

Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

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Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thur: Cloudy	46 30
Fri: Cloudy	52 37
Sat: Rain	57 42
Sun: Rain	55 28
Mon: Sunny	47 26
Tue: Sunny	49 30
Wed: Rain	49 34



Upstream Elevation Predicted 12/29/10	
Lake Chatuge	1918.26
Lake Nottely	1762.00
Blue Ridge	1624.65

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New Year's Eve at Ridges

Enjoy live music and dancing with Rick Davenport and the Sundown Band on New Year's Eve at The Ridges Resort and Marina. Ring in the New Year with Party Favors and a Champagne Toast at midnight.

Enjoy the Ice Bar with mixed seafood cocktails, smoked Salmon and Wakami Salad.

Also enjoy diver scallop skewers, chicken satay, sauteed mushroom and vegetable stir-fry. A cash bar is available.

The evening cost: \$49 per person. Call (706) 896-4141 for reservations.

Young Harris Snowman



The builders of this 8 and a half foot snowman built in Young Harris at the Young Harris Enotah Village Apartments believe they've got a record snowman on their hands. It might very well be a record for Young Harris. The builders are Zachary Pittman, Austin Pittman, Justin Simpson, and Kyle Witfield.

Food Pantry

The Towns County Food Pantry will hold its free food distribution on Tuesday, Jan. 4. The distribution will be held at the Towns County Food Pantry on Jack Dayton Circle from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. All that are in need of assistance are encouraged to attend. If you are unable to pick up your food, please call (706) 896-4783 for more details prior to distribution day. This allows us to make arrangements to deliver food to you. All clients and inquiries are kept confidential.



HAPPY NEW YEAR!



White Christmas arrives; stays here a while

By Charles Duncan
Towns County Herald
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A very White Christmas has given way to extremely cold temperatures and wind chills throughout Northeast Georgia.

The good news: warmer temperatures are on the way.

Towns County residents got their White Christmas, the first such occurrence since experiencing a dusting in 1993. The weather system behind the historic Christmas snow was a low pressure system off the North Carolina coast. That same weather system created blizzard conditions as it crept up the Eastern Seaboard on Monday.

Locally, the system

brought extreme frigid temperatures and plenty of frozen precipitation. Snowfall measurements in Towns County ranged from 7 inches to a foot in certain elevations.

Weather conditions were ideal for sledding, snowball fights, building a snowman or just cutting a doughnut in the local parking lots with a four-wheel drive. Some residents lost power, some lost cable service, and some lost both.

However, power was restored by Sunday.

The storm prompted a brief postponement of the 17th Annual Battle of the States Christmas Tournament in Hiawassee. Instead

See Weather, page 3A



There's nothing better than a Christmas Day snowball fight in Towns County. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

2010: In the books; one last look

By Charles Duncan
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A new city councilman in Hiawassee, the return of college basketball to Towns County, a familiar winter feeling and 50-plus acres to build a recreational park dominated the headlines in 2010.

While the year is almost gone, it's appropriate to take a look back at the year that was and track the notable news stories.

The year ended as it began with snow and ice dictating the headlines. Fires and tragedy struck again as the year came to a near close.

On election night in November, voters throughout House District 8 spoke loud and clear that they were satisfied with State Rep. Stephen Allison. Statewide, voters, including those in Towns County, said yes to Nathan Deal as their new governor and yes to Republicans in general. No state



The late Ralph and Johnnie Foster, the namesakes of a future park in Towns County off Mining Gap Road. One 2010's highlights.

office is headed by a Democrat for the next four years.

In the July Primaries, Jeff Langley was the District Attorney of choice and voters in Senate District 50 declared State Sen. Jim Butterworth worthy of a second term as the district's state senator.

Locally, the city of Hiawassee said farewell to a beloved councilman,

Howard Cunningham, who retired, and welcomed Pat Smith aboard in November to fill his unexpired term.

Also, the community honored its heroes and none deserved the honor more than Hiawassee Police Chief Jimmy Wright. The chief risked life and limb to rescue fire victims Ivalee

See Review, page 5A

Towns man dies in suspicious Union fire

By Charles Duncan
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Blairsville - The State Fire Marshal's Office is investigating a suspicious fire in neighboring Union County that resulted in the death of two men, including a former member of Towns County basketball and baseball.

Chad Derek Marshall, 38, of Young Harris and 62-year-old Joseph Leroy Powell have been identified as the victims of the fire at 65 Guffey Valley Road in Blairsville, said Glenn Allen, spokesman for the State Fire Marshal's Office.

