

Child Abuse...from Page 1A



Commissioner Bradshaw signing the proclamation.

represent the fun a child should have versus the real trauma these children have been suffering.

"We're always looking for volunteers. We've recently increased our number of volunteers because the number of children coming into the system continues to increase."

These pinwheels are not simply for display, but can be purchased at either Army of Hope or any S.A.F.E. thrift store in the area.

"We're going to be selling pinwheels as a way to build awareness," said D'Angelo. "We're going to be selling a bouquet of three for \$10 or one pinwheel for \$5. Our goal is to be able to paint the county blue to show that everyone is taking a stand against child abuse."

More information on the pinwheels can also be found on the Enotah CASA website, www.enotahcasa.org.

The proclamation for

Child Abuse Prevention Month reads as follows:

"Children are key to Towns County's future success, prosperity and quality of life. While children are our most valuable resource, they are also our most vulnerable. Children have a right to be safe and an opportunity to thrive, learn and grow in an environment that fosters healthy development.

"Child abuse and neglect can be prevented by supporting and strengthening Towns County families, thus preventing the far-reaching effects of maltreatment and providing the opportunity for children to develop healthy, trusting family bonds, and consequently, building the foundations of the community.

"Effectively intervening in the lives of children threatened by abuse is a shared responsibility, and Towns County citizens must come together so that the voices of our children are heard by

all. We must ensure that our communities are extending helping hands to children and families in need.

"Effective child abuse prevention strategies succeed because of partnerships created among citizens, human service agencies, schools, faith communities, health care providers, civic organizations, law enforcement agencies and the business community.

"By providing a safe and nurturing environment for our children, free of violence, abuse and neglect, we can ensure that Towns County children will grow to their full potential as the next generation of leaders, helping to secure the future of this county, state and nation." Therefore, I, Cliff Bradshaw, Sole Commissioner of Towns County, do hereby proclaim April 2017 as Child Abuse Prevention Month in Towns County, and urge families and communities to become involved in protecting Towns County's children."

Youngblood...from Page 1A



Kenny Garrett received this "Outstanding Citizen Award" from Commissioner Bradshaw in the March county meeting for various acts of public service.

Georgia Mountain Officials Association, Towns County Rec Department officiating umpire... the list goes on and on and on," said Commissioner Bradshaw.

And indeed, the list went on.

Youngblood is a former teacher of Lumpkin County Schools, Pickens County Schools, Towns County Schools, and has coached a variety of sports teams from the schools in those systems.

"I have known him probably for 20 years," said Bradshaw. "He started coaching my children when they were very young, and they would come home and brag about how nice this man was, and I got to know him."

Added Commissioner Bradshaw: "His integrity, his personality, the atmosphere that is around him that he puts off - let me tell you something, this is a big hire. I'm very excited for him, I'm very excited for our county. He has a very big smile every day."

At another point in the meeting, Bradshaw welcomed Derrick Moody of Air Methods, who spoke on the county's recent acquisition of Air Methods coverage, effective June 1, for every resident to have access to paid life flights that are medically necessary through the Air Methods service, which has a helicopter stationed at Union General Hospital in Blairsville.

The county and Union General Hospital teamed up to bring the service through a restructured municipal membership, which is different from how signups were handled in the past, when members had to sign up individually for coverage.

"We're going to do a blanket coverage for Towns County," said Commissioner Bradshaw. "What this means is, you do not have to sign up. If you are a resident in this county, you're covered."

The cost of the service to the county is around \$27,000, according to Commissioner



Bradshaw in the meeting, which he has committed to paying for by renegotiating longstanding county contracts for savings.

On the completion of the ballfields at Foster Park, the commissioner said he's hard at work making sure those get finished as soon as possible.

"Baseball is getting ready to get started," said Bradshaw. "We've got the new Foster Park, a beautiful building, but the ballfields were never completely finished. So, we are working on that now, trying to get some round-number figures on dirt. There's no bleachers there, the dugouts do not have covers, (there's no) bases, there's a lot of things that are needed.

"We're working on that to see what it's going to cost. We should be able to cover that with SPLOST funds. We may have to amend the budget to do that, but we are working on that right now."

As far as the state of the county, Commissioner Bradshaw said everything was looking good.

"We're working hard, we're keeping an eye on the budget," said Bradshaw. "Everything's in line, everything's going good. We feel really good about it."

commissioner's initiatives to complete an employee handbook for county employees, as well as the development of a drug-testing program for county employees.

"It will save money on our worker's comp insurance, and it's the right thing to do for the employees and for the county," said Bradshaw of the upcoming program. "We hope to have that implemented by next county meeting (Tuesday, April 18)."

Commissioner Bradshaw also announced that a new flagpole is being installed at the Towns County Veterans Park, and that process should be completed sometime in the coming month.

Also in the meeting, the commissioner held the first reading of a resolution setting the terms for the Towns County Board of Assessors, and he moved to adopt the updated Comprehensive Plan and follow through on its subsequent transmittal to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for publication.

Towns County Commission Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of every month in the Towns County Courthouse, with a 5:30 p.m. start time.

Fire Board...from Page 1A

plumbing in order to save taxpayer dollars.

For several years now, Towns County Fire Station No. 2 in Young Harris has been operating out of the old Blue Ridge Mountain EMC headquarters, in the shop area around behind the main building.

The fire board is aware, however, that the EMC is actively trying to sell the building, and if that were to happen and the station wasn't ready to move, Station No. 2 could find itself in a real jam.

According to Clint Hobbs, who has chaired the fire board for more than a decade, the Georgia 66 future site of the Young Harris fire station just makes sense.

