

## Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thur: Showers	72 50
Fri: Showers	66 42
Sat: Sunny	73 45
Sun: Cloudy	75 47
Mon: Cloudy	75 48
Tue: Showers	70 44
Wed: Cloudy	68 46



Upstream Elevation Predicted 04/04/12	
Lake Chatuge	1920.55
Lake Nottely	1766.69
Blue Ridge	1672.03

## INDEX 18 Pages

Arrests.....	2
Chamber News.....	13
Church/Obits.....	8,9
Classifieds.....	15
Editorial.....	4
Elected Officials.....	4
Fire Report.....	2
Legals.....	16
Television.....	6

## Sports Page 10

## Log onto our Web site

Log onto Towns County Herald.net to keep up with breaking news that impacts Towns County. If you haven't noticed, we've got the Legal Advertisements online. Feel free to take a look.

## Bankers' Hour

United Community Bank presents The Bankers' Hour on April 14th, at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. at Anderson Music Hall. This year's event is entitled "Family Reunion." This is the 18th, year UCB has put on this standing room only event to raise money for community charitable causes. Tickets are \$10 and all proceeds go to charitable causes in the various UCB communities. Call (706) 896-4191 for ticket reservations.

## Democrats meet

The Towns County Democratic Party will hold its April general meeting on Thursday, April 12th, at 5 p.m. at the Towns County Senior Center, near the County Courthouse. Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall will explain the TSPLOST referendum on the July 31st ballot. The public is invited to attend at 5:30 p.m. to get informed on this important regional issue.

## Whidden Wins

Towns County sheriff's Deputy Wayne Whidden was named the MADD/ATTEN DUI Enforcement Officer of the Year last week. Whidden made 15 DUI arrests in 2011.

# Lake volunteers work to 'save the Goose'

### Annual Lake Chatuge clean up effort attracts volunteers from all walks of life

By Charles Duncan  
Towns County Herald  
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In the race for all important tourism dollars, protecting "the Goose that laid the Golden Egg" is a must. Volunteers gathered at The Ridges Resort & Marina on Saturday to make sure Lake Chatuge's 189 miles of shoreline stays clean.

"Keeping Lake Chatuge clean, that's what it's all about," said The Ridges' General Manager Chad Hooper, who fed breakfast to a group of more than 120 community members anxious to "save the Goose" during a tour of duty trash pick-up around the 7,000-acre lake which straddles Georgia and North Carolina.

The event, sponsored by the Towns County Chamber of Commerce, is a recurring one at The Ridges, Hooper said.

"This event has been

hosted by the Resort for many years now," Hooper said. "We're trying to continue this and keep it an annual event to where we get participation from both sides of the states of North Carolina and Georgia.

Hardee's, McDonald's, Ingles, Young Harris College, The Ridges, Dill's, and Fred's, provided food and beverages for the event.

Pick up teams included Northeast Georgia Board of Realtors, Blue Ridge Mountain EMC, Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition, Lake Chatuge-Hiwassee Rotary Club, Girl Scout Troop 11501, Young Harris College Sorority - Susan B's, Mountain High Hiking Club, Century 21 Realty, Hiwassee Episcopal Church, Good Shepherd Church, Humane Society, Towns County GOP, Towns County Food Pantry, Friendship Commu-

See Clean up, page 12



Volunteers from Saturday's Love Our Lake clean up event haul in large chunks of Styrofoam that once supported boat docks along the shoreline of the 7,000-acre lake. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

## FBLA team heads to Texas

By Lindsay Patton  
Special to Towns County Herald  
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Eight multi-talented Towns County Future Business Leaders of America are returning to national competition, this time in San Antonio, Texas, June 28th through July 3rd.

For the 12th year in a row, Towns County High Scholl and Georgia will be favorably represented at the national competition as the eight TCHS students prepare to compete this sum-



McKenzi Moss member against other finalists from across the nation.

TCHS FBLA will be represented in San Antonio at the 2012 National Leadership Conference by McKenzi Moss (first in Word Processing I), Ali Bleckley (first in Spreadsheet Applications), Claire Wilson (first in Client Service), Lesleigh Irvin (first in Principles and Procedures), Courtney Farmer and Thanh Duong (second in Digital Design and Promotion), Courtney Marshall

See FBLA, page 12

## Judge Alderman steps down from Enotah Circuit Bench

Gov. Nathan Deal must fill two seats on Enotah Bench

By Charles Duncan  
Towns County Herald  
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When the clock struck midnight on Jan. 1, residents within the Enotah Judicial Circuit might have figured the circuit's three judges might be in place for years to come.

