

Inga...from Page 1A

home, stay safe and remain off our roadways. We will continue monitoring the weather and will provide updates as necessary."

When it came to Towns County Schools, kids only met for one day of classes the week of Jan. 15.

That Monday was Martin Luther King Jr. Day, a holiday, and school was in session on Tuesday, Jan. 16, though Superintendent Dr. Darren Berrong had to close schools on the subsequent two days for non-weather-related reasons.

Of course, Dr. Berrong certainly would have closed schools for winter weather and hazardous road conditions on Jan. 17 and Jan. 18, but it turned out that classes would have been canceled anyway, regardless of the weather, due to a break in the water main supplying the school that occurred the evening of Tuesday, Jan. 16.

"The water line runs from the highway under the high school parking lot," said Dr. Berrong. "It burst once when Mrs. Melissa Williams was here, and they said that after 40 years underground, the ground had shifted, and it busted.

"This leak is about 10 yards below where the last one burst. We had to dig up the parking lot in that area to find and repair it. When we shut that



Back roads continued to be perilous to traverse into Friday, Jan. 19, causing schools to close for weather.

line off, no water could reach the School.

"With these dangerous temps and dealing with water, we waited until Thursday to safely repair it. We had no access to a backhoe on Jan. 16 to even consider a fix then. We may replace the entire line next summer in phase two of our modernization project."

With assistance and equipment provided by Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw, the school maintenance team was able to get the repair fixed in time to hold school on Friday, Jan. 19.

However, after a thorough survey of secondary roads on school bus routes the morning of Jan. 19, Dr. Berrong decided to call off school because of

hazardous driving conditions.

The Towns County Courthouse closed on Jan. 17 and held a delayed reopening on Jan. 18.

Several community events were canceled in the area, including the January Commission Meeting, and for the most part, drivers seemed to stay off the roads during the coldest stretches of time during and after Winter Storm Inga.

A good resource for disaster preparedness is Ready.gov, where people can learn all about preparing for winter weather and other kinds of disaster situations.

Stay tuned to local first responder social media outlets for up-to-date information on incoming weather events.

Milsap...from Page 1A

world-class band plan to play all of the hits for folks, including "Smokey Mountain Rain," "Why Don't You Spend the Night," "Don't You Know How Much I Love You," and dozens more.

"Every song folks might want to hear, they're going to get to hear it," Milsap told the *Towns County Herald* recently. "And if for some reason I miss something, I'll just probably stop and say, hey, what do you folks want to hear?"

"And they'll call out something. The band knows everything. All 40 No. 1 songs, we'll get them in there."

Opening for Milsap in the Feb. 3 show will be T.G. Sheppard, who has had a stellar Country Music career of his own with 21 No. 1 hits, including "Faking Love," "Only One You," and "Strong Heart."

As far as the show be-

ing rescheduled, these things happen from time to time, and fortunately, Milsap was able to commit to another date.

"We've got it rescheduled, and everything's going to be great," said Fairgrounds General Manager Hilda Thomason. "We're selling more tickets, so that's good.

"We want everybody to come out and support the concerts and enjoy listening to all of Ronnie's hits. There will be over 40 hits, and he's planning on doing every one of them.

"T.G. Sheppard has a lot of hits, too, so it'll be a fun night to come out to Hiawassee and enjoy some great Country Music."

Of course, for folks who can't make it to the Milsap/Sheppard show, there are still plenty of opportunities coming up to support the Fairgrounds while checking out

some great entertainment.

"On March 3, we've got Gene Watson, Johnny Lee and Ronnie McDowell - tickets are still available," said Thomason. "We also have the Southern Uprising Tour (March 24), and it's sold out, but we're selling outside standing-room-only, and letting people bring chairs.

"We've sold probably 100 tickets on the outside already, so if you want to see that show, you can still see, and definitely can hear.

"Then, we have Jeremy Camp coming April 27. I have several offers in on a lot of different shows, but I don't have them confirmed yet, so I can't announce them."

The Feb. 3 Milsap/Sheppard concert will begin at 7 p.m., and fans can still get their hands on tickets at \$50 for Level 1 seating and \$40 for Level 2 seating. Pricing includes handling fee.

Firewise...from Page 1A

information out there in hopes that people will internalize it and want to learn more about it."

Over the last year, the coalition has continued to make headway in its efforts to spread the word about wildfire preparedness in neighborhoods and individual homes.

In fact, the coalition has done such an outstanding job getting the word out that, as of 2017, 21 of the 91 Firewise communities across the state of Georgia were located in Towns County.

