

Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

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Thursday, June 25, 2009

Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thur: Cloudy 86 64
Fri: T-Storms 86 65
Sat: T-Storms 89 66
Sun: T-Storms 92 67
Mon: Cloudy 88 65
Tue: Cloudy 87 65
Wed: Sunny 86 65



Upstream Elevation Predicted 6/22/09
Lake Chatuge 1925.47
Lake Nottely 1776.72
Blue Ridge 1686.68

INDEX

18 Pages 2 Sections

Arrests.....2A
Church/Obits.....10A,11A
Classifieds.....3B
Editorial.....4A
Elected officials.....4A
Legals.....4B
Sports.....2B
Television.....8A

Highway Safety

The Governor's Office of Highway Safety is launching its statewide summer mobilization of the Operation Zero Tolerance (OZT) impaired driving enforcement campaign. The campaign began Friday, June 19. OZT means if you're "Over the Limit," you're "Under Arrest" on July 4th.

Search begins for Beauty Queens

The Miss Georgia Mountain Fair Pageant in Hiawasse has begun its search for contestants in the Northeast Georgia Mountain Region and Western Carolina Mountains. The Georgia Mountain Fair is taking applications for girls ages 17-24 to represent the fair in community events during 2009-10. The GMF Pageant will be held Monday, July 20. For more details, look in this week's Sports Section.

Food Pantry

The Towns County Food Pantry will have a free food distribution for Towns County residents on Tuesday, June 30 from 2 p.m. to 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 inquires are confidential.

Transfer Station

The Towns County Transfer Station will be closed on Saturday, July 4th, in observance of Independence Day.

HSMS meeting venue change

The Humane Society Mountain Shelter annual board meeting is scheduled for June 25 at 6:30 p.m. at the Cadence Bank Community Room in Blairsville.

Two people charged in Bald Mountain Park burglaries

By Charles Duncan
TOWNS COUNTY HERALD
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Towns County sheriff's investigator Brian Wilson is drawing high praise from Sheriff Chris Clinton for what the sheriff calls "a fine piece of police work."

Wilson is credited with solving a string of burglaries in the Bald Mountain Park community. Christopher Blake Carroll, 19, of Hiawasse, has been charged with allegedly committing seven burglaries, Towns County sheriff's reports show.

Also, a juvenile com-

plaint has been filed, Sheriff Clinton said.

Carroll was arrested without incident late last week, Sheriff Clinton said.

"Detective Brian Wilson worked diligently on this case until the suspect was identified," the sheriff said. "With the support of tips from the residents of Towns County, deputies were able to close in on Christopher Blake Carroll and safely affect an arrest near Carroll's residence in the Gander Gap area."

"The dedication of local investigators and the watchful eyes of Gander Gap residents made the solv-

ing of this case possible," the sheriff said. "They worked hand-in-hand to gather leads and suspect information, which led to the arrest. This is another great example of how effective a community watch program really is."

The case was solved as Detective Wilson canvassed the Bald Mountain Park neighborhood speaking with residents, Sheriff Clinton said.

"Several alert residents gave the detective valuable information as to suspicious activity they had witnessed. Leads were developed and

See Charged, page 2A

Development Authority to pay debts

By Charles Duncan
TOWNS COUNTY HERALD
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The Towns County Industrial Development Authority will use its \$500,000 line of credit to pay off long-term indebtedness.

The Authority agreed on Monday to pay out more than \$342,000 to settle debts incurred by the defunct Clay-Towns Development Authority.

The Authority agreed to send Blairsville-based Colditz Trucking Co. a check for \$338,636.77 to settle a court-ordered judgment that included 12 percent interest. It also agreed to pay \$8,250 to Blankenship for work done at the Industrial Park.

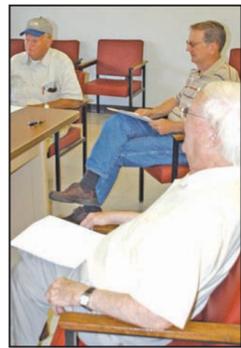
The Industrial Development Authority recently agreed to borrow up to

\$500,000 from United Community Bank to resolve any debts on approximately 21 acres of Industrial Park property. The agreement with the local bank became official on Monday.

The group met Monday evening in the Grand Jury Room at the Towns County Courthouse to finalize the line of credit. The property, which is valued at more than \$1.1 million, will stand good for the debt.

The property that once made up Clay-Towns Authority was placed in the hands of the Towns County Industrial Development Authority following a vote in March by the joint Clay-Towns Authority.

See Debt, page 3A



Towns County Industrial Development Authority members discuss how they will use a \$500,000 line of credit from United Community Bank. The Authority agreed to pay debts owed Colditz Trucking Co. and Blankenship by the now defunct Clay-Towns Development Authority. Photo by Charles Duncan

From the Desk of the Sheriff

Special to the Herald

I recently mentioned the fundraiser for the Georgia Sheriffs' Youth Homes that I am hosting on July 10, 2009 at the Chatuge Gun Club Range on Owl Creek. The event is shaping up to be a fun day for a great cause. All proceeds from the day directly support the children of the Georgia Sheriffs' Youth Homes.

We are still signing up teams for the event and if you are part of a group or business that would like to participate in the shooting or sponsor a team, you may do so by calling (706) 896-1783 to reserve your shooting

time. You may shoot solo or as a team. The entry fee is \$50 per shooter. Each shooter will shoot at 50 clay birds. They will compete for a Best Shooter award as well as a Best Team award and be eligible for a \$100 prize.

