

Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

www.townscountyherald.net

Your Hometown Newspaper Since 1928

75 Cents

Publication Number 635540 Volume 91 Number 13

Wednesday, January 29, 2020

Health board discusses flu, coronavirus, measles and hepatitis A

By Mark Smith
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

In the Towns County Board of Health quarterly meeting on Thursday, Jan. 23, District 2 Public Health Director Dr. Pamela Logan said the flu has been rampant in Georgia this season.

"There have been 31 deaths so far since they started reporting and collecting data," Logan said. "They start collecting data in our state in the 40th week of the year, and this (flu season), that was Sept. 29 (2019). So, from that date through Jan. 11, you had 31 deaths so far.

"Seven of the deaths were during the week of Jan. 5-11, which is their last week of reporting (at press time), that suggests that the volume of flu that we're seeing is just really increasing. There have been 1,019 hospitalizations,

and geographically, it's widespread."

Moving forward, Logan said that officials with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta were very concerned about a new disease known as "2019 Novel Coronavirus," or 2019-nCoV, infecting people in the U.S.

"The CDC is closely monitoring an outbreak of respiratory illness caused by a novel (new) coronavirus first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China," the CDC said recently. "Chinese authorities identified the new coronavirus, which has resulted in hundreds of confirmed cases in China, including cases outside Wuhan, with additional cases being identified in a growing number of countries internationally."

Logan reiterated the information from the CDC, saying that "you see the most cases in China, as you've been

hearing on the news."

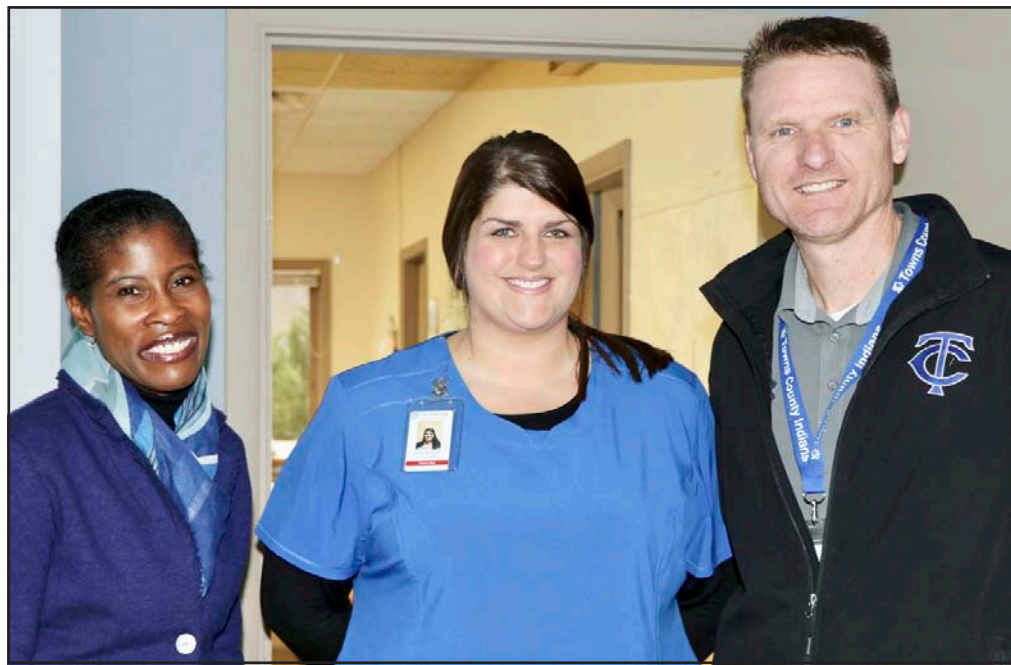
"For some people, it's a mild response," Logan said. "Other people are having pneumonia that's leading to death. The response to this virus is really varied.

"Earlier in the week, they were saying 300 cases. Now, they're reporting up to 500 cases and a number of deaths (internationally). We've had our first case in the United States, and that was in Washington state. It was diagnosed on Jan. 21."

A second travel-related case was reported in Illinois by the CDC on Friday, Jan. 24, in a press briefing.

