

# Flights...from Page 1A

membership.

And while residents may still receive a bill after using the service, they will not be held responsible to pay out of pocket for that remaining balance.

"The way this plan works for the county is, last year it was people who signed up in the county were covered," said Moody. "This year we did a full municipality membership, which means that anytime anyone is flown, they will get a bill."

"However, when they receive a bill, all they have to do is contact the billing office, which the information on that will be in the packet that they get in the mail, and just prove their residency is in either Union County or Towns County and they will be covered."

between this year and last year."

The multimillion dollar helicopter came to Union General last May and has since saved dozens of lives by transporting patients in record time.

According to Moody, there have been multiple cardiac transfers from Union General to Northeast Georgia Medical Center's catheterization laboratory, or cath lab, in approximately 68 minutes – that's the time from when a patient first walks into Union General to when they're on a table in Northeast Georgia with a procedure being performed.

With such amazing results, and so many lives saved, Union General decided to approach the county about bringing this service to the public as a countywide

benefit.

"The membership thing, for us, is just another great way for us to be able to reach out to the community and provide this wonderful added benefit," said Chance Owen, Air Methods Southeastern Regional Business Manager. "A lot of people are hesitant about transports and air medical transports because they're afraid of what the bill is going to look like. So, what this does, it allows for a great way to be able to alleviate that pressure off of the patient once they receive the bill."

"You guys are really blessed to have this helicopter in your county to be able to service Union and Towns. Eighty-two million Americans live in rural America, so they're without access to a level 1 or level 2 trauma centers."

For more information about Air Methods and in-flight services, visit [www.airmethods.com](http://www.airmethods.com).

# Mayor...from Page 1A

that none of the bids received addressed the need for both a website manager and a social media manager.

"We had put out a RFP (request for proposal) for people to give us bids on redoing our website," said Councilwoman Liz Ordiales. "This included maintaining the website, putting us on Facebook and social media."

"We had bid comparisons that ranged from \$1,140 to \$24,000. So, we're going to start all over again and rebid the process to be more specific."

"We want to redesign the website, be able to have all of our building forms on the website, have an archive of minutes and agendas and things of that nature. We need to be more specific."

When discussing the social media aspect of the bids, the council decided that it was best to limit the platforms in which the city should have an online presence, rather than pay to have all platforms managed when not all are needed.

The city is currently taking bids on such services and will reevaluate the website RFP in the coming months.

In terms of a code enforcement officer, the council discussed the need for an officer to manage code violations throughout the city, such as blighted buildings and documents related to such codes.

"We need to assign a person who will be in charge of signs, blighted building documents and to keep some kind of order," said Ordiales.

Ordiales suggested that a Hiwassee City Police Officer should take over this position since the code enforcement officer would



Hiwassee City Councilman Kris Berrong and Councilwoman Rayette Ross



Hiwassee Mayor Pro Tem and Councilwoman Liz Ordiales

not be a demanding or time consuming job. Explanation of city codes and ordinances and how individuals or businesses are violating the codes and ordinances would also be included in the job description.

This position would not require any excess training since the city would also be

hiring a building inspector to conduct inspections for blighted buildings.

The council agreed to appoint a code enforcement officer and continue the discussion of what that officer's job would entail at the council's work session next month.

# EMC...from Page 1A

Mountain EMC that actually work with the policies from day to day," said Phillips. "And instead of just having me on the Policy Committee, I have (Director) Ray Cook as a vice-chair, then (Director) Gene Mason and (Director) Charles Jenkins on the Policy Committee."

Going through policies is a tedious process. Currently, there are more than 600 policies at the EMC, and each policy must be given individual attention to ensure that its language and content is refreshed as necessary.

And that's not to mention the creation of new policies aimed at bringing the EMC and its board of directors into the 21st century.

"The first year, we made a lot of policies that governed the board," said Phillips. "We took the insurance away (from directors), we did a conflict of interest policy, we did a whistleblower policy, and all of that's been done."