You do not have to shoot in the event to come out and watch and participate in events of the day. We will be raffling off some great prizes including a guided hog hunt for two, a guided grouse hunt for two, a 12 gauge shotgun, a 20 gauge shotgun, a weekend stay for two at Brasstown Valley Resort, fishing gear,

From the Desk of:

Sheriff Clinton of Towns County

meals at local restaurants and much more. Anyone can participate in the raffles and you do not have to be present to win.

The Georgia Sheriffs' Youth homes and the Georgia Sheriff's Association provide children in need a place to call home; a secure en-

See Desk, page 5A

Satterfield discusses new EMC site



Satterfield

By David Seckinger
TOWNS COUNTY HERALD

Tempers flared as Blue Ridge Mountain EMC general manager Joe Satterfield spoke to the Towns County Homeowners Association last Thursday.

Satterfield was there to discuss the plans BRMEMC have to build a new headquarters just east of Young Harris. He said the company recently bought 102 acres for \$3.8 million. The property is located near the substation in Young Harris and Brasstown Valley Resort. Satterfield said Young Harris College wants to purchase 23 acres of the land, and the company will probably sell some of the land to developers. He said BRMEMC will use 42 acres for their new site.

Satterfield said a pre-bid meeting earlier this month was attended by 105 people hoping to work the site. He said bids will open July 9, the board will decide on the bids July 15, and work should begin on site by Aug. 1. Satterfield said it should take two years to complete the project.

In addition to the money spent for the land, the project will cost about \$14

million. Satterfield said this is an opportune time to build while the economy is slow because they can save on construction costs. "Hopefully a lot of sub-contracts will be awarded locally," said Satterfield.

Satterfield said the cost of the project would amount to an extra 80 cents per month on their customers' power bill. In addition, he said maybe BRMEMC could sell the land where their present headquarters is located to Young Harris College, in order to offset costs.

Satterfield showed the association members maps of the project. He said during construction the site would look ugly, but they have plans to cover up any cutting done to the mountain with the new headquarters building. "We tried our best to make a presentable site out of it," he said.

See TCHA, page 2A

Kendall amends proposed Saturday voting ordinance

By Charles Duncan
TOWNS COUNTY HERALD
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Towns County's 7,800-plus registered voters moved one step closer to having an opportunity to cast ballots on Saturdays.

Last week, Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall heard an amendment to the first reading of an ordinance that will change the hours when local voters cast ballots.

The amendment allows for the closure of local voting facilities at noon on the Saturday before the General Election, Kendall said.

"We're tweaking this ordinance a bit," Kendall said. "That means we'll need one more reading next month before this ordinance becomes official."

Election Superintendent Joeni Marie Shook told Commissioner Kendall that the Towns County Elections Board had already signed off on the amendment to the local ordinance.

The amendment allows election officials time to prepare for the General Election prior to Election Tuesday.

Local voters will cast ballots in November in favor or against a revised Homestead Exemption that would guarantee local homeowners receive an additional \$8,000 exemption above the \$2,000 already in place.

Last month, Kendall told those attending the monthly Towns County Commission meeting that, "we've got an opportunity to allow more people to come in and vote early."

Kendall also said that the county is working hard to find more space for early and advanced voting.

Kendall first considered making changes to the times voters cast ballots when he received complaints last year that locals were unable to access the voting booth from noon to 1 p.m. during early and ad-

vanced voting. That's because Towns County's voting laws allowed for the Election Office to be closed for lunch.

Kendall took the bull by the horns and together with County Attorney Rob Kiker and Election Superintendent Shook, created a proposed ordinance that satisfies local voting needs.

Shook said that 47 percent of the ballots cast last year in the Presidential Election came during early and advanced voting.

Kendall took that information into account when trying to look for more ways and opportunities for Towns County residents to cast ballots.

The proposed legislation would provide new hours to cast ballots during the 45-day period prior to a general election, primary or special election. The legislation becomes local law following the final reading and approval in July by Commissioner Kendall. Those hours will be 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. On Tuesday, the hours will be 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. and from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, with the exception of the Saturday before the General Election when voting would end at noon.

New voting hours would be enforced in the 45-day period before an election. Regular hours for the Election Office will be 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 a.m. on Tuesday and Thursday with an hour of scheduled lunch from noon to 1 p.m.

In addition to revamping the voting hours, Kendall is exploring moving voting into the county's law library to allow more space for an additional voting machine during early and advanced voting. In its current location, the county only has room for two voting machines.

There is room for three voting machines downstairs in the law library, Shook said.

Kendall speaks to TCHA

By David Seckinger
TOWNS COUNTY HERALD

Commissioner Bill Kendall spoke to the Towns County Homeowners Association last Thursday night about Lowe's, water and sewer services, and ball fields.

First, he talked about a resolution that will increase the Homestead Exemption in the county by \$8,000. He said if the voters pass the resolution on Nov. 3, it will go into effect in the 2010 digest. Kendall told the association members that if the resolution passes, they will not be taxed on the first \$25,000 of their homes at Fair Market Value.

Next, Kendall said there have been questions about how much taxpayer money is going into attracting Lowe's into the county. "We will not be putting one dime for Lowe's to come," he said. Kendall added the county and city has done all they had to do to get Lowe's to come, and they did not even have to give Lowe's a variance for their building.

"This is not a done deal," he told the association members. He said he will be meeting with Lowe's in January. Kendall finished by saying no one is trying to put the local hardware store out of business, but Lowe's will bring jobs to the county.



Kendall

Kendall told the association that he hopes they will follow through with their plans to create a new ball field. "Let's all come together and do that," he said.

Kendall said he has proposed a couple of locations for a field, but they did not happen. Nevertheless, he said he would not give up, and he believed the project could possibly be funded with SPLOST money.

Currently, the Towns County Recreation Department serves about 4000 people a week, between the

See Kendall, page 3A

TOWNS COUNTY HERALD

