grant for \$217,750 to help pay for items that include protective gear and fire-fighting equipment, Chief Floyd said.

"Here's what goes into that package," Floyd said, holding up a mountain of paperwork. "It is labor intensive, the paperwork is literally unreal."

EMS Director Ricky Mathis told Kendall that his department is in the running for a \$75,000 grant to provide Narrow Band communications for all public safety personnel in Towns County.

"There's no matching grant," Mathis said.

The county also has applied for stimulus grant-funding for three computers to install in county ambulances. The computers assist in providing instant information to trauma centers while the ambulance is en route to the medical center.

The grant covers \$1,450 per computer, or actually only half the cost of the equipment.

The county also seeks a \$146,000 grant to cover half the cost of two new ambulances. Towns County qualifies because the closest trauma center is more than 100 miles away.

Also on the county wish list: funding for first responder classes, which costs an estimated \$5,200 per class.

Assistant County Fire Chief Harold Copeland told Kendall that the chances of successfully securing stimulus dollars for local capital projects are slim.

"There's a lot of competition out there for stimulus dol-

lars," he said. "And there's not a whole lot of money to go around when you're talking about nationwide."

The one area where Towns County has been successful in securing federal stimulus funding is area roads. The county recently received \$137,441.08 to help pay for resurfacing improvements on Gum Log Road.

In total, the county has received almost \$8 million for road improvements through federal stimulus legislation. Meanwhile, state funding for local roads has literally dried up, Kendall said.

"We probably could have gotten more federal funding for roads, but a lot of our roadways aren't eligible for those dollars because they're mostly one-lane or dirt roads and don't meet state specifications," Commissioner Kendall said. "Moving forward, any new roads will meet those specifications."

'The Possum' at The Hall...from page 1A

chorus, along with other cover songs.

However, the highlight of the evening was when Jones took command of the stage.

Wearing his signature glasses, he energized the crowd with able assistance from his band. Jones looked as cheerful as ever as he closed the show with *I Don't Need Your Rockin' Chair*, with an engaged crowd reciting the familiar lyrics in unison.

Amber Dale of Redding, Calif. thought Jones' performance was

"simply amazing."

"I can't get over how incredible he is in person," she said. "He is an artist that stands the test of time."

Herman West of Andrews, NC also was in awe of Jones' performance.

"George Jones is the greatest country star who ever lived! He is the man!" West exclaimed.

Mike Freeman, 48, of Demorest, traveled all the way to Hiawassee to take his mother Austell to the concert for her birthday.

"Mama's been looking

forward to this ever since she heard George Jones was coming to the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds," he said. "Her birthday is in February so I thought this would be a nice present for her. She was excited to say the least. I enjoyed the show myself."

And the rest of the crowd at Anderson Music Hall, all faithful George Jones fans, proved that after all these years, *the real* Country Music fans haven't "stopped lovin'" "The Possum."

Bridal Show...from page 1A

close as local brides were given the chance to model their dream gowns to the crowd of onlookers. During the show, prizes were awarded, which ranged from cakes to photography.

Brenda Adams, owner of The Flower Garden in Blairsville, brought her business's services to the show. She noted, "We've been in business for 15 years. We did 48 weddings last year."

Lindsey McIntyre of Young Harris also brought her services to the show. Her photography studio, built onto her house, is located on Harris Ridge. "We primarily do

weddings...usually between 30 and 50 a year," she said.

Soirees Southern Events specializes in showcasing the wedding industry.

It is published twice a year and also includes a special section on Pageantry and all that is involved as pageants play a huge part in Southern society.

The magazine features many elements and articles to inspire those planning a spectacular and unique event.

The Bridal Extravaganza was not only a success, but a lifesaver for local brides looking for services in the area.

Budget cuts...from page 1A

group this week with the state Department of Education.

"We should get a little more information on what's going on during that session," he said.

The state already has cut into teacher planning days, using some of the 10 days set aside for teacher training as part of the state furlough program. Classroom time for students could be next, including a shorter school week.

Lower than expected revenues have the state's lawmakers already bracing

for another \$1 billion shortfall in 2011.

Georgia's Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle said that 80 percent of the state government's costs are employee-based. Layoffs and or asking state employees to take early retirements are extreme possibilities.

Cagle said that to absorb the reduction of revenue, cuts are to be expected.

"The reality we face this budget year is nearly unprecedented and we must act accordingly," Lt. Gov. Cagle said.

Honors Night at The Hall...from page 1A

Club during Honors Night at Anderson Music Hall.

"I'd put him up against any student in the country," Perren said. "He's smart, real smart."

He's also humble. Black, who rose to address the crowd that included 2010's fellow honor students and their families, said it was no secret that public speaking wasn't his strong suit.

"It's an honor to be recognized for one's achievements," he said. "This is kind of like wrapping up everything for myself and all my friends."

