

## Early vote counts...from page 1A

Shook, born Jan. 5, 1908, cast his most recent ballot in the building he helped build in 1930 while serving as a worker with President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal work programs.

Shook was 22 at the time and remembers getting up well before daylight to walk through Ivy Log Gap with Cicero Nichols and Ott Hooper to get to Crow Gap and through to Hog Creek to get to Hiawassee where the Rock Jail was being constructed.

In his lifetime, Shook, who grew up in part in Union County, has been a moonshiner, a saw miller, a logger, worked on cars and as a farmer during his days on this earth.

He's a father to seven children and his two broth-

ers Arvil and Andy both lived to be more than 100 years old also.

"Arvil lived to be 102, Andy lived to be 101 and seven months," he said.

Shook said he went to the doctor for the first time at age 98.

"The doctor said I had the vital signs of a 20-year-old," he said with a laugh.

Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall met with Shook after his ballot was cast on Thursday. He remains amazed that Shook still gets around as good as he does. He's even more amazed that Shook still has a hankering to cast a ballot.

"It's amazing that a man his age still has the craving to vote," Commissioner Kendall said. "I wish

everyone was as eager to cast a ballot as Arthur Shook is. We'd have a heck of a voter turnout."

On Monday afternoon, ballots 1,649 and 1,650 were cast at the end of the day's voting. More people have voted early than those who voted in the Towns County Primary elections in July. Towns County has almost 8,000 registered voters.

The early voting for the Nov. 2 general election continues through Saturday (9 a.m. to noon) at the Old Rock Jail at 91 Berrong St. in Hiawassee.

Early voting in record numbers is due primarily to the Saturday voting option for Towns County residents approved in late 2008 by Commissioner Kendall.

## Don Williams...continued from page 1A

effects of a bad chest cold prior to taking the stage on the Thursday show at The Ryman, however managed to soldier on to the end. Upon arriving in Ashland it was obvious that Don couldn't perform that night and he was taken to a doctor at the local hospital, who gave him antibiotics and he was told to rest for a few days and let the medication work.

He then traveled on to Hiawassee in the hope he could fulfill the engagement there, which regrettably he couldn't. It was then decided to take a few days complete rest, let the antibiotics do their job and aim for his next con-

cert on Tuesday, Oct. 26 in Texarkana, Texas.

"Don would like to thank everyone for their kindness, their understanding and looks forward to seeing all his fans in Ashland on Nov. 1, and in Hiawassee again soon."

Williams, who retired in 2006, came out of retirement for a limited number of concert dates.

Williams also missed his induction into the Country Music Hall of Fame in Nashville, Tenn. on Sunday.

Williams, who has 17 No. 1 hits to professional credits, is one of the most legendary sounds in Coun-

try Music. He was named Male Vocalist of the Year in 1978 and his iconic hit Tulsa Time has crossed genres and has been featured in major Hollywood motion pictures.

However, his most memorable No. 1 hit is *I Believe in You*, a song, recorded in 1980, that reflects on the times we lived. It is a telling tale of the things in life that aren't genuine and the things that really mean the most.

"We'll know something about the rescheduled concert date in a few days," Thomason said. "Tell everyone to hold onto their tickets; Don Williams will be here soon."

## Georgia Forestry Commission simplifies burn permit process

Getting a permit for outdoor burning has become faster and easier. Permits from the Georgia Forestry Commission are now issued instantly only at GaTrees.org\* when conditions are safe for burning hand-piled natural vegetation in your community. Acreage and machine-piled burn permits are issued by the local GFC county office at 706-781-2398.

Burn permits are issued 24 hours a day at GaTrees.org\*. Permits are valid for the day on which they are issued. Permits issued after dark will be good on the following day (if that county is approving permits for that day.)

Residents may also receive burn permits via the automatic phone system by calling 1-877-OK2-BURN (1-

877-652-2876)\*.

What can be burned? Permits are required for burning all natural vegetation that is hand piled, including leaf piles on the premises when they fall, and vegetative debris from storm damage, weed abatement, disease and/or pest prevention. It is unlawful to burn all man-made materials such as tires, shingles, plastic and lumber.

Why is this better? The new automated system saves time when customers use the same computer whenever a permit is requested; the system "remembers" the customer and utilizes previously filed data to hasten the process.

The new system benefits communities by providing information about the location of permitted area burns and contact information for those in charge.

What's at risk? Failure to secure a valid burn permit may result in penalties. If an unpermitted fire escapes and causes wildfire, suppression charges will be levied. The average suppression charge is \$200.

Prescribe burning can help slow wildfire. Requests for prescribe burning are expected to increase this year,

due to last season's wet weather and residents' inability to burn. Firebreak, harrowing, and prescribe fire services are offered by the GFC on a first come first served basis. Contact your local GFC office for more information at 706-781-2398 or visit GaTrees.org.

*\*You may only obtain a burn permit using GFC's automated systems if your community authorizes GFC to issue the burn permit. Some communities require citizens to obtain permits through their local Fire Department or other county office. It is the responsibility of the burner to determine if local ordinances require additional permits or notification.* NT(Oct27,216)CA

## Customer Appreciation Day

You're invited to a Customer Appreciation Day at Barrett & Associates Insurance on Friday, October 29 from 11 AM - 2 PM at 333 Big Sky Dr. (the road above Smoke Rings). There will be hot dogs, chips, sodas, and door prizes. You can also get details on a chance to win a Panasonic plasma television. TO(Oct27,HI)SH

## Hiawassee Park...from page 1A

Mayor Mathis concurred.

"These people have worked real hard to make this a reality," she said. "This is a great group of people that are coming into our area. They will be good, not just for Hiawassee, but for Towns County. I just feel so lucky to be a part of this today."

The project is expected to create several temporary construction jobs in addition to the 50 or so full-time jobs once the project is complete.

"We're drawing residents from various parts of North Georgia, especially the Cumming area," Willis said. "We've got some couples from Atlanta that want to move up here. We're expecting a lot more interest from other parts of the state when we report on this at the Georgia Baptist Convention."

Baptist Retirement Communities of Georgia, Inc. provides below market independent and assisted living to individuals age 50 and above at two campuses, Clairmont Crest in Decatur, and Palmetto Park in Palmetto, about 45 minutes south of Atlanta.

Hiawassee Park adds a new dimension to BRCGA, Willis said.

"Today is a continuing

realization of our long-range planning," Willis said. "Several years ago, we targeted different areas in North Georgia and East and West Georgia that we needed to be in. This was one of the areas that we had targeted and it has come to fruition."

Willis said that Hiawassee Park has given BRCGA a project to work toward.

"We're looking at about 95 to 100 units," she said. "The gentleman next door, Mr. Sanders, is anxious to talk with us about acquiring some property for future expansion. It's nice to know that we've got that option because we're going to have to build on everything we've got right now (23-plus acres)."

BRCGA Board Member Tim Wilson said he believed divine intervention led the group to Towns County.

"We looked at a lot of different places and when we came here, you just knew that this was the right place. There was no doubt."

Willis projects that construction will begin in 2011 once good weather returns.

"We missed the building season for this year," she said. "We're looking forward to getting this project underway and building upward."