Which is why Phillips and his Policy Committee have been working on getting the existing policy manual up to snuff, including the tidying up of old policies, as well as putting in place policies that have been sorely needed.

"We had a lot of policies in there that were outdated and not even signed," said Phillips. "We've added an Internet, email, and social media policy because we didn't have anything. And when it comes to social media, you've got to have some kind of a policy for that."

Another big goal for the EMC is to better channel its ability as a large organization to help its various communities with charitable endeavors.

As a start to that process, the board has put a cap on how much the general manager can donate on behalf of the EMC before said donation must be brought before the board, and Phillips is excited to be working on a project called Operation Round Up.

The EMC's own Byron McCombs approached a



The BRMEMC Board of Directors speaks to members in the Jan. 26, 2016, town hall held at the Union County Schools Fine Arts Center.

previous EMC board about Operation Round Up, and the board is finally at a point to where it can begin to concentrate on making the project a reality.

"The way Operation Round Up works, if you get your bill and it's \$49.79, it rounds up to the next dollar bill to make it even, and then that money goes into a charitable fund," said Phillips. "They've done studies on this, and it's about \$6 per year per customer is what they're looking at."

"That would be used for donations, and it would be set up to take it out of the hands of the directors and the manager. There would be a committee that would handle this, which each board member would have somebody at large that they would appoint on this committee, and the committee would meet to see what they would want to donate the money to."

Scholarships for area schoolchildren within the 50,000-meter membership of the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC is one example Phillips said was a possibility for Operation Round Up, though that decision would be left up to the operation's donation committee.

"You would opt in to do it, so you're not automatically in it – it's a volunteer only thing," said Phillips of Operation Round Up. "The Blue Ridge Mountain EMC wants to be involved with the community all we can be. The

money that we're donating now is actually operating capital for BRMEMC, it's just money that they've set aside for charitable donations to be in the community."

The Policy Committee is also busy drafting a code of ethics policy, and open board meetings are inching closer to reality.

"We are working on that right now," said Phillips. "It's going to be open meetings we're working on for the membership. We've talked to several different EMCs that have open meetings already."

"We've done a lot of board training, and I've talked to a lot of different board members that have open meetings, and it's going to be for the membership, which is a good thing. I think most of the board members are for it."

Due to limited space in the boardroom, those looking to attend the forthcoming open EMC board meetings will need to sign up in advance, and more details will be available once the policy is finalized.

Phillips encourages residents to attend one or both of the upcoming town halls.

"We want to hear from you," said Phillips. "If you've got something you want to weigh in on, like on Operation Round Up or whatever, email us, call us. Come to the meetings, let's hear what you've got to say."

Contact information for the board is available at [brmemc.com/Board\\_Directors](http://brmemc.com/Board_Directors).

# BOE...from Page 1A

Banister and Dr. Kilee Smith. School Board Appreciation Week calls special attention to the contributions of the school board to education and the community at large.

This is the third year that the Towns County Board of Education has celebrated the occasion, something Towns County Schools Superintendent Dr. Darren Berrong feels is an important occasion for the school system.

"This is Board Appreciation Week throughout the state of Georgia for all board members of education," said Dr. Berrong. "I know board members know, as well as many other individuals, that being on the board is pretty much a thankless job and a thankless position. You don't make anything to be on this board."

"The decisions you guys help us make and the guidance that you give to this school system is invaluable and we cannot appreciate you more for all that you do and for the support that you give us and that you give our students and our administration and for the feedback that you give us."

"We do appreciate you," Dr. Berrong said. "We know that it's a thankless job but just know that you're appreciated and we thank you very much."

Each board member was presented with a special plaque of appreciation in honor of their continuous efforts to serve the students of Towns County and provide excellent educations to the youth of the county.

