

## Park land closing...from page 1A

impact local property taxes. "There will be no property tax increase because of this land purchase," he said.

Mining Gap Trail is centrally located within the county borders. Kendall will purchase the land from the county's operating reserve

general funds.

Kendall envisions developing the new park with sky-friendly security lights and deed restrictions that include that the property must remain in perpetuity as a county recreation facility.

"This park and green space will be an asset for the

county, our senior citizens, children, grandchildren and posterity," he said. "The alternative use for this property would be hundreds of condominiums and/or single family homes. The maximum best use for this property is as a park and recreation facility."

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remain relatively small and walkable.

"This helps to foster friendships between students," she said.

The college was founded in 1886 and will soon be celebrating its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary, marking yet another historic occasion in Towns County history.

Young Harris College was initially a four-year college from the years 1886-1915 until being transitioned into a two-year college in the year 1916. In the fall 2009 semester, the college witnessed its first junior class in 95 years. Young Harris College anticipates that in the upcoming fall semester, it will host students from around 40 different countries around the world. Also in the fall, there is expected to be an enrollment of about 800 students.

In order to make sure students have the ability to succeed, the Academic Suc-

cess Center has been put into commission to help struggling students to succeed in their courses.

According to President Cox, some buildings fit the time they were built and did not fit the campus they were built on. In an attempt to restore a natural look; two tones of brick much like those of the Susan B. Harris Chapel were used in the construction of the new resident's hall. The idea also remained true in the construction of the new Student Recreation Center at Young Harris College.

"Tying everything in to fit the historical standards of Young Harris College," President Cox said when asked about a major goal in keeping the historical aspects while at the same time, expanding the campus.

Other aspects and projects in the college's expansion consist of a world class fitness center, a 1,000

purple-seat competitive basketball arena for the basketball team that hopes to begin competing in NCAA Division II, a 38-foot, indoor climbing wall, and 12 new lighted tournament-style tennis courts being built next to the highway.

The college will hold a community open house day in early August for members of the public who plan to become possible gym and tennis members.

The campus expansion will also include the addition of a new dining hall and also educational expansion such as nine bachelor's degree programs and the college has also applied for five new academic major programs this fall.

Though the campus is rapidly expanding, the small Methodist liberal arts college looks to enhance for the better, while protecting the college's history and preservation at the same time.

## Vardo...1A

logical choice.

"Over the years, he and Coach Moss worked closely together," Perren said. "Coach Vardo loves the game and he's a student of the game. "I'm confident he is the person to replace Coach Moss with the baseball program.

"It'll make for a smooth transition with the players and I really believe good things are going to happen," Perren said. "Coach Moss stepped down to spend more time with his family and those two worked closely together. Coach Moss was pulling for him; the players were pulling for him.

"I think we've got the right man for the job," Perren said. "I'm excited about the program. Chris Vardo is a fine young man."

Vardo is the second coaching decision in recent months by the Board of Education.

Interim Head Coach Ken Hamilton was recently chosen to lead the Indians' boys' basketball program, a move that proved popular among players and community.

## ELOST...continued from page 1A

much discussion and deliberation had gone into the decision of the expiring ELOST.

"With that, do we have a motion?" Anderson asked. Board Member Larry Kimsey motioned to vote in favor of beginning the process of ELOST renewal. He was seconded by Board Member Bob Gibby.

When Anderson asked for a show of support for the measure, Kimsey and Gibby signaled that they supported the measure to renew the ELOST.

Board members Emily Phillips and Donna Hedden signaled that they did not support the measure. Anderson broke the tie to let the ELOST die.

A county SPLOST would mean a jolt to the local economy, spurring economic growth through the development of much needed local infrastructure.

Earlier in the year, Hiawasse Mayor Barbara Mathis was extremely supportive of a 1 cent sales tax referendum to fund important projects that include expansion of the city's water and sewer facilities.

The Towns County Homeowners Association also has come out in favor of a SPLOST to fund much overdue capital improvement projects. It's estimated that over a six-year time frame, the county can collect an estimated \$12 million for capital improvements.

In Hiawasse, the City Council has had a moratorium in place for more than two years on sewer hook-ups outside the city limits. If a SPLOST is approved, the county would contribute \$400,000 of SPLOST funds to upgrade the city's waste water treatment plant. Without a SPLOST, the sewer problem, the sewer moratorium and economic development

in the county is without a solution, local leaders say.

Also on the previously proposed projects list, roads and bridges also rank high on the list of needs.

Since the economic downturn, the county has reduced the number of Towns County Road Department employees from 16 to the present nine workers.

