

Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

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75 Cents

Publication Number 635540 Volume 91 Number 19

Wednesday, March 11, 2020

Bradshaw qualifies unopposed; five vie for sheriff's badge Single local contest to be decided in Nov. 3 General Election

Towns County Sheriff



Daren "Bear" Osborn



Jim Couch



Kenneth "Ode" Henderson



Lisa Joseph



Linda J. Curtis



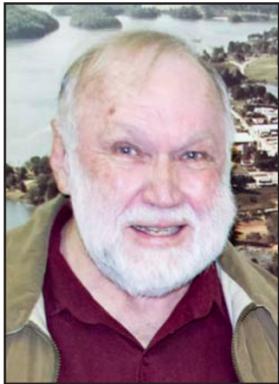
Cliff Bradshaw (I)

Towns County Commissioner

Tax Commissioner



Bruce Rogers (I)



J.C. Berrong

Coroner



Harold Copeland (I)



Tamela Cooper

Superior Court Clerk



Cecil Dye (I)

Probate Judge



David Rogers (I)

Board of Education

Post 1



Brandon Grimsley (I)

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

Qualifying wrapped Friday with a final list of candidates vying for public office at the local, state and federal levels in 2020, leaving two main takeaways in Towns County: Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw qualified

Post 4



Stephanie McConnell (I)

unopposed, and five candidates are in the running for sheriff.

Bradshaw, a Republican, submitted his paperwork on the first day of qualifying last week, and by the time the dust settled at noon on Friday, no candidate of any party had stepped forward to challenge him in either the May 19

Post 5



Steve Green

General Primary Election or the Nov. 3 General Election.

"I'm very humbled that the citizens of Towns County have faith in me to continue to serve them as commissioner," said Bradshaw, who will be entering his second term next year. "I'm totally committed to Towns County and will

Post 5



Caroleen Woods

continue to diligently perform my duties."

Local incumbents joining Bradshaw in qualifying unopposed were longtime Superior Court Clerk Cecil Dye, Probate Judge David Rogers, and Board of Education Members Brandon Grimsley and Stephanie McConnell.

All of the incumbents are set to swear into new four-year terms in January 2021.

Not a single Democrat or Independent qualified for the office of Towns County Sheriff – but five Republicans did, meaning that race will be settled following the May 19 General Primary, after which a single candidate will advance unchallenged to the Nov. 3 General Election.

Qualifying candidates for sheriff are Daren "Bear" Osborn, Kenneth "Ode" Henderson, Linda J. Curtis, Jim Couch and Lisa Joseph.

Whoever wins the election in May will take over in January from Sheriff Chris Clinton, who announced in November that he would not seek re-election to his fourth full term in office.

Incumbent Harold Copeland and challenger Tamela Cooper, both Republicans, will square off in May for the chance to lead the office of Towns County Coroner, with the winner primed for an unchallenged victory come

November.

Likewise, Incumbent Bruce Rogers, a Democrat, is facing opposition from Republican J.C. Berrong for Tax Commissioner. Both men qualified unopposed with their respective parties, and their race won't be decided until the Nov. 3 General Election.

The other contested local race is that of Towns County Board of Education Post 5, for which Steve Green and Caroleen Woods have both qualified.

And since Board of Education posts are nonpartisan elective offices in Towns County, the fate of Post 5 will be decided in the concurrently running May 19 Nonpartisan General Election, with the victor being sworn in at the start of 2021.

The Post 5 BOE seat is currently being held by Dr. Kilee Smith, who decided not to seek re-election this year.

At the state level, Incumbent Superior Court Judge Joy Parks of the Enotah

See *Qualifying*, Page 3A

County on top of COVID-19 prevention, preparedness

By Mark Smith
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Since December of 2019, when awareness of the new strain of coronavirus was first disseminated publicly at the height of this year's especially virulent flu season, COVID-19 has become a main topic of concern, not only in the U.S., but across the globe.

In Towns County, Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw and Hiawassee Mayor Liz Ordiales are looking to Towns County Emergency Management Agency Director Brandon Walls for all things COVID-19 prevention and preparedness.

Walls gave a short presentation on COVID-19 in a special called meeting at the commissioner's office on Thursday, March 5.

"Start off with education, because that's the biggest thing," Walls said. "Coronavirus is a family of dozens of viruses that were first identified in the '50s and '60s. They're typically zoonotic diseases, meaning we typically find that virus first in



Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw welcomed EMA Director Brandon Walls for a discussion about COVID-19 in a called meeting last week.
Photo by Mark Smith

animals.

"Most of them don't affect humans. Historically, there wasn't a lot of work into studying coronaviruses or developing vaccines because the ones that did affect humans were very mild.

"Everybody in this room has had a coronavirus infection at some point in their life. If you've ever had a small cold, sniffles, runny nose, it was likely a coronavirus infection

"The one in question

is COVID-19, which stands for coronavirus disease 2019, because it was first detected, of course, in China in the year 2019 during an outbreak in Wuhan City.

"COVID-19 seems to be a little different in that it's moving a little faster and is a little more severe in terms of symptoms," Walls continued. "The big thing – we're only several months into this. Even in China, we don't have a big

See *COVID-19*, Page 6A

Gov. Kemp appoints Buck Levins to Superior Court Judgeship

News Special
Towns County Herald

Gov. Brian P. Kemp announced last week his selection of Buck Levins to fill a vacancy on the Superior Court of the Enotah Judicial Circuit.

"I am humbled to be appointed to the Superior Court for the Enotah Judicial Circuit, and I appreciate Gov. Kemp's confidence in my ability to serve in this role," Levins said. "Most of my career has been in public service, and I look forward to continuing to serve the people of Union, Towns, White and Lumpkin counties.

"I'm committed to making sure the rule of law is upheld and that justice is done in each case that comes before the bench in our Circuit."

Levins, a native of Houston County, Georgia, has served as the Senior Assistant District Attorney for the Tallapoosa Judicial Circuit since August 2019.

Prior to that, he served as the Senior Assistant District Attorney for the Enotah Judicial Circuit from October 2012 to August 2019, Assistant District



Buck Levins

Attorney for the Alcovy and Atlanta Judicial Circuits, and as an associate attorney at several practices throughout Georgia.

The new judge graduated from the University of Georgia in 2000 with a bachelor's degree in political science. He earned his Juris Doctorate from the University of Georgia School of Law in 2005.

Levins is an active member of the Blairsville community, serving on the board of the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce and as a member of First Baptist

Church, the Rotary Club of Union County, and a graduate of Leadership Union.

In 2019, he was named the Georgia Council of Accountability Court Judges' Prosecutor of the Year.

He and his wife, Jaime, reside in Union County. It is unknown at this time when Levins will swear into his new position.

The vacancy being filled by Levins was created when Chief Judge N. Stanley Gunter decided to retire from his position on the court, effective Oct. 1.

Superior Court Judge Raymond George became the new chief judge on Oct. 1 following former Chief Judge Gunter's last day in office on Sept. 30.

The four-county Enotah Judicial Circuit consists of three Superior Court judgeships.

Georgia's Superior Courts are courts of general jurisdiction handling civil and criminal law actions, according to GeorgiaSuperiorCourts.org.

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BASEBALL
Mar 12 vs. Copper Basin 4:30 PM

SOCCER
Mar 10 @ Washington-Wilkes 5 & 7 PM
Mar 12 @ Stephens 5:30 & 7:30 PM

VOTE

Early Voting Continues
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Sheriff Candidates Forum
TCHS Auditorium
March 14
See page 5A

Rotary Meals of Hope
March 14th
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