The fire was called in at 9:40 p.m. on Dec. 23rd, Allen said.

"The bodies of the victims are at the Georgia Bureau of Investigation Crime Laboratory in DeKalb County," Allen said. "The



Fatal fire claims Towns man bodies were sent there, not only for identification, but also to determine the cause of death.

"The reason the state Arson Unit is investigating this, it's a very suspicious fire," Allen said. "A very suspicious fire."

The house, roped off with crime scene tape, remains a focal point of the investigation.

Meanwhile, the cause See Fire page 2A

Bill Medley tickets on sale

By Charles Duncan
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His 1965 single with his music partner Bobby Hatfield is the most played single in American radio history; his 'righteous brother' died in 2003.

Bill Medley is coming to Anderson Music Hall Jan. 22 and you can rest assured, 'he'll have the time of his life.'

Medley, who was inducted into the Rock 'N' Roll Hall of Fame along with fellow Righteous Brother Bobby Hatfield in 2003, was confirmed to play The Hall last week, Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds General Manager Hilda Thomason said.

And that's not all; the Devil is coming down to



Bill Medley

Georgia. Charlie Daniels will play Anderson Music Hall March 19, 2011.

Tickets for the Medley concert go on sale Friday; tickets for the Charlie Daniels concert go on sale Feb. 4th.

Tickets for each concert are \$35 plus \$2 handling for Level I seating and \$25 plus \$2 handling for Level 2 seating.

Medley's legendary Righteous Brother hits include *You've Lost That Loving Feeling*, *Unchained Melody*, *(You're My) Soul and Inspiration*, *Ebb Tide* and *Just Once in My Life*.

In 1987, Medley teamed with Jennifer Warnes to record *(I've had) The Time of My Life*, for which they both earned an Oscar and a Grammy.

Daniels, who scored his first major music triumph when he sold one of his written songs, *It Hurts Me to Elvis Presley*, is best remembered for his Grammy Award-winning *The Devil Went Down to Georgia*. He also scored with *Long-*

See Medley, page 2A

Sheriff urges fire safety

By Charles Duncan
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Towns County Sheriff Chris Clinton urges Towns County residents to adopt a personal fire safety plan for 2011 in the wake of recent extreme cold weather.

Fire-related tragedy occurs far too often, the sheriff said.

"There are some things that you can do to help keep yourself and your family safer," he said.

Fires in the home can start in an instant and spread in seconds, leaving families with as little as 2 minutes to escape from a residential fire. However, with smoke alarms, escape plans and good fire safety practices, two minutes is enough time for families to evacuate unharmed.

Sheriff Clinton urges the installation and maintenance of smoke detectors in each home.

"Smoke detectors can save your life, but only if they are in good working order," he said. "Maintain and test smoke detectors regularly and never remove the batteries for other uses."

Not only should smoke alarms be tested monthly, but batteries should be replaced once a year, unless the smoke alarm has a longer-lasting lithium battery.

Also, smoke alarms should be replaced every 10 years.

Another safety tip: if a smoke detector sounds while you are sleeping, roll to the



Sheriff Chris Clinton

floor and crawl, Sheriff Clinton said.

"If you encounter smoke, remember the best air will be closest to the floor," he said.

The sheriff asks residents to be sure to give heaters and fireplaces plenty of space.

"Placing combustible material close to a heat source can cause it to ignite and start a fire," he said.

The sheriff also urges families to adopt an escape plan in the event of a fire.

"A good plan should include two escape routes from any room in the home," he said.

"You should designate a place to meet outside. Once out of the fire, stay out."

If your clothes are on

See Fire Safety, page 2A

Bank on new deal in 2011

By Charles Duncan
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For the seventh consecutive month the Georgia Department of Revenue has recorded an increase in tax revenues.

That's a sign of economic recovery that we've all been waiting to see and hear.

It's a sign that 2011 is about to be better than 2010 or any year since 2006. Economic recovery is a sign of the times and while jobs still lag behind, there are even signs that market is improving. Fewer jobless claims are the key indicators and its



Gov.-Elect Nathan Deal

happening statewide.

Locally, the tell-tell signs of economic recovery will be a decrease in the amount of activity at the

Towns County Food Pantry. Here's hoping that happens and soon.

Gov.-Elect Nathan Deal has his hands full trying to turn Georgia's economy around. However, having personally known Gov.-Elect Deal and his family for going on 18 years, I truly believe he is the man for the job.

Nathan is one of us, a true down-to-earth human being, who is likely to slap you on the back and ask you how you're doing in a crowd of strangers.

See New Deal, page 2A



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