"We're expecting to see more cases throughout the United States," Logan said, adding that there are now five major airports where people are being screened, including Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta

See Health Board, Page 6A



District 2 Public Health Director Dr. Pamela Logan, Towns County Nurse Manager Bethany Barrett and Health Board Chair Dr. Darren Berrong attended the Jan. 23 quarterly meeting. Photo by Mark Smith

Speech training underway for students in Top of Georgia contest



Veteran student speaker Samantha Church is leading up this year's Top of Georgia Speech Training and Contest. Photo by Chad Stack

By Chad Stack
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Student speech contestants started preparing for this year's 12th Annual Top

of Georgia Speech Contest on Tuesday, Jan. 21, at the Towns County Senior Center.

The Top of Georgia Student Development

Organization welcomes all Towns County students grades sixth through 12th to sharpen and demonstrate their public speaking skills.

After winning last year's contest, veteran student speaker Samantha Church is taking on a new role with the competition in 2020 as the speech contest chairwoman.

Church has been involved with the speech contest now for four years, including three years as a competitor, and she was appointed as this year's chairwoman after Hiwassee City Councilwoman Amy Barrett stepped down from the role.

"We have been working together for the past three months to try and make this year's contest the best yet," Church said of the speech

See Speech Contest, Page 6A

TCHS Robotics Team to compete at state tourney in February



Robotics Team members William McConnell and Bentley Floyd in their award-winning Jan. 18 appearance at the North Georgia League Tournament.

By William McConnell
Robotics Team Captain

On Saturday, Jan. 18, the Towns County High School

Robotics Team, Dragons & Tiaras, competed against 22 teams in the state qualifying North Georgia League

Tournament. FIRST Tech Challenge teams are challenged to design. See Robotics, Page 6A

Habitat hosts dedication, blessing of new Lee Family home

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

YOUNG HARRIS - The members of the Lee Family welcomed friends, family and volunteers with Habitat for Humanity Towns/Union Counties for a very special dedication and blessing held at their new home Saturday, Jan. 25.

Habitat for Humanity pulled together yet again for a local family over the past year, with the most recently completed home taking the effort of volunteers and workers alike to make a reality.

"This house took longer than houses normally take us because of the things we have going on with the ReStore and having to move and get that all together," local Habitat Executive Director Bryan Thomas said.

The new Blairsville See Habitat, Page 8A



The Lee Family welcomed guests for a ribbon cutting at their new house to celebrate the latest home build by Habitat for Humanity Towns/Union Counties on Saturday, Jan. 25. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

County clears up emergency communications with digital switchover

By Chad Stack
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

YOUNG HARRIS - Towns County switched over to its new digital radio communications system at the E-911 Dispatch Center on Tuesday, Jan. 21.

The countywide transition from analog to digital radios includes upgraded dispatch equipment and handheld radios for all local first responders, which vastly improves upon previously static-filled emergency communications and addresses the issue of dead spots in the mountainous area.

"This is very, very important to the county to do this," Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw said. "I'm very thankful we have the funds to do all this."



911 Director Marty Roberts and Hiwassee Police Chief Paul Smith joined other first responders for a digital switchover of county communications on Jan. 21. Photo by Chad Stack

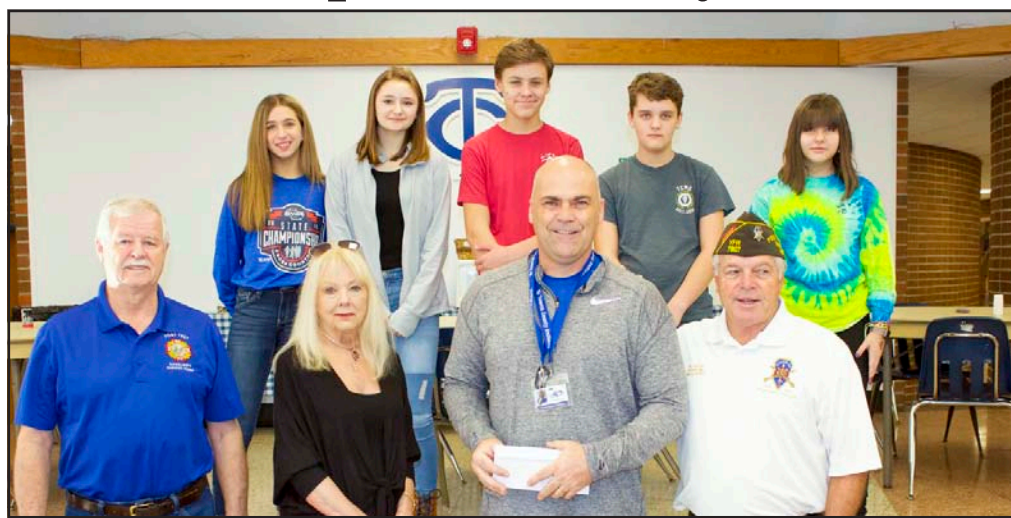
Joining Bradshaw that day to discuss the benefits of switching to digital radios were members of the Towns County Sheriff's Office, Hiwassee Police Department, Towns County Fire Rescue, Towns County EMS and E-911