These workers maintain approximately 400 miles of county roads that include mowing right of ways, cleaning ditches, clearing fallen trees, graveling and scraping gravel roads, re-capping and patching pavement, and removing ice and snow.

A successful SPLOST would help provide equipment and materials for repairing and upgrading the road system.

Other capital projects include the purchase of fire department equipment and fire hydrants.

One fire hydrant will cover 2,000 feet, 1,000 feet in each direction and homes owners will save a substantial amount on their fire insurance. Ambulances for Towns County Emergency Medical Services could be purchased by SPLOST instead of with property tax dollars.

Other potential projects include \$100,000 to match a \$900,000 state grant to upgrade the library in Hiawasse. The county already has committed \$100,000 in funding from property tax dollars to match the state grant.

There's also the potential for jobs creation through upgrades in infrastructure, sewer and expansion of the county's Industrial Park.

Historically, a high percentage of the SPLOST is paid by nonresidents and tourists visiting the county during the warmer months, or peak tourist season.

## Early voting...continued from page 1A

ballot, voters must choose between Sam Olens, Preston W. Smith and Max Wood.

In the race to replace Commissioner Tommy Irvin, Gary Black and Darwin Carter make up the GOP ballot.

In the race to replace John Oxendine as Insurance Commissioner, GOP voters must choose from a wide-open field: Dennis Cain, Rick Collum, Seth Harp, Ralph Hudgens, Tom Knox, John Mamalakis, Stephen Dale Northington, Gerry Purcell and Maria Sheffield.

For State School Superintendent, GOP voters must decide if John Barge, Incumbent Kathy Cox or Richard Woods is the best candidate. Cox is taking a job with an educational think tank, but her name remains on the ballot.

GOP Labor Commissioner candidates are Mark Butler and Melvin Everson.

For Public Service Commissioner to replace Robert B. Baker Jr., GOP candidates are B. Joseph

"Joey" Brush, John Douglas, Tim Echols and Jeff May.

U.S. Rep. Paul Broun is unopposed on the GOP ballot, as is State House District 8 State Rep. Stephen Allison.

The GOP ballot has one question: "Do you support an amendment to the Georgia State Constitution so as to provide that the paramount right to life is vested in each human being from the earliest biological beginning until natural death?"

On the Democratic ballot, voters must decide between R.J. Hadley and Michael Thurmond for U.S. Senate with the winner to face Sen. Isakson in November.

For governor, Democrats must choose between Thurbert Baker, Roy Barnes, Bill Bolton, Carl Camon, Randal Mangham, Dubose Porter or David Poythress.

In the race to face Lt. Gov. Cagle, Democrats must choose between Tricia Carpenter McCracken and

Carol Porter.

For Secretary of State, Gail Buckner, Gary Horlacher, Michael Mills, Angela Moore and Georganna Sinkfield square off for the Democratic nod.

In the Attorney General's race, Democrats Ken Hodges and Rob Teilhet hope for the nod.

J.B. Powell is the lone Democrat vying for the Commissioner of Agriculture seat.

Mary Squires hopes to become the Democratic nominee for Insurance Commissioner.

Beth Farokhi, Joe Martin and Brian Westlake are in contention for the Democratic nod for State School Superintendent.

Terry Coleman and Darryl Hicks are in a tight race to earn the Democratic nod for Labor Commissioner.

PSC candidate Keith Moffett, 10<sup>th</sup> Congressional District candidate Russell Edwards and State House District 8 candidate Jack Lance are all unopposed in the Democratic Primary.

## State OK's Bugscuffle Road work project

By Charles Duncan  
TOWNS COUNTY HERALD  
cduncan.tch@windstream.net

Towns County residents will soon notice a difference on Bugscuffle Road.

Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall signed the paperwork to initiate the resurfacing project that includes 1.3 miles of roadway.

The funding comes via the Georgia Department of Transportation LARP fund,

which provides roadwork assistance to counties that apply for the grant money.

"This is probably the last LARP money Towns County is going to see," Commissioner Kendall said Friday, prior to signing the DOT contract during a special called meeting at the Towns County Courthouse.

The road will be resurfaced from Bugscuffle East to Kimsey Cove Road.

The project will begin

as soon as the paperwork is returned to DOT and finalized and then the go ahead for bids is given by the state.

"This is a well-deserving project," Commissioner Kendall said. "We look forward to seeing this roadwork started and then completed."

Commissioner Kendall emphasized that the money came from the state DOT and not federal stimulus dollars.

"There's a big difference," he said.