"We have all of our communities except one renewed, which is a plus," said Elliott. "We've added two new communities, with a third one ready to come on board, and we have about six or eight other communities that we just need to put a little fire under to get them to commit to the Firewise program.

"Going into the New Year, we hope to continue to gain more committed neighborhoods and increase our efforts this year."

Moving forward into 2018, the coalition has its eyes set on continuing to expand the number of Firewise communities throughout the county, and even assisting in efforts to increase awareness in neighboring Union County as well.

However, in the coming



Chief Ranger Tony Harkins of the Georgia Forestry Commission with Chest-Chatt RC&D Council Executive Director Frank Riley. Photo/Lily Avery

weeks, Elliott and the rest of the coalition hope to see both the cities of Hiawassee and Young Harris join the ranks of Firewise Communities in the county.

As of now, Young Harris College is a certified Firewise Community, and the coalition would like to see that extend out into the city as well.

"We want to work on laying out action plans for these two cities," said Elliott. "Both mayors seem to be on board with helping the cities both become Firewise certified, so we want to try our best to help with the necessary steps for them to accomplish this.

"Becoming a Firewise Community is so important to preserving the beauty and nature of our mountains, and having our municipalities participate in that would be forever encouraging."

To continue to raise awareness in the community about wildfire preparedness, the coalition will host its annual celebration in honor of National Wildfire Preparedness Day on May 5. More details on the event will be released at a later date.

To learn what it takes to become a Firewise community, visit www.Firewise.org.

Ian Calhoun awarded Kimbrel Master of Business Administration scholarship

Ian Elijah Calhoun, of Young Harris, GA, a 2009 graduate of Towns County High School, and 2013 graduate of Young Harris College, and recipient of the Dr. Charles R. Clegg Outstanding Scholar Award for overall highest grade point average at YHC, is honored to be named recipient of the Monroe Kimbrel Master of Business Administration Scholarship. Fully endowed by the Watson-Brown Foundation, in memory of M. Monroe Kimbrel, a 1936 honors graduate of Terry College of Business, and an original trustee of the foundation, providing full tuition, and a paid summer internship at the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta to its graduate student recipient.



Ian Calhoun (center) receives scholarship.

encouragement for the student to emulate the reputation and career of its namesake, who not only enjoyed a twenty-year career at the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, as well as service to a host of civic and non-profit boards, but also was highly esteemed as a gentleman and banker. Ian Calhoun is a 2018 candidate for a Juris Doctor degree from the UGA School of Law, and a candi-

date for a Master of Business Administration degree from UGA Terry College of Business. Upon graduation in May, and bar exam in August, Ian hopes to work in the Atlanta area.

Ian is the son of Shep and Stacy Calhoun, of Young Harris, GA, and brother of Noah, Alana, Wesley, Zion, and Gabriel. NTUJan24,F2/SH

Chamber...from Page 1A

Members are as follows: Melanie Hughes, Chairwoman; Dwayne Phillips, Chairman-Elect; Sarah Dearing, Past-Chairwoman; Bill Pierson, Secretary; Mike Dvorak, Treasurer; Tim Barrett; Charles Burton; Brandon Grimsley; Carmolita Haney; Michael Kennedy; Pat McCallen; Nathan Noblet; Katie Stancil; Lindsey Townsend and Noel Turner.

Past Chamber Chairwoman Sarah Dearing recapped 2017 chamber business, highlighting the many exciting ribbon cuttings and expos the chamber hosted throughout the year.

Last year marked the chamber's 32nd year serving local businesses, and in 2017, the chamber welcomed 6,200 visitors to the Towns County Visitors Center, handed out over 3,000 visitor packets for conferences and groups, distributed 5,000 community guides, 10,000 visitor guides, donated 672 volunteer hours, became a certified travel consultant, and recertified as a Regional Visitor Information Center.

According to Dearing, the chamber added a total of 63 new members in 2017, bringing chamber membership to its largest ever at 407 members.

"It is a great honor to serve on this board and to see a community come together," said Dearing. "I personally am thankful we can donate to charities and scholarships.

"I think it's great to do events, but it's also great to give back, and I think that it's wonderful that the chamber has been able to do that this year.

"One of our biggest events that we had last year was the solar eclipse. We had great impact with that. The golf tournament, Dash to the Vineyards, the Lake Home Showcase, the High School BASS Tournament, the lightshow at the fairgrounds, and the list goes on.

"This past year was wonderful, and I'm looking forward to helping with 2018. We have some amazing things coming."