Black's list of those who inspired him to achieve at a high level is a short one.

"My parents inspired me to be the best I could be," he said. "I have to give the credit to my parents. They've always encouraged me to do the best I can, to give each subject the same amount of attention. Over the years, they've encouraged me to do the best that I can. I take pride in how they raised me."

Black chose Towns County science teacher Alecia Frizzell as his STAR Teacher for reasons that seem somewhat surprising.

"I'm terrible at science," he said. "Math, now that's a different story, but science, I had to have a lot of help. She inspired me; she explained things that made them simple and easy to understand. She's taught me more than any teacher has ever taught me before."

"She's done so much for me over the years to even begin to list them," he said. "She's made special considerations for me whenever I needed help. She spent long hours teaching me stuff that I didn't understand. Whenever I struggled, she was always there to help me. She's the true definition of the word 'teacher.'"

For Frizzell, being named STAR Teacher was humbling as well.

"Thomas has been a joy to teach," she said. "It's been a privilege to teach all of the kids actually. They're so dedicated, motivated and inspiring. It truly has been a privilege for me."

Teaching wasn't Frizzell's chosen profession. Actually, she was set on becoming a pharmacist. While in college, she was recruited to be a math tutor at Young Harris College. The rest is history. Frizzell fell in love with teaching and actually realized that it was her gift.

"I knew that was what I was supposed to do," she said. "It's a blessing; it's what God chose me to be."

The evening also featured comments from Towns County Schools Superintendent Dr. Richard Behrens, who told the honor students about his brother Robert, an autistic savant.

Stories vary, Dr. Behrens said, but to sum it up, the doctors didn't believe he would live past 12 years old.

"He managed to survive the first years, although he was a few years behind," Dr. Behrens said. "His view of life is so different than ours. Growing up with him, it really influenced the way I think. My parents went through a terrible ordeal trying to decide what to do with him as he grew older."

Kids like Robert didn't go to school in those days. Dr. Behrens' parents put him in an institution in Fort Myers, FLA. In those days, patients in these institutions weren't segregated, and included patients dealing with various mental issues.

Robert's IQ was in the 70s and here he was dealing with all the issues of life in an institution.

"He became an indi-



Towns County's best and brightest were honored by the Towns County Lions Club last week at Anderson Music Hall. The students were honored for their SAT achievements and overall classroom abilities. All students honored achieved a 90 average or above. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

vidual, but at the same time, they had to deal with him quite often," Dr. Behrens said. "After five years there, he was moved back to Miami and that's when we really started to build a relationship together."

Robert, who was quite the athlete in his younger days, wasn't quite as talented as the character played by Dustin Hoffman in the Academy Award-winning motion picture *Rainman*, but he had unique skills. Those skills included being able to tell what day a person was born just by hearing the birth date and birth year.

"He reads at a first grade level, and he writes at a first grade level," Dr. Behrens said. "He reads what he wants to read, he reads the sports papers and remembers the box scores."

Today, for the first time in his life, Robert is on his own. He's functioning in society and living in Cleveland.

"The folks there have adopted him," Dr. Behrens said. "It's amazing."

Dr. Behrens then asked Towns County's honor students why he would talk about his brother who is mentally handicapped.

"I think there is something you can learn from my

brother," he said. "First and most important, count your blessings. God has given you many gifts; you have the abilities to do anything in life that you want to do."

"Second, don't be afraid to ask for help," he said. "If I can get one thing about education across to you as you start into this next step, it's understand what you know. That's more important than the A's and the B's."

"Finally, never meet a stranger," he said. "Accept everyone as your friend. That will carry you farther than you'll ever know."

Afterward, Duncan Weekley presented SAT awards to students making the highest advance in test scores.

Those students included Melissa Conrad, Heather Poole, Jeffrey Stewart, Camille Gus, Christopher Holloway, Jordan Moss and Ginny Rhoades.

Weekley also presented awards to the school's Honor Students, Kerri Abernathy, Allison Arnold, Austin Arrowood, Thomas Black, Melissa Conrad, Kaleb Garrett, Cody Parton, Shawna Pettengill, Heather Poole, Haley Silvey, Alexander Spiegel, Jeffrey Stewart and Amy Vardeman.

Deal...continued from page 1A

tion on his bid to become Georgia's 82nd governor.

Deal, the clear gubernatorial front runner in Towns County, made his announcement in front of 100 or so supporters at the Gainesville Civic Center on Monday.

The 18-year Washington veteran is one of seven Republican candidates seeking the gubernatorial bid.

"Having entered the campaign to become the next governor of Georgia, I

have worked very hard to balance the responsibilities of my current office with the demands of sharing my vision for our state," Deal told supporters in Gainesville on Monday. "The Bible teaches us that 'To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.'"

"I firmly believe that now is the season for me to devote my full energies to the campaign for governor," he said.