

Towns County Herald

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Thursday, June 11, 2009

Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thur: T-Storms	84	62
Fri: T-Storms	82	61
Sat: T-Storms	82	61
Sun: T-Storms	82	61
Mon: T-Storms	84	61
Tue: T-Storms	84	63
Wed: T-Storms	83	62



Upstream Elevation Predicted 6/08/09	
Lake Chatuge	1926.07
Lake Nottely	1777.19
Blue Ridge	1687.35

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Food Drive

The monthly mobile food distribution for families in need will be held at No. Mt. Zion Church of God on Friday, June 12 from 10 am to noon. This outdoor food distribution will be held in the rear parking lot of No. Mt. Zion Church of God on Scataway, rain or shine.

Library meeting

The Mountain Regional Library System Board of Trustees regular meeting originally scheduled for Friday, May 1st has been re-scheduled for Friday, June 19th at 10:00 a.m. at the Mountain Regional Library System Headquarters in Young Harris. All library board meetings are open to the public.

Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition

The Board of Directors of the Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition will meet at the Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition Office in Peachtree on Tuesday, June 16 at 7 pm. Agendas and meeting summaries are now available on our web site: www.hrwc.net/hrwcboardmeetings.htm The HRWC office is located at 1853 NC Hwy 141 in the Peachtree Community of Murphy, NC and is open Monday-Thursday, 8:30-4:30. Call HRWC at (828) 837-5414, toll-free (877) 863-7388 or email info@hrwc.net for more information

Food Pantry

The Towns County Food Pantry will have a free food distribution for Towns County residents on Tuesday, June 16 from 2-6 p.m. Those that are in need are encouraged to come. The pantry asks that you enter Jack Dayton Circle on the Funworld side for a more orderly distribution. If you are unable to pick up your food, please call us at 706-896-4783, prior to distribution day, so arrangements can be for food to be delivered to you. As always all clients and inquiries are confidential.

Mayor, city council support Lowe's project

By Charles Duncan
TOWNS COUNTY HERALD
charlesduncan@brmenc.net

Hiwassee Mayor Barbara Mathis kept her promise and the Hiwassee City Council backed her up as the city signed off on providing 1,100 gallons a day in sewer to bring 75 full-time jobs to Towns County.

"I have talked to all the council members and I feel like it is in our best interests and the best interests of Towns County to support this project," Mathis said. "With the economy like it is, if we can do our part to bring 75 jobs to this community I feel like that is the right thing to do."

Council members agreed and voted to temporarily lift a sewer moratorium to grant a sewer service request by Lowe's Home Improvement Store.



Mathis and Wagoner

Photo by Charles Duncan

The unanimous vote in favor of the request opens the door to new development at The Junction that potentially includes a 96,000 square foot Lowe's store.

The term "potentially" is used because Lowe's corporate headquarters in Mooresville, NC has not officially signed off on the

project. However, Kelly Wagoner, an engineer with Wolverton & Associates, told the council that he's almost 100 percent certain that a Lowe's store will be built in Towns County.

See Lowe's, page 2A

Perdue signs off on homestead exemption vote

By Charles Duncan
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With one swift motion of his ink pen Georgia Gov. Sonny Perdue recently gave local voters the chance to increase the local homestead exemption in Towns County by \$8,000.

The legislation introduced and supported by State Rep. Stephen Allison and State Sen. Jim Butterworth was the brainchild of Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall.

The bill is a local constitutional amendment, which applies only to Towns County, and allows Towns County voters the opportunity to endorse the measure during the Nov. 3 general

election. If approved by local voters, the legislation would raise the local homestead exemption from \$2,000 to \$10,000.

Commissioner Kendall was elated by the news that Gov. Perdue had signed the local legislation allowing Towns County voters a chance to lower their taxes.

Kendall expressed his appreciation to Rep. Allison, Sen. Butterworth and Gov. Perdue for introducing and signing off on the legislation.

According to Kendall the current \$2,000 homestead exemption on homes in Towns County has not been increased since it was originally enacted into state

law in 1937. "At that time if you owned the average priced home in Georgia, the intent of this legislation was to, and did exempt the home you lived in from all property taxes," Kendall said.

Kendall said that he was in agreement with "the philosophy and wisdom of our forefathers" who passed the original act.

"Towns County's present homeowners, many of whom are retired and living on a fixed income, should not have to worry about a large tax burden on the house that they live in, which brings in no income, and is one of the three necessities of life - food, clothing and shelter," Kendall said.

Development authority approves line of credit

By Charles Duncan
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The Towns County Industrial Authority has approved a resolution which allows it to borrow up to \$500,000 to resolve any debts on approximately 21 acres of Industrial Park property.

The group met Friday in the Grand Jury Room at the Towns County Courthouse to weigh the costs of accepting a line of credit on the property, which is valued at more than \$1.1 million, from United Community Bank. The property will stand good for the debt.

At least \$375,000 of the borrowed funds would go toward paying a court-

ordered judgment to Colditz Trucking Inc. which was awarded a court settlement against the property's former owner, the Clay-Towns Development Authority.

The Towns Development Authority's Board of Directors voted to authorize its Chairman Morris Phillips, and its Vice Chairman Bud Parker, and its Secretary Benny Barrett to execute a deed to secure debt in the amount of \$500,000 with United Community Bank. The \$500,000 line of credit is only 40 percent of the value of the property at Crooked Creek Road and Industrial Way.