All three Towns County School System principals shared special recognitions for the board members as well, thanking each member for putting the needs of the children before anything else and helping Towns County to have a prosperous school system.



Dr. Berrong hands Laura Banister a certificate of appreciation in the March board meeting. Also pictured, Board Member Stan Chastain.

"We appreciate each one of you and your commitment to the school and the students of our schools," said Erica Chastain, Towns County Middle School Principal. "The thank you note and the lunch are just small tokens of our appreciation and all the thanks we want to give you for what you do."

"I think you make great contributions to our school and our teachers and I'm pleased to have you as leaders in our system."

Also during the meeting, Towns County Elementary School Principal Dr. Sandy Page shared exciting news about a Title I Progress Award that the school recently received.

"This is based on three years of data for 10 percent of Title I schools for having made progress for the entire student population," said Dr. Page. "I am very proud of our teachers and very pleased that they have worked so hard with making progress for all of our students for three years."

According to Dr. Berrong, this is a very difficult list to make because the school

must be in the top 10 percent of schools in progress to make the list. This list is determined from College and Career Ready Performance Index, or CCRPI, scores, which TCES received exceptional points on for progress this year.

Towns County Middle School also recently received notoriety with being included on a list of schools that have "beat the odds" for a consecutive five years. A prediction from the Georgia Department of Education was made to determine how TCMS CCRPI scores are statistically supposed to fall based on student demographics, class size, etc.

However, if the school's CCRPI scores are above the prediction rate, then that school makes the list. TCMS is one of 61 middle schools in over 2,200 schools in the state that has beat the odds for more than five continuous years.

"This is just a testimony for how teachers are working to prepare students for not only testing, but for high school and beyond," said Chastain.

# Cox...from Page 1A

to transform Young Harris College into this progressive model of a 21st-century liberal arts education," said Brantley Barrow, '74, Chairman of the Board of Trustees. "She has successfully led YHC through the transition to a baccalaureate degree-granting institution now recognized as a 'Best National Liberal Arts College' by U.S. News & World Report. On behalf of the Board of Trustees,

I thank Cathy for her service and dedication to Young Harris and our students."

Under Barrow's leadership, Young Harris College will begin a national search immediately to fill the position.

"Getting to work with and alongside the faculty and staff, who personify every day what it means to be committed to student success, has been gratifying beyond words," said Cox. "Getting to know so many of our students – and watching

them pursue and achieve their dreams, has without question provided me with meaningful experiences I will never, ever forget."

"I'm very proud of all that we have collectively accomplished, through enormous hard work and vision, to grow Young Harris into the thriving liberal arts college it is today," Cox continued. "I am confident that the foundation we've built will serve as a great platform for even further success in the years to come."

it. It put us on the map because people connected with it.

"Everybody, at some point we lose somebody that we love, and we question what happens when we die. And that's all that song is, is a bunch of questions, so I think people relate to it."

"It's a song that, for us, it won't ever go away, in a good way. It's going to be a part of who we are forever."

For those who have never been to a MercyMe show and for MercyMe concert veterans alike, the March 25 live outing is sure to be a memorable experience for all involved.

"We're excited to be coming back to Hiwassee," said Scheuchzer. "It's definitely off the beaten path for a lot of people, but we have great memories from the last time we were there."

"For us right now, we're excited because we're starting down the barrel of a new season, new music, and all that. We kind of have a shot in our arm to get back out on the road. We've had a little break here for about a month, so we're ready to get on it."

# MercyMe...from Page 1A

smash hit "I Can Only Imagine," which tackles ideas of personal loss and the afterlife, MercyMe will release a brand-new album on March 31 called *Life*.

And though it's been a little while since they visited Hiwassee, the members of MercyMe can't wait to be back onstage at Anderson Music Hall.

"We just hope that people come and have a great time, and are reminded that God loves them," said MercyMe guitarist Mike Scheuchzer. "And that if they trust in God, that that's so much bigger than their mistakes, and that they're not known by their mistakes and their shame, because it's easy for any of us to fall into that."

