

Towns County Herald

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Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thur: Rain	84	61
Fri: Clouds	84	62
Sat: Clouds	82	63
Sun: Clouds	85	64
Mon: Clouds	87	66
Tue: Clouds	86	64
Wed: Clouds	86	65



Melissa Williams

Towns County Board of Education member Jerry Taylor said the BOE hired the best person for the job.

Melissa Williams, the current superintendent at Jenkins County Schools, was named as the new Towns County Schools superintendent on Monday night, becoming the successor to retiring Schools Chief Dr. Richard Behrens.

"She's worn a lot of hats in her career; she's handled varied responsibilities in her career," Taylor said. "She has a strong understanding of what it takes to run a small school system."

Williams becomes the first female superintendent in the history of Towns County Schools.

"We didn't think about that one bit when we were going through the interview process," BOE member Michael Anderson said. "I didn't even realize that she would be the first female superintendent until after we made a decision to hire her."

Williams was one of 34 candidates for the job, and one of eight candidates to make it through to final interviews in front of the BOE.

"I am truly humbled and honored to be given this

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Towns County BOE Chair Emily Phillips tells retiring Superintendent Dr. Richard Behrens how much the board appreciated his seven years of service to the community. Photo/James Reese

Towns County awaits Shriners

By Charles Duncan
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Just how full are Towns County's hotels heading into the Georgia State Shriners' Convention?

Country Music legend Ronnie Milsap and his band can't even find a room.

The fruits of the Towns County Tourism Association's labors are coming to fruition as the county begins what may be its busiest tourism season to date.

The Shriners come into town on Friday, with a Private Luau and Low Country Boil scheduled for the evening at the Towns County Beach Pavilion.

Prior to the feast, The Ridges Resort & Marina will host its Second Annual Poker Run beginning at 11 a.m. on Friday with 100 percent of the proceeds going to Shriners' Children's Hospital.

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Hilda Thomason and members of the Towns County Tourism Association expect a crowd this weekend as 1,500 Shriners make their way to the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds for this week's State Shriners' Convention. Hotels are sold out, a parade is scheduled for Saturday at 2 p.m., Ronnie Milsap is in town and it's just the start of a busy summer. Photo/James Reese

Commissioner, Mayor welcome Shriners

Convention seen as an economic shot in the arm

By Charles Duncan
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Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall and Hiawassee Mayor Barbara Mathis are ecstatic about the arrival of Shriners on Friday in anticipation of the annual Georgia Shriners' Convention.

Commissioner Bill Kendall expressed his gratitude to the Georgia Temple of Shriners International for choosing Towns County as the site for their convention for the next three years. He asked residents to join in extending this great organization a warm welcome later this week.

"They will spend hundreds of thousand dollars and give the economy a boost at a time when our business community needs it very much," Commissioner Kendall said. "It will also help dwindling sales tax revenues due to the recession and help all local governments and schools which receive sales tax revenues.



Economic statistics show that when a dollar is spent in a county it turns over

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FFA Rodeo is a huge success

By James Reese
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Georgia Agriculture Commissioner Gary Black felt at home on Saturday evening in Towns County.

Black said attending the First Bulls 'N' Barrels Rodeo, took him back a spell.

As the former President of Georgia's Future Farmers of America, Black was, well, at home around a load of livestock and eager Towns County FFA Students.

"I am absolutely more than happy to be here tonight to help this event," Commissioner Black said. "I grew

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Georgia Agriculture Commissioner Gary Black gives a huge endorsement of Towns County FFA's first Rodeo at The Stables at Brasstown Valley Resort. Photo/James Reese

Bank of Hiawassee to become Citizens South

Blairsville, Blue Ridge branches also become Citizens South

By Charles Duncan
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For more than a century, the Bank of Hiawassee was an institution in Towns County.

The bank survived the collapse of Wall Street in 1929, the Great Depression in the 1930s and the growing pains of a community once viewed to be behind the times.

In the end, the bank that grew up with a small community of Baby Boomers around a TVA lake could not survive the great real estate collapse of the 21st century.

In March 2010, the Bank of Hiawassee turned the page to another chapter in its storied history. Along the way, it got stronger, gaining solid financial footing with a little help from some interested investors from North Carolina.

Initially, it was believed that the bank and its branches would retain their identities as Bank of Hiawassee, Bank of Blairsville and Bank of Blue Ridge following its acquisition by Gastonia, NC-based Citizens South Bank.



All that changes on June 30 when the Bank of Hiawassee, Bank of Blairsville and Bank of Blue Ridge begin operating under the Citizens South Bank name. It made good business sense to operate under the Citizens South Bank name after the recent addition of New Horizons Bank in East Ellijay.

The announcement was made this week by Tony Stancil, North Georgia Market President.

"We are excited about

See Citizens South, page 13A

Trap Shoot gives Youth Homes a boost

By Charles Duncan
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The Third Annual Georgia Sheriff's Youth Homes Benefit Trapshooting Event at the Shooting Range on Owl Creek Road in Towns County was as successful as ever.

Towns County Sheriff Chris Clinton said it probably should have surprised him, how successful the 2011 Trap Shoot event turned out given the state of the economy, but, then again, he wasn't surprised.

"We've got a giving

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Shooters braved hot temperatures to raise money for the Georgia Sheriff's Association Youth Homes. Photo/James Reese