Newly inducted Chairwoman Melanie Hughes shared her immense gratitude for being able to serve on the



Towns County Chamber of Commerce President Candace Lee



The 2018 chamber annual meeting took place at Brasstron Valley Resort on Thursday, Jan. 18. Photo/Lily Avery

board and to work with all the staff and volunteers at the Towns County Chamber of Commerce.

Hughes highlighted her vision for the coming year, placing a heavy emphasis on continuing to come together as a community to support tourism and growth efforts.

According to Hughes, it's the combined work of the chamber and community that continues to grow Towns County tourism, and she hopes to maintain that success in 2018 and beyond.

"It is an absolute, sincere honor to be able to serve as chairwoman," said Hughes. "I am starting my third year as a board member. I have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know our past board, and I'm really looking forward to working with this new board.

"The board, the chamber members, all of you who are here tonight, you're the ones

who make Towns County a great place to work, live and play, and we appreciate it.

"As an incoming chairwoman of the 2018 board, our focus will continue to be to recruit new members and to add additional value to our existing membership. We appreciate you."

Looking ahead, the Chamber already has several major events coming in 2018.

A few of those events include the Made in Georgia showcase, which will feature products made only in Georgia; an outdoor expo; and the B.A.S.S. Elite Bassmaster Angler of the Year tournament.

"We're so excited to be able to bring all of this to Towns County," said Lee. "It's going to be a good year for Towns County."



Installation of the 2018 camp officers. Photo/Lily Avery

Sons...from Page 1A

have already heard that," said Boshers. "You could Google it and find out anything you wanted to. I could tell you all of that, but that starts to get a little boring and little bit drawn on.

"We are gathered here to pay honor and to pay tribute to these two men, but you cannot talk about these two men without talking about the rest of the soldiers. You will find out that these two generals even said that, without their men, it would have never happened.

"We are here to pay tribute to these two men because they were steadfast supporters to the cause, which embodied every true Southerner. These men, which were heroes during their lifetimes, have now become mythical legends."

Boshers shared how Lee and Jackson first met during the Mexican-American War in the mid-1840s, explaining the similarities and differences between the two generals.

Lee was of British descent and Jackson was of Scot-

tish decent, though both were descendants of Revolutionary War soldiers.

Boshers told of Jackson's untimely death from friendly fire, and how Lee wept in front of his men after receiving news of Jackson's death.

"We gather to honor Lee and Jackson," said Boshers. "And we also honor the memory of those who fought under Lee and Jackson."

Not only did Boshers talk of the Confederate heroes, but he also touched on a current struggle across the United States regarding the removal of Civil War monuments and memorials, specifically those regarding the Confederacy.

These monuments are important for the preservation of history and the memories of all those who fought for what they believed in, according to Boshers.

"(Gen. Stephen D.) Lee said in his speech there's one thing that we need to always keep in our trust, and that's the memory of the Confederate soldier," said Boshers. "One of these is also the erection of

public monuments to remember our dead, not only to pay tribute to the leaders, but to the soldiers who helped these leaders. Nothing would have happened without them."

After speaking, Boshers was awarded a certificate of appreciation on behalf of Camp 1633 for his continued support of the organization.

Camp member Ed Massengale also received an award during the meeting, to honor his distinguished service to the camp and to the organization.

2018 camp officers sworn in by Massengale that evening were: David Jung-hans, Commander; Robert McTureous, Lt. Commander; Scott Ledford, Adjutant; Pete White, Treasurer; and Russell Shreeve, Chaplain.

To be a member of the SCV, an individual must have proof of lineage to a Confederate soldier.

However, all Camp 1633 meetings and ceremonies are open to the public, and attendance is welcomed. For more information, visit SCV.org.

AARP Foundation Tax Aide

Free in-person tax preparation. Every Friday February 2 through April 13, 2018 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. First come, first served or now accepting limited appointments, 770-312-2258. Location: St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 7 Ewing Street, Blue Ridge, GA at corner of Ewing and Jones Street by the old Kiwanis fairgrounds.

When you come, please

bring the following: Photo ID; Social security cards or statements (SSA-1099) for everyone on the return, including children; last year's tax returns, if available; W-2 forms from each employer and unemployment compensation statements; all 1099 forms, including interest, dividends, pension & IRA distributions, investment income, etc.; Dependent care information if

any - name, employer ID or social security number; Documentation if itemizing deductions - receipts, cancelled checks, etc.

We work hard to make sure you get every tax credit and deduction you've earned. The program is open to taxpayers of all ages. AARP membership is not required. Our volunteers are trained and IRS-certified every year. NTUJan24,A2/SH