Scheuchzer and the band get just as much out of their performances and interactions with the crowd as their fans get in seeing them live, and Scheuchzer said that their music helps them to remember to look to God in all things.

"This show is for us as much as anybody else," said Scheuchzer. "We need the reminders that it's not what we

do, it's who we know, and it's a message for the church or for people who don't believe, just to know that there is more than just the stuff we go through every day."

As for the new album, Scheuchzer said they may play a couple of songs from it, but for the most part the show will feature tunes their fans already know and love.

"We've got a big tour to support the record coming out after the album releases," said Scheuchzer. "We're doing the new single ("Even If"), and we've talked about doing a few more songs, we're just not 100 percent sure we're ready to bring them to the public yet."

"And it's kind of hard, too – how many new songs do you want to play when nobody's heard them yet?"

MercyMe fans will certainly get a chance to hear the iconic crossover hit "I Can Only Imagine" during Saturday's concert.

"It's a career song," said Scheuchzer. "It put us on the map, and not just because people loved

# Continuing Learning courses for Spring 2017

The Institute for Continuing Learning (ICL) at Young Harris College offers a wide range of educational opportunities for mature adults who are interested in intellectual stimulation as well as cultural enrichment and shared interests.

The Course Previews are Saturday, March 25th at 10:30 a.m. in the Wilson Lecture Hall of the Goolsby Building at Young Harris College. The course instructors will provide a brief overview of their upcoming courses. This event is open to the public. The Spring schedule has 15 courses offered.

Bridge "Play Of Hand" – starts 4/3 (Mondays 10:15-12:15 PM for 8 Weeks).

Supreme Court – starts 4/3 (Mondays 1:10-3:10 PM for 6 weeks).

Spring Wildflower Rambles – starts 4/3 (Mondays 3:15-5:15 PM for 8 weeks).

Constitutional Office Of

Sheriff – starts 4/4 (Tuesdays 1:10-3:10 PM for 4 weeks).

Spring Time Yoga – Starts 4/4 (Tuesdays 3:15-5:15 PM for 5 weeks).

Take Me Out To The Ball Game – starts 4/5 (Wednesdays 10:10 a.m.-12:10 p.m. for 3 weeks).

Get The Most From Your iPhone and iPad – starts 4/5 (Wednesday 3:15-5:15 p.m. for 1 session).

Spring Birding – starts 4/6 (Thursdays 9:10 a.m.-11:10 a.m. for 6 weeks).

The Organ Loft – class limit 15 – starts 4/6 (Thursdays 1-2:30 p.m. for 3 weeks).

The Wines Of Portugal – Exploring Hidden Gems And Values With Bacchus Wine Shoppe – class limit 12 – starts 4/14 (Fridays 2:15-3:45 PM for 4 weeks).

How Happy Are You? – Starts 4/26 (Wednesdays 10:10 a.m.-12:10 p.m. for 4 weeks).

From The Vineyard To The Bottle – starts 4/27

(Thursdays 1-3 p.m. for 3 weeks).

Celtic Zentangle – starts 5/2 (Tuesdays 10:10-12:10 p.m. for 4 weeks).

Union Of States – starts 5/3 (Wednesdays 1:10-3:10 p.m. for 4 weeks).

Preparing For Death – starts 5/3 (Wednesdays 3:15-5:15 p.m. for 4 weeks).

The Institute's curriculum committee continually reviews members' interests and expands the curriculum accordingly. Individual course registration fees normally range from \$12 to \$24 each. ICL offers a new series of subjects every quarter, commencing in January, April, June and September.

For more information please visit [www.iclyhc.org](http://www.iclyhc.org) for registration and detailed course information or call 706-379-5194 and leave a message or send an email to [icl@yhcc.edu](mailto:icl@yhcc.edu). You can also find us on Facebook as "ICL at YHC".