The property once made up Clay-Towns De-



Phillips

velopment Authority. That authority voted in March to put the property in the secure hands of the Towns County Industrial Development Authority.

Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall

See Credit, page 2A

Renowned chef comes to town

By Charles Duncan
TOWNS COUNTY HERALD
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Dennis Barber is smitten with Hiwassee, from the picturesque mountain landscapes to the people that make up Towns County.

He enjoys the area's laid back lifestyle.

"It's simple, laid back and casual," he said. "It's my kind of place."

Barber, a veteran in the kitchen, is the new executive chef at The Oaks, formerly known as Old Hiwassee Grille. He's also played a pivotal role in the opening of another local restaurant, Cafe Portofino.

Barber's arrival coincides with recent moves by The Ridges Resort at Fieldstone.

"We're proud to provide as many jobs locally as

we can," said Chad Hooper, general manager for The Ridges Resort at Fieldstone. "With economic times being what they are, we're very proud to be able to offer people jobs.

"We're also proud that we've got people like Scottie Fain, Dana Merritt and Ken Merritt who have meant so much to this community," he said.

Hooper said that he was excited to have Barber come to Hiwassee from The Copper Door in Hayesville, NC.

"We're really glad to have Dennis working with us," he said. "The restaurant has been packed ever since he arrived and we look forward to a long-term relationship."

Barber has been cooking professionally for more than 20 years. He exited the



Barberis

United States Air Force after nine years with a passion for becoming an executive chef.

"I've always loved to cook," Barber said. "I've always had an interest in the restaurant business."

Barber, who is not caught up in the hype of The Food Channel, trained in New Orleans under the tutelage of Executive Chef Felix Sturmer.

See Chef, page 7A

Weekend fest goes to the dogs

Special to the Herald

Castaway Critters Pet Rescue held their annual Bark-in-the-Park on Saturday, June 6, at the Hiwassee Town Square. Thirty-seven dogs participated in various contests that were judged by Susan Burr of Chatuge Animal Hospital, Hiwassee mayor Barbara Mathis, and Julie King of Pets at Peace.

Cooper, a 220-pound Great Dane, won three ribbons--Best of Show, Largest Dog, and Most Unusual. Food and refreshments were provided by Fresh Market in Hiwassee.

Castaway Critter's dogs that attended the event included a black, male Pomeranian and a young, male



Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Beagle/Terrier Mix. These dogs are available for adoption along with many other dogs, puppies, cats, and kittens. To adopt, please call Castaway Critters Pet Rescue at 706-781-3992 or call June at 706-379-2169.

Music festival packs a crowd



Buck and Nelson perform

Photo by Lowell Nicholson

By Charles Duncan
TOWNS COUNTY HERALD
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All roads led to Hiwassee over the weekend as the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds played host to two days of traditional and contemporary Bluegrass, Americana and Folk music at Anderson Music Hall.

With headliners that included Dan Tyminski, Dale Ann Bradley and the Steeldrivers, the festival that blended arts and crafts and a chance to pick a tune was certainly a crowd pleaser.

The festival celebrated the heritage and traditional music of our mountains as well as contemporary acts in the Bluegrass, Folk, and Americana genres.

Clara Adams of Blairsville said the crafts alone were a major attraction.

"They had some really talented artists," she said. "I was amazed. The arts and crafts amazed me more than anything."

"The music was fantastic," she said. "It was a wonderful blend of Bluegrass and Folk Music. We really enjoyed the Steeldrivers and Dan Tyminski is always pleasant to hear. I still love the O Brother Where Art Thou music."

"It was the most perfect day for a festival," she said. "God made a beautiful day (Saturday)."

Chad Hooper, general manager of the Ridges Resort & Club at Fieldstone, said the event provided a boost to the area's tourism industry.

"The town was packed," Hooper said. "It definitely drew a good crowd. The restaurant (The Oaks) was packed Friday and Saturday. It was everything you expect a festival to be."

The proverbial best was saved for last on Saturday night.

The Dan Tyminski Band brought the music portion of the festival to a close at Anderson Music Hall. One of Bluegrass Music's most beloved voices, Tyminski has more than left his mark on the Bluegrass genre.

He has took home 13 Grammy Awards during his 14-year career as a guitarist and vocalist for "Alison Krauss and Union Station."

Almost a decade ago, Tyminski stepped into the national spotlight as the singing voice of actor George Clooney in the classic Coen Brothers motion picture "O Brother Where Art Thou."

Adams said she can't wait until next year.

"The music was as good as I've ever heard, the crafts were unreal and the vendors were some of the nicest people I've ever met," she said. "I'll be back again next year and I'll bring a little extra money with me when I do."

TCHA to hold annual meeting

Special to the Herald

The 2009 annual meeting of the Towns County Homeowners Association will be held on June 18 at 7 pm in the Senior Center Building in Hiwassee. This is the meeting where we review our activities for the past year, our financial status and elect new officers and two board members for the coming year. We encourage all our members to attend and, if possible, bring a friend.

In addition to the above, we will have two guest speakers:

Commissioner Bill Kendall will discuss current county issues and plans including the status of the proposed facility for Lowe's, the water and sewer nego-

tiations and the Master Plan for the County;

Blue Ridge Mountain EMC General Manager Joe Satterfield will review the plans for the new office and maintenance facility in Young Harris and how this could affect your electric bill. Joe will also be prepared to answer questions about the new substation progress and the power poles that go with it.

Both gentlemen will take questions from the floor as time permits.

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