On March 27th, it became readily apparent that Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal had a mountainous task as he must dedicate time to fill two seats on the Enotah Judicial Circuit bench.

Gov. Deal accepted the resignation of Enotah Circuit Superior Court Judge Lynn Alderman last week as Judge Alderman left the bench following the signing of a consent order agreement with the Georgia Judicial Qualifications Commission, according to the JQC Web site.



Judge Lynn Alderman

According to a copy of the consent order, the commission was investigating Judge Alderman for alleged judicial misconduct regarding professional influence involving the criminal case of Charles Steven Stringer, a convicted methamphetamine trafficker.

See Alderman, page 12

## Deal, lawmakers ban K2, Spice

By Charles Duncan  
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Gov. Nathan Deal's signature has marked the death of synthetic marijuana in Georgia.

Gov. Deal signed Chase's Law, or better known as Senate Bill 370, the outlawing of the use or manufacturing of synthetic marijuana in Georgia.

All forms of synthetic marijuana are now illegal in



Gov. Nathan Deal

Georgia under the legislation signed into law on March 27th, by Gov. Deal.

Synthetic marijuana contains cannabis-like chemical compounds mixed with various forms of dried vegetation. It was sold in some gas stations and before March 27th, could be smoked by persons in search of a 'legal' high.

Towns County Sheriff

See Faux Pot page 12

## Fire hydrant 151 a done deal

Voter-approved SPLOST budget item done in 8 months, two weeks

By Charles Duncan  
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It all started with voters going to the polls on March 15, 2011.

Slightly more than a year later, the voter-approved Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax has paid for 151 new fire hydrants, which will greatly reduce the county's ISO fire rating to a Class 5 in many areas, Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall said.

The installation of those hydrants was completed last week, well ahead of pace. In fact, they Fire



County workers put the finishing touches on Fire Hydrant No. 151 on Thursday near the Deer Lodge. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Hydrant Project, which was supposed to be done by the first week of April, was completed on March 29.

All of the hydrants ap-

proved by voters have been installed, said Marty Roberts, Towns County's 911

See Hydrants, page 12

## TSPLOST meetings heat up

Opposition to the proposed 1-cent tax mounts in Towns and Union counties

By Charles Duncan  
Towns County Herald  
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Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall is calling for residents in Blairsville and Hiwassee to attend 'anti-tax' meetings this month.

The tax that residents in Towns and Union counties don't like is a 1-cent proposed regional sales tax that could elevate local sales tax rates to 8 cents on the dollar in both counties.

Commissioner Kendall



Commissioner Bill Kendall

is calling for a bipartisan meeting at the Towns County Senior Center Thursday on April 26th, at 6:30 p.m., for the purpose of informing residents of a proposed 1-cent TSPLOST re-

gional sales tax that will be voted on July 31st.

"This important vote, if passed, will increase your sales tax to 8 percent and will drastically effect families' well being and pocket-books for many years," Commissioner Kendall said.

Commissioner Kendall is very concerned that many residents are still unaware of the upcoming vote and the effect it will have on their families when purchasing food, clothing,

See TSPLOST, page 12

## Wilkinson: A busy time at The State Capitol

Lawmakers make history of 'birthday tax'

By John Wilkinson  
Special to Towns County Herald  
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The 2012 legislative session drew to a close following 14 hours of debate on Day 40. Significant legislation was passed during the session to help make our state a better place to live, work, and raise a family. As I have said many times, I sincerely appreciate the opportunity that you have given me to represent your interests in Atlanta. It is a responsibility that I take seriously and I have worked during the session to promote fiscal responsibility in our state while limiting the growth of state government. As we look back, I will attempt to highlight some significant legislation that will become law upon the Governor's signature.

HB 386, also known as the Georgia Jobs and Family Tax Reform Plan, implements a variety of tax reform measures. This reform will change the way Georgia collects revenue, making our state friendlier to businesses and helping families as they recover from the economic downturn. HB 386 includes a measure that will eliminate the "birthday



State Sen. John Wilkinson

tax," an annual vehicle property tax on cars, trucks and vans that is due on auto owners' birthdays each year. Instead of paying this annual tax and a state and local sales tax, people purchasing a new or used vehicle after March 1, 2013 would only pay a one-time title fee equal to 6.5 percent of the car's value. Although this change is not applicable to those currently paying the annual "birthday tax," those who

See Wilkinson, page 12

