

## Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thur: Storms	83 58
Fri: Clouds	86 61
Sat: Storms	83 61
Sun: Storms	82 59
Mon: Sunny	81 59
Tue: Sunny	83 61
Wed: Clouds	85 62



Upstream Elevation Predicted 08/10/11	
Lake Chatuge	1923.28
Lake Nottely	1777.73
Blue Ridge	1676.90

## INDEX

2 sections, 16 Pages

Arrests.....	2A
Church/Obits.....	8,9A
Classifieds.....	2B
Editorial.....	4A
Calendar.....	4A
Legals.....	3B
Racing.....	11A
Television.....	6A

## Sports Page 10A

## Driving Course

An AARP Driver Safety Program sponsored by North Georgia Technical College will be held Thursday at the Campus Conference Center in Blairsville.

The program consists of one seven-hour day meeting in two sessions from 9 a.m. to noon, and from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Fees are \$12 for AARP members and \$14 for nonmembers. Anyone 50 years old or older are welcome. Bring your AARP membership card to get the discount. For more details, call (706) 439-6332.

# Back to business as usual at Towns County Schools

By Charles Duncan  
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Towns County Schools are back in session.

More than 1,000 students were greeted by faculty, staffers and administration when they arrived at the doorsteps of the elementary, middle and high schools on Thursday.

New Schools Superintendent Melissa Williams got to meet a lot of new faces on Thursday, the first day of school within the system. Everyone was all smiles as they welcomed the new Schools Chief to Towns County.

At Towns County High School, it was a wonderful day on Thursday.

"Everything went smoothly," said Towns County High School Principal Roy Perren. "It's been a great start. It's gone very

smooth. There are always some schedule changes at the beginning of the year, but it's been a really good start to the school year."

Perren said there was nothing dramatic to the first few days of classroom activity.

"It's our prayers that the rest of the year will go this smoothly," Perren said. "We've got great kids and a great community."

At Towns County Middle School, Principal Darren Berrong was pleased with the opening days of school.

"Things have gone pretty smooth, of course this year is a little different than the others," Berrong said. "We've had several changes over the first few days of school. Erica Chastain, who was the middle school counselor last year, was just ap-

See School Starts, page 7A



Class is back in session at Towns County Schools. Thursday was the first day of classes since last May. It seems like only yesterday that schools closed for summer break. Photo/Lowell Nicholson.

## Pain at The Pump continues

Northeast Georgia gas prices well above the norm as oil prices tumble

By Charles Duncan  
Towns County Herald  
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Oil prices continue to plunge as investors shift gears from the commodity, to gold and U.S. Treasury Bonds following the recent selloff on Wall Street.

Gold skyrocketed to more than \$1,754 an ounce on Tuesday while oil opened Tuesday morning at \$78 a barrel, the cheapest it's been in almost a year.

However, the price at the gas pumps, especially in Northeast Georgia, continues to stay well above prices at convenience stores south of Atlanta.

Locally and throughout most of Northeast Georgia, a gallon of gasoline is costly.

In Towns County on Tuesday morning, the cheapest gallon of gas was at Cash Gas, off Georgia 76 near the Friendship Commu-

See Pain, page 7A



Oil prices have plunged, but local gas prices have failed to keep pace with the drop at The Pumps. Oil opened at \$78 a barrel Tuesday as daytraders continue to shift their focus from oil to other interests like gold and U.S. Treasury Bonds. Photo/James Reese

## Local teen singing group takes title in Tennessee

Towns County students excel at top level



Vocal coaches Ryan Wilson and Latisha Wilson-Usher pose with Alyssa Pyle, Erin Westberry, and Courtney Farmer at Church of God International Awards ceremony.

By Nighta Davis  
Special to Towns County Herald  
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for international music recognition at the Church of God International Music Awards.

Twenty five hundred teen-agers from ages 13 to 19 and their families from around the world gathered in Cleveland, Tenn. to compete

Three Towns County middle and high school teen-agers from Hiawassee

See Awards, page 7A

## Moonshine Cruize-In arrives

Thousands expected to attend three-day Hot Rod and Classic Car Rally



By Charles Duncan  
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The Georgia Mountain Moonshine Cruize-In kicks off Thursday at 5:30 p.m. with the Third Haulin' Mash Moonshine Bash at The Ridges Resort and Marina.

More than 10,000 people are expected to converge on Towns County during the Third Annual Georgia Mountain Moonshine Cruize-In, which concludes on Saturday.

The Ridges Resort & Marina General Manager Chad Hooper says the 2011 event is going to be bigger and better than last year.

Double the cars, double the enthusiasm and most business owners are banking on bringing in double the money.

Linda Vaughn, better known for a 20-year stretch as "Miss Hurst Golden Shifter," and the "First Lady of Drag Racing," will be at the 2011 Cruize-in on Friday and Saturday. The 2011 event also features a huge auto swap meet and car corral.

There'll be plenty of music to go around; Steven Phillips and the Midnight Express, the Lisa Price Band and Elvis Impersonator Bill Brooks will all be on hand at the event.

See Cruize-In, page 7A



Robert "Rakes" Parrish brings his swap meet and Hot Rod affair to the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds for the third consecutive year on Thursday. The fun begins at The Ridges. Photos Lowell Nicholson

## Towns County Schools have a sister school system

School in Republic of Georgia has a common link

By Christina Peebles  
Special to Towns County Herald  
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Towns County Schools has just become sister schools with Chikha Public School in The Republic of Georgia.

Sister schools are partnerships created between schools in different countries to encourage cultural exchange and improve language skills.

Christina Peebles, a 2007 TCHS graduate, has been teaching English at Chikha Public School since September 2010. Christina



Chikha Public School, in Chikha, Georgia. Photo/Christina Peebles and Ms. Bridges, TCHS English teacher and newly

See Sister, page 7A

## Severe storms cause lightning damage in Towns County

By Charles Duncan  
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Recent severe thunder storms have caused damage to local businesses and the Towns County Detention Center following a series of lightning strikes.

Though the storms have brought some much needed rain to the area, they've also wreaked havoc.

Towns County Sheriff Chris Clinton reports that lightning struck the Towns County Detention Center. No one was injured, but some expensive electronic

equipment was damaged following a lightning strike.

The Towns County Herald also reports some equipment damage linked to the recent barrage of lightning, Publisher Kenneth West reports.

Public Safety workers were summoned to McDonald's in Hiawassee related to the storms.

More storms are expected this week.

TOWNS COUNTY HERALD