Dispatch.

The process of enhancing the county's Dispatch Center began in 2019, with the call center upgrading its computer-aided dispatch system and beginning the switch from

See Communications, Page 6A

VFW Post 7807 and Auxiliary award students in patriotic essay contest



VFW Post 7807 and Auxiliary honored local students and teacher Shannon Floyd in a special presentation at the schools on Thursday, Jan. 16. Photo by Chad Stack

By Chad Stack
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Each year in January, members from the local Veterans of Foreign Wars Garrett-Owenby Post 7807

and Auxiliary announce the winners of the annual Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen student essay contests.

This school year's winners from Towns County were recognized on Thursday,

Jan. 16, by VFW Auxiliary members Cheryl Clemente, Dan Healy and Mel White, alongside VFW Post 7807 Cmdr. Mel Halfon at Towns County Schools. See VFW, Page 6A

Towns County GOP Headquarters 'egged' in act of vandalism

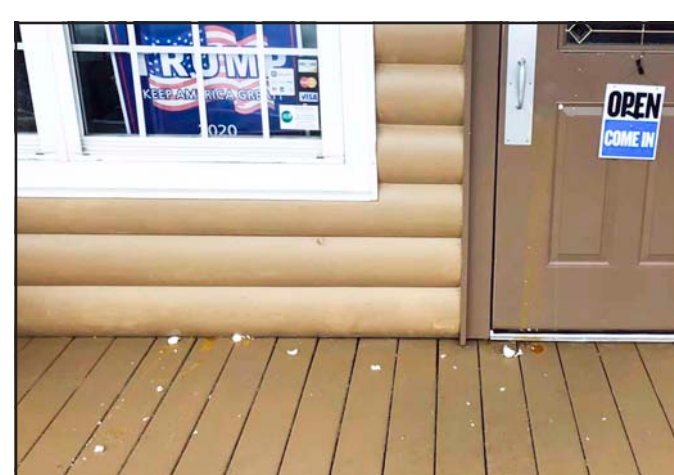
By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

The Towns County Sheriff's Office is investigating an act of vandalism that occurred at the Towns County GOP Headquarters near the Junction sometime over the weekend.

Local Republican Party Chairwoman Betsy Young posted about the incident Monday morning on Facebook, including photos showing eggs that were thrown at the GOP headquarters building.

"I am in shock," Young wrote. "Our GOP Train Station headquarters was vandalized over the weekend in the lovely area of Towns County."

"I can't understand why



this would happen, and it pains me to think someone would consider us a threat. This has never happened to me in the

many years I have been involved in politics in many states politics; I am truly at a loss." See Egged, Page 6A

2 Sections 16 Pages
Lake Levels
Blue Ridge 1,669.67
Chatuge 1,918.11
Nottely 1,761.75

Arrests	2A
Church	4B
Classifieds	6B
Opinion	4A
Legals	7B
Obits	5B
Sports	2B

Inside

BASKETBALL
Jan 28 @ Tallulah Falls
6 PM
Jan 31 @ Athens Christian
6 PM

Qualifying Fee Notice
See page 3A

We Are Towns County Schools
See page 7A

Georgia Forestry Commission
Debris Burning Tips
See page 2A