

# SPLOST...continued from page 1

and streams in Towns County. It also would pay for new ambulances and public safety vehicles as well as economic development infrastructure.

"If the SPLOST is not approved, many projects will have to be eliminated," Commissioner Kendall said.

Those projects include recreational facilities, sewer up-grades benefiting economic development, increasing the number of fire hydrants and fire equipment that would help lower homeowners' insurance rates.

Several projects that include additional ambulances, road repairs, matching funds for a \$1.8 million library grant and essential fire equipment would have to be paid from taxpayer pockets.

"A successful SPLOST means we'll have help paying for necessary city and county projects from the folks who come to visit us during the tourism season," Commissioner Kendall said. "The 1 cent sales tax comes from not just the folks who live here, but from the people who come to visit

us and shop in Towns County. "It's paid by everyone who shops in Towns County, including tourists, visitors and part-time residents," Commissioner Kendall said.

At the end of the six years, any revenues above the amount designated for SPLOST projects are guaranteed to go toward property tax relief, Commissioner Kendall said.

"I'll use the remaining SPLOST funds after the projects are paid for to roll back property taxes," Commissioner Kendall said.

# Widening...continued from page 1

GDOT's Bobby Hilliard, the department's program delivery engineer.

"With this being said, (GDOT) is moving forward to reschedule the second stakeholder meeting with the invited stakeholders mentioned above," Hilliard writes. "Shortly thereafter, the (public information open house) will be advertised and scheduled with the public at large.

"The information obtained during stakeholder meetings provide a road map in developing alternatives during the preliminary planning stages of project development," Hilliard wrote in an open letter to readers, published inside today's Towns County Herald.

However, according to Georgia's Open Meetings Act, the stakeholder meeting is open to the general public because of the quorums of elected officials invited to the meeting. Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall and Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris, by virtue of their positions as sole commissioners, both are considered a quorum of the Towns County and Union County commission offices.

And yes, both are expected to attend the March 16 meeting at Young Harris College.

State officials say funding for the project could become a reality by 2014. Construction is anticipated to begin by 2017.

Specifically, the proposed project would consist of widening the existing two-lane and three-lane roadway

to a four-lane highway with a median for the majority of the project, according to state documents.

In December, it was agreed upon that input and collaboration with locals would be crucial to the success of the project and, as a result, a follow up meeting would be scheduled to discuss potential alignment alternatives, state documents show.

Overall, traffic concerns along the corridor are the reasoning behind the proposed widening project, GDOT Project Manager Steve Adewale said.

Meanwhile, Hilliard apologized for any inconvenience of the cancellation of the Feb. 22 meeting slated for 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at Young Harris City Hall.

"We'd like to take this opportunity to clear up any confusion about the purpose of stakeholder meetings and to make you aware of other opportunities for public involvement on the proposed widening of SR 515," Hilliard wrote in an open letter to readers of the Towns County Herald.

"Once stakeholder information is received, (GDOT) holds a Public Information Open House where one or more conceptual alternatives are presented to the general public for input and comment," Hilliard writes.

The informational open house where the public is invited could be scheduled late spring or early summer, according to Hilliard. A public notice will

be advertised in the Towns County Herald and the North Georgia News, the legal organs of Towns and Union counties respectively, Hilliard writes.

"After the (public information) open house takes place and comments are taken into account, a preferred concept is chosen for further development," according to Hilliard. "(GDOT) responds to comments and provides feedback to the public about the comments received. Importantly, the choice of a preferred concept and its design details are influenced by the comments received (from the public information open house)."

A third opportunity for public involvement is the public hearing open house, where a full Environmental Assessment document is being prepared, according to Hilliard. This public hearing opportunity presents the preferred concept to the public and provides another opportunity for public input and discussion, according to Hilliard. Project changes also are considered based on comments received.

The Towns County Historical Society urges the public to attend the stakeholder meeting at Young Harris College. They also hope that GDOT takes into consideration the ecological systems, including the wetlands at Brasstown Creek, historical sites, scenic beauty and historic Downtown Young Harris when planning a widened state route 515 through the city.

# Cigarette Bandits...continued from page 1

took several items, included cartons of cigarettes and energy drinks.