"It is a more ideal location for the station than the other places we've had the station," said Hobbs. "We cover a lot more houses from here. We don't lose anybody back (toward Young Harris), but we pick up a lot of houses (toward Warne, North Carolina) now, plus a couple of subdivisions that have a lot of lots in them."

Basically, it means that more Towns County homes will be expressly covered by the Towns County Fire Department, and that those residents won't have to rely so much on automatic aid agreements with neighboring Warne and Union County, though those agreements will remain in place.

According to former Young Harris Fire Chief George "Bud" Dyer, the first Young Harris fire station began in 1979 in the basement of the old Masonic Lodge hall, where the Young Harris Pharmacy sat



Chief Copeland pointing out a feature of the property, a gigantic white oak.

on the corner of U.S. 76 and Georgia 66.

After that, the Young Harris fire station became Station No. 2 in a consolidated Towns County Fire Department, and eventually moved to the city building situated next to Gibson's Drive-In.

That city building was condemned in recent years due to a sewer problem, which is how, three years ago, Station No. 2 took up lodgings in the old EMC shop.

Back in December of 2016, the county closed the deal to acquire Corn's land, and now the board is confident that progress on the station, as of the March 31 meeting, is well underway.

"We hope to have a drawing to us in a couple of weeks," said Hobbs. "We would like to get prices to us a couple of weeks after that, maybe, and then proceed with construction as soon as possible, so that, certainly by the end of this year, and

I would suggest that by the time we get to fall, maybe, we have this completed and in operation."

Towns County Fire Chief Harold Copeland is excited about the new station, too, for what it means for Young Harris and for the county.

"It means better coverage for our residential build-up areas in this direction," said Chief Copeland, pointing north from Young Harris. "It's a win-win for these insurance services and these homeowners going back this way, as it will send us in deeper for residential service."

Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw said in last week's fire board meeting that the county will be able to put SPLOST funds toward building the station.

The next meeting of the Towns County Fire Board will be Monday, April 17, at 10:30 a.m. in the 911 Mapping Center in Young Harris.

Mattee...from Page 1A



The Mountain Movers and Shakers meet at Mary's Southern Grill most every Friday at 8 a.m.

Georgia, this is transmitted through migrating waterfowl," said Mattee. "This is circulating, without any symptoms, in wild geese and also seagulls.

"This is a really big threat because Georgia's number one agricultural asset is poultry."

As of right now, Georgia has two recorded cases of avian influenza, both of which are in Northwest Georgia, said Mattee.

And while there have been recorded instances of avian influenza outbreaks in the Southeastern United States before now, this is the first time it has spread to Georgia.

"It's transmitted through feces, that's how they get it from the waterfowl," said Mattee. "The geese will fly over, defecate on property, and then the chicken will come into contact with it or someone will track those particles into a chicken house. Those chickens will become infected and infect each other and will be dead within 24 hours."

There are no visible symptoms in the chickens that become infected, which add to the severity of the outbreak. The No. 1 indicator that a poultry stock has become infected is sudden death.

"It is a very dramatic disease and it can be devastating," said Mattee. "So, by the time you realize your flock has it, it's already been transmitted everywhere."

"In Northwest Georgia, they are starting to do screens. There are sometimes indicators that a flock is infected. Their combs start to swell up. They're a little bit tired. They have diarrhea but, again, a lot of times it is asymptomatic."

According to

Mattee, the most effective preventative method against avian influenza is caution around areas that waterfowl may have defecated.

For those who have a poultry flock, Mattee advised using a separate pair of shoes that are only to be used while tending to the flock that are kept in a contained environment away from potential infectious particles.

Also during the meeting, Mattee discussed spring gardening tips for those who wish to grow plants from seedlings rather than purchasing a mature plant.

"It's cheaper to grow from a seed," said Mattee. "Now is a good time to start doing that, if you plan on going that route."

"There are several different ways that you can start plants from seeds. There are different methods that you're going to use, depending on the different plants you're growing."

There are two methods that can be used when sowing a seed, the transplanting method or direct seed planting.

As the name suggests, direct seed planting is where the seed is planted directly into the desired spot and grown from that location.

"The bigger seeds that you get, they don't do too well with transplanting," said Mattee. "These are the seeds you'll want to use direct seed planting. Others, like tomatoes and peppers, with the smaller seeds, those will do much better with transplanting."

When using the transplanting method, the seed will first be put into a small container with seed planting mix. According to Mattee, this is a specially formulated mixture for

starting seeds and is not the same as regular soil.

"It may look like dirt, but there is no soil in it," said Mattee. "This is actually really good because it allows for a lot of drainage, and if you don't have soil in it, then you don't have any bacteria or fungus that could potentially harm the seed."

The seed will remain in the container, typically kept inside where water and sun exposure can be closely monitored, until the seed sprouts its first leaf. After the seed sprouts, the transplanting process begins.

"Once the leaves sprouts and you have the first set of leaflets, you're going to want to transfer it from the container," said Mattee. "You'll then take the seeds and put them into their own individual containers."

After the first transfer, the plant should be left to grow until it reaches 4 to 5 inches, depending on the plant. During this stage, the plant is still being heavily monitored and is typically still kept indoors or in a greenhouse.

"Before you do that final transfer into the plant's permanent location, you'll want to do something called hardening off," said Mattee. "Up until this point, you've really been babying the plant."

"So, you'll want to set them outside for a week or two and let them experience what it's like to maybe not have water everyday. What it's like to have a breeze. What it's like to have a cool night and a warm day."

"Then, after that, just plop them wherever you want and let them grow."

For more material on avian influenza and gardening tips, visit extension.uga.edu.