

Towns County Herald

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Wednesday, November 23, 2011

Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thur: Sunny	63 37
Fri: Clouds	65 40
Sat: Clouds	60 46
Sun: Showers	58 32
Mon: Clouds	45 37
Tue: Clouds	51 31
Wed: Sunny	51 28



Upstream Elevation Predicted 11/23/11	
Lake Chatuge	1917.56
Lake Nottely	1760.98
Blue Ridge	1667.79

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Sports Page 10A

KOM Dec. 2 and Dec. 3

Towns County Wrestling welcomes 19 teams to the House of Pain on Friday afternoon, Dec. 2 as the annual King of the Mountain Tournament kicks off. The tournament, which will feature first year programs from Union and Rabun counties will continue on Saturday, Dec. 3 as champions emerge.

Love Light Tree

The Annual Love Light Tree Celebration at Chatuge Regional Hospital and Nursing Home is scheduled for Dec. 8. A short program of Christmas songs is scheduled. See more details on Page 7A

Food Pantry

The Towns County Food Distribution is scheduled for Tuesday Nov. 29 from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. All that are in need of food assistance are encouraged to attend. If you are unable to pick up your food, please contact The Pantry at (706) 896-4783 prior to distribution day so arrangements can be made to deliver your food. All clients and inquiries are kept confidential.

Tour of Homes

Turn to Page 3A to learn more about the 2011 Tour of Homes scheduled for Dec. 3 and Dec. 4th.

The event is once again sponsored by the Towns County Chamber of Commerce.

Six beautiful homes are on the 2011 tour. Many more details about the tour are on Page 3A.

Happy Thanksgiving!

To You and Yours from the Towns County Herald

Cochran sets new school mark

By Jerry Kendall
Towns County Herald
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The Dawson County Lady Tigers learned a valuable lesson on Saturday night.

Don't foul the Towns County Lady Indians, better yet, don't foul Eryn Cochran.

The Lady Indian sophomore guard set a modern day record for successful free throws as she connected on 19 of 20 against the Lady Tigers, leading Towns County to a 76-66 non-region victory.

Cochran wasn't the only hot shooter at the charity stripe as the Lady Indians sank 21 of 24 fourth quarter free throw attempts

See Cochran, page 12A



Towns County Lady Indian Eryn Cochran (10) took a physical beating Saturday night in Dawsonville. She made Dawson County pay for every foul at the charity stripe. Photo/James Reese

'We're thankful for you'

By Charles Duncan
Towns County Herald
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Two weeks ago, we quietly celebrated our 83rd year of serving the Towns County community.

On Oct. 27th, I celebrated my third year as editor of the Towns County Herald.

Every day that passes, I continue to celebrate the Towns County community and its people.

As we approach the day that we all bow our heads and give thanks for the many blessings that we celebrate in our daily lives, it didn't take me long to recount the many blessings that I continue to enjoy.

I'm thankful to my Maker for the thrill of living each day. For those who



Charles Duncan

don't know it, I almost died in February 2009. I have a new mechanical heart valve and pacemaker that keep me going from issue to issue.

I'm thankful to be able to live in the North Georgia Mountains again and celebrate the thousands of loving and caring individuals

See 'Thankful', page 12A

Wilson, Shirley honored

By Charles Duncan
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Each year the National Sons of the American Revolution honor community public servants for their actions in the line of duty.

This year, two of Towns County's own were honored during the November Meeting of the Towns County Commission.

SAR representatives Terry Legg and John Preston were on hand to make the presentations to two of Towns County's finest public servants.

"We at the Sons of the American Revolution like to



Towns County Firefighter Jonathan Wilson and Paramedic James Shirley were honored last week by the Sons of the American Revolution. Photo/Charles Duncan

honor our public servants. We received the nominations for outstanding public servants," Legg said. "Is Jonathan Wilson with us to-

See Honored, page 12A

Tax bills in the mail on Nov. 30th, Rogers says

By Charles Duncan
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Towns County residents will soon see their new tax bills in the mail.

Towns County Tax Commissioner Bruce Rogers told county residents last week that tax bills will be in the mail by Nov. 30th.

The bills likely will be cheaper than last year as decreased fair market values continue to eat away at the Towns County Tax Digest.

Rogers added that there are a lot of good people struggling right now to pay their taxes in this unpredictable economy.