After leaving Cornerstone, the suspects allegedly journeyed across the county to Lakeview Store.

While at that location, these suspects allegedly tried the same diversion tactics again.

However, the manager

at that store was instrumental in apprehending all three suspects. The first victim placed a call to Lakeview Store advising them to be aware in case the trio attempted to rob another store. The Lakeview manager kept the suspects occupied while he called 911, sheriff's reports show.

Towns County sheriff's

deputies were dispatched to the Lakeview Store. When they arrived on the scene they quickly took the suspects into custody.

The case remains under investigation with the potential of additional charges, according to sheriff's reports.

No further information was available at press time.

# Kenny Rogers...continued from page 1

TV shows, Silver Screen movies and televised holiday specials.

Rogers is credited with more than 40 music awards from Rock to Pop to Country Music. His awards include Grammys, lifetime achievements, Top Male Vocalist and numerous albums of the year. Most importantly, Rogers is credited as being one of the Top 40 Country Music male stars within the genre.

To date Rogers has recorded 65 albums and sold more than 122 million records.

On Monday, he released his 66<sup>th</sup> album, his first of the Gospel genre.

On Saturday night, he played before a packed house of appreciative fans in Franklin, NC. He sang chart-toppers like *Ruby (Don't Take Your Love to Town)*, *Lady and his first solo hit, Lucille*. He continued to toss \$10 bills.

He returned the affection to his adoring audience, singing his greatest hits with a voice that sounds as strong today as it did when he broke into the music business with *The Scholars* in the mid-1950s and later with *The First Edition*.

"I think he was every



Rogers wowed the crowd in Franklin, NC. Photo/Charles Duncan

bit as good as he ever was. His voice was strong and he had it when he needed it," said Margaret Anderson, of Franklin, NC. "I thought that he showed true character. He had a lot more substance than a lot of superstars have today."

The concert itself was like allowing Rogers' fans to take a trip through time with him, as a high definition wide screen TV flashed images to the crowd as Rogers crooned. Images of his days with the First Edition flashed across the screen as he sang the legendary tune, *Through the Years*.

"I thought he had a wonderful sense of humor, and I thought he sang all the right songs," Anderson said. "I was just thankful that I could even be here at all tonight. Someone gave me a gift of a ticket to be here tonight."

The next big musical event at the Smoky Mountain Center for the Performing Arts is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. on March 19, when Chuck Negron, formerly of Three Dog Night, and Blood, Sweat and Tears come to town. Tickets are \$45 and can be purchased at GreatMountainMusic.com.



Even in defeat, the Lady Indians fans are standing and cheering them on. Photos/James Reese

# Sweet 16... continued from page 1

This year's winning percentage of 93.1 percent eclipsed the 87.5 percent established by the Lady Indians during the 1972 season and matched by the 2008 squad. Also, the 103-19 overall record for the past four years easily surpassed the 96-17 record for the four year period through the 2010 season.

The current season included two lengthy winning streaks as the Lady Indians started the season with 11 straight wins and then won 16 straight games between

their first loss to Gordon Lee in the Battle of the States Championship Game and the loss to Pace.

Also, the Lady Indians won their second Region 8-A Tournament Championship in the last three years with just one such championship prior to that way back in 1977.

Among many additional accomplishments for the Lady Indians this year were three wins over Union County and two over Hayesville, their neighborhood rivals, and a perfect 16-0 record in all games

played against opponents in Region 8-A.

The Lady Indians were led in scoring for the game by senior Jordan Moss with 17 points, junior Gabby Arencibia finished with 16, junior Ali Bleckley added 12, and junior Lindsay Patton finished with 6 points. Leading in assists were freshman Eryn Cochran with 5, Bleckley and freshman Makayla Underwood with 4 each, and Arencibia finished with 2 assists according to your reporter's unofficial tally.

# Charlie Daniels...continued from page 1

when he sold one of his written songs, *It Hurts Me* to Elvis Presley, didn't disappoint the Hiwassee crowd, interacting with the crowd and letting Hiwassee know that being a redneck Southerner isn't such a bad thing at all.

"The true definition of redneck is that of a hard-working human being," Daniels told the crowd. "Ain't nothing wrong with that."

