

SPLOST ...from Page 1A

working hand in hand with (Emergency Management Agency Director) Brandon Walls to implement all the CDC measures to try to ensure that we can reduce any COVID risk."

Three weeks of advanced in-person voting for the Aug. 11 runoff begins July 20. There will be no mass mailings of absentee ballots like in the General Primary, though voters can still request them. For more information or to volunteer, call the Board Office at 706-896-4353.

Also in his June 18 meeting, Bradshaw touched on the state of the \$8 million Towns County Courthouse renovations, which will be moving forward after voters approved the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax referendum on June 9.

Designs are currently being completed in a roughly five-month process, after which construction will occur in two phases: a nine-month period to build a brand-new add-on with multiple courtrooms, then another nine-month period to completely renovate the existing building.

In new business, Bradshaw accepted the county's property and liability insurance renewal through Association County Commissioners of Georgia in the amount of \$172,393, which now includes the new Fire Station in Young Harris.

This amount is about \$15,000 more than 2019 costs, though the county was able to save more than \$26,000 by taking advantage of discounts made available through safety programs implemented via the Emergency Management Agency.

Concerning Lost Option Sales Tax collections, the county is down about \$20,000 between March and April, though Bradshaw said collections look to be flattening out and could possibly go up a little bit in the



Towns County Elections Supervisor Rachel Edwards attended the June 15 county meeting with Board Chair Janet Oliva to give an election update ahead of the Aug. 11 runoff.

Photo by Shawn Jarrard

coming days.

Revenues from Towns County EMS are down, apparently due to COVID-19, as many people have been seemingly choosing not to engage medical services to avoid possible transmission of the disease.

"We got a new ambulance, it was delivered last week," Bradshaw said in the June 18 meeting. "We went again with a Frazer box that goes on the ambulance, so this will be our second one with the Frazer boxes, and we'll probably end up doing one more like that."

The new ambulance cost the county \$176,917.52 and included a qualifying trade-in to deduct about \$15,000 from the total price.

"And then, for the next six to seven years, we can buy just the cabin chassis, and that box will mount right on to the new cabin chassis," Bradshaw said. "So, over time, we come out ahead and save money for the taxpayers."

Under old business, Bradshaw presented a supplemental agreement between the county and the Georgia Department of Transportation for the operation of Towns County Transit.

The county usually chips in 50 percent of the cost but will not have to pay anything this year due to COVID-19.

"We will also be getting a new van out of this, so that's very good news," Bradshaw said. "That'll help offset some of the losses that I was just talking about."

Also that day, the commissioner reappointed Jerry Taylor to the Towns County Library Board of Trustees.

Patrick Malone of the 2020 Census Complete Count Committee attended the meeting, saying the census had been extended to Oct. 31. Both he and Bradshaw asked everyone to do their part in completing the census, which appears to be experiencing a lower than usual response locally.

The courthouse is now open to the public, though the commissioner is asking people to wear masks inside the building. Masks will be provided as necessary.

Folks are being advised to call in advance to see about the specific operations of the various officeholders inside the courthouse, which are subject to change.

Libraries...from Page 1A

they needed something, they could give us a title, author or something, and we could go get it for them. At the beginning of June, we started letting people come in the building."

Both libraries are taking similar virus precautions, with limited computer use and quarantining returned materials.

"We have taped off some seating and inserted sneeze guards," Cannon said. "We wear masks to protect y'all, and we hope everyone wears one to protect us."

"We have limited time on the computers with wearing gloves because they are hard to sanitize. We also have to quarantine our materials for up to 72 hours."

The libraries are asking that people not make book donations during this time as they continue to take precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Over at the Towns County Public Library, the magazines have been made unavailable as well due to the difficulty in cleaning the materials.

"We can let people use newspapers; we have some disposable gloves that we ask that they use," Phillips said. "As far as checking out books and everything, people can go back and get what they need, and we will check them out as normal."

"We are only using one station right now so that we can



Mountain Regional Library Branch Manager Marlene Cannon and Assistant Stephanie Smith are open to the public for two days in Young Harris, with a third day for curbside pickup by appointment only.

Photo by Jarrett Whitener

keep everything in one area. We also have a hospitality or coffee bar that is not going to be in use right now."

The libraries had several events scheduled that had to be canceled due to COVID-19, with their Summer Reading Program being impacted as well.

Fortunately, the Library System is still hosting a Summer Reading Program, with member libraries sharing videos on Facebook and offering crafts that can be picked up at each location.

"The biggest thing that was canceled was our program

for our kids that would have been ran here from June 4 to July 16," Phillips said. "That is a weekly thing on Thursday that had to be canceled in person."

"We are doing the Beanstack app (for summer reading). Then, we are sharing storytimes by the girls in Fannin and Union to our Facebook page. We are also having the materials available if they want to pick up the craft things that are mentioned in the weekly storytimes."

For more information on the libraries, visit MountainRegionalLibrary.org.

Coronavirus...from Page 1A

but like I said, I think it will all be OK."

Kristen Reid of White County said that what people should really be worrying about "is the economy."

"With the closings and the pandemic, people have lost jobs, and that stimulus check (provided by the CARES Act) everyone got doesn't make up for it," Reid said during a shopping trip to North & Main Clothing Company on June 18.

"It is a good thing that people are going back to work,

especially around here," she continued. "I know that the cities like Atlanta are still closed for the most part, and they have those riots going on."

"Another thing I find crazy is that people can't find a way to make money, but I have seen signs and jobs all over the place. Some of the fast-food chains even have sign-on bonuses, so they are almost begging for workers, yet nobody is going there to work."

"I know that it is not an ideal job, but some money is

better than no money. People say that things will be normal again, but I just can't see that happening anytime soon."

As summer wears on, it's becoming increasingly clear to many people that the virus is affected by sunlight, which is welcome news for folks looking to get out of their homes and onto the lake.

"My family and I haven't really worried about the virus or anything going on recently," said Jeremy Carpenter, a visitor to Splash Island at the Ridges Resort Saturday. "We came out here to get a break from everything. This is open air and in the hot sun, so I think we are safe from any viruses here."

"We have been to the beach and to public places for a few weeks now, and nobody has gotten sick, so maybe the sun really does change things. I also just do it for the kids; they don't want to be stuck inside and worrying about this."

The one thing that many people in the area seem to agree on is that it's time to move on from quarantining and work toward a more normal lifestyle, even if precautions need to be taken.

Arrests...from Page 1A

a residence located on Cynth Creek Road in Hiawassee. Upon completion of the search of the residence, deputies arrested Terry Nichols, 52, of Hiawassee.

He was arrested for possession of methamphetamine, possession of marijuana, possession of drug-related objects, and possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony.

Lisa Nichols, 44, of Hiawassee, was also arrested and charged with possession of methamphetamine, possession of marijuana, and possession of drug-related objects.

On Tuesday, May 26, deputies assisted a Hiawassee Police officer on a traffic stop involving a Chevrolet truck inside the city limits.

Upon further investigation, deputies arrested Gregory Stroud, 43, of Young Harris, on charges of driving on a suspended license, having an expired vehicle registration, possession of methamphetamine, and possession of drug-related objects.

On Friday, May 29, deputies arrested Jason Levon Garrett, 46, at a residence off West Union