"We understand that," he said. "Commissioner (Bill) Kendall lowered the county millage rate by a quarter mill. That will make a difference on these tax bills."

Rogers said that county residents who pay their taxes before Dec. 30 can claim them on their 2011



Bruce Rogers

tax returns.

"By law you've got 60 days to pay your property taxes, but you don't have to wait that long," he said. "A lot of folks like to pay them before the end of the year and claim them on their tax returns."

Rogers' comments came on the heels of Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall's approval of the 2011 millage rate at 5.320 mills, down slightly from last year's rate of 5.570 mills.

A mill is \$1 for every \$1,000 of assessed property tax. Towns County assesses property at 40 percent of its value.

Dec. 6th Senate runoff nears

By Charles Duncan
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It's been one of the shortest election processes in Georgia history.

But at the end of the business day on Dec. 6th, there will be a new District 50 State Senator.

Qualifying for the seat left vacant when Jim Butterworth became Major Gen. Butterworth of the Georgia National Guard began on Oct. 3rd. In three days, five candidates lined up for a shot to become the eight-county Senate district's next representative.

On Nov. 8th, only two candidates made the final cut for the Dec. 6th runoff: Rick Austin and John Wilkinson.



Rick Austin

Austin, of Demorest, is the former state representative from Georgia House District 10. He resigned that post to run for State Senate. Terry Rogers, of Habersham County was elected to fill his unexpired term on Nov. 8.



John Wilkinson

Austin is a biology professor at Piedmont College in Demorest and former Habersham County commissioner.

Wilkinson, of Toccoa,

See Runoff, page 12A

2012 budget \$20 less than 2011

Watchful eye, smart shopping save taxpayers dollars

By Charles Duncan
Towns County Herald
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It's funny how things work out.

At a time when most local governments are raising taxes for their residents, Towns County taxpayers will experience tax relief.

As the county Tax Digest continues to regress, Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall lowered the county's millage rate by .25 mills to 5.320 mills. He also set the Fire Tax at .470 mills for the Fire & Rescue operations.

The current Tax Digest depreciated by more than \$607,000. The quarter mill cut by Commissioner Kendall decreased tax rev-



Commissioner Bill Kendall

enues by another \$204,000. Overall, the \$9.38 million budget approved last week by Commissioner Kendall is \$20 less next year than in 2011.

"It's a good budget; it's balanced and it comes at a time when people all over the county are having trouble," Commissioner Kendall said. "The foreclosures are really hurting our Tax Digest."

Foreclosed properties are selling for pennies on the dollar and when a foreclosed property sells, the selling price, according to Georgia law, is the new assessed value of the property.

The approved budget includes \$1.12 million for the Towns County Sheriff's Office, \$912,000 for Jail Operations, \$1 million plus for Towns County Ambulance Services, \$930,700 for the County Road Department, \$294,000 for the Recreation Department and \$370,000 for Fire Services.

Commissioner Kendall said he was able to cut the millage rate by realizing savings in several ar-

See Budget, page 12A

YHC one step closer to NCAA Division II

By James Reese
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The Young Harris College Board of Trustees has approved the addition of intercollegiate men's and women's lacrosse and competitive cheerleading to the athletics programs at Young Harris College beginning in the fall of 2012.

Young Harris College currently sponsors 12 intercollegiate sports teams: baseball, men's and women's basketball, men's and women's cross country, men's and women's golf, men's and women's soccer, softball and men's and women's tennis.

The addition of more competitive sports comes on the heels of news that YHC has been formally accepted as a candidate for membership in the NCAA at the Division II level.

"We are very excited to begin the formal process to full membership in NCAA at the Division II level," YHC President Cathy Cox said in a release last week. "Our athletic department has worked diligently in leading this endeavor, and this achievement is a significant milestone in our on-going transformation to a four-year college. We know that



President Cathy Cox

NCAA membership will attract many talented student-athletes to Young Harris College."

YHC Athletics Director Randy Dunn agreed.

"Today is a great day for YHC," Dunn said. "I am very pleased that the NCAA membership committee considered YHC a worthy institution for provisional membership. Obtaining full membership will be a three-year process, and if everything goes well, YHC should receive full NCAA membership in 2014-2015."

During the first provisional year, YHC will bring

See YHC, page 12A

TOWNS COUNTY HERALD