Daniels, one of the

most accomplished fiddle players in the world, thrilled the partisan Charlie Daniels fan base with songs that included his Grammy Award-winning *The Devil Went Down to Georgia*. He belted out the Southern ballad *Long-haired Country Boy*, *The South's Gonna Do It Again* and *The Legend of Wooley Swamp*.

Daniels, also an accomplished Gospel and Christian

singer, let the crowd know how proud he is of the troops serving overseas in a series of thankless missions.

An outspoken critic of the liberal news media, Daniels continues to support U.S. troops and has made several trips to the front in Iraq.

The All-American music-loving crowd in Hiwassee cheered Daniels as he played his brand of music, the way it should be played.



Charlie Daniels can pick a guitar too. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

PRECINCT: 001-TATE TOWNS COUNTY CARD 1

**OFFICIAL ABSENTEE/PROVISIONAL/CHALLENGED BALLOT**

**OFFICIAL SPECIAL ELECTION BALLOT OF THE STATE OF GEORGIA MARCH 15, 2011**

To vote, blacken the Oval (●) next to the candidate of your choice. To vote for a person whose name is not on the ballot, manually WRITE his or her name in the write-in section and blacken the Oval (●) next to the write-in section. If you desire to vote YES or NO for a PROPOSED QUESTION, blacken the corresponding Oval (●). Use only blue or black pen or pencil.

Do not vote for more candidates than the number allowed for each specific office. Do not cross out or erase. If you erase or make other marks on the ballot or tear the ballot, your vote may not count.

If you change your mind or make a mistake, you may return the ballot by writing "Spoiled" across the top of the ballot and return envelope. You may then mail the spoiled ballot back to your county board of registrars, and you will be issued another official absentee ballot. Alternatively, you may surrender the ballot to the poll manager of an early voting site within your county or the precinct to which you are assigned. You will not be permitted to receive a regular ballot.

\*I understand that the offer or acceptance of money or any other object of value to vote for any particular candidate, list of candidates, issue, or list of issues included in this election constitutes an act of voter fraud and is a felony under Georgia law. [OCGA 21-2-285(h) and 21-2-383(a)]

**1% Sales and Use Tax (Vote for One)**

Shall a special 1 percent sales and use tax be imposed in Towns County for a period of time not to exceed six (6) years for the raising of an estimated \$12,700,000 for the purpose of funding the acquisition, construction, and equipping of the following capital outlay projects within Towns County: (i) for Towns County, parks and recreation improvements including the acquisition, construction and equipping of a multi-purpose recreational/community building, road and bridge purposes, which purposes may include pedestrian cross-walks, parking and public library; equipment therefore; fire department vehicles, equipment, facilities and fire hydrants, and; construction and improvements to the public safety water and sewer improvements including solid waste, storm water management, and equipment therefore; ambulances and other public safety vehicles and equipment; and industrial and economic development improvements to include infrastructure and possible land acquisition; (ii) for the City of Hiwassee, parks and recreation improvements including the acquisition, construction and equipping of a park and buildings, walks and turn lanes, and capital equipment related thereto; fire hydrants and improved fire protection facilities and water lines and equipment related thereto; construction and improvements to the Hiwassee Water Treatment Plant and water treatment facilities including water storage; Hiwassee Sewer Plant and sewer treatment facilities; and industrial and economic development projects for downtown development including renovation of the Hiwassee City Square; and (iii) for the City of Young Harris, parks and recreation improvements; road, street, and bridge purposes, which purposes may include sidewalks, bicycle paths, pedestrian cross-walks and capital equipment therefore; and water and sewer improvements including fire hydrants, solid waste, storm water management, and equipment therefore?

If imposition of the tax is approved by the voters, such vote shall also constitute approval of the issuance of general obligation debt of Towns County in the principal amount not to exceed \$6,200,000 for the above described capital outlay projects of Towns County, the issuance of general obligation debt of the City of Hiwassee in the principal amount not to exceed \$685,000 for the above-described capital outlay projects of the City of Hiwassee, and the issuance of general obligation debt of the City of Young Harris in the principal amount not to exceed \$685,000 for the above-described capital outlay projects of the City of Young Harris.

YES

NO

**SAMPLE**

FRONT Card 1 RptPct 20-10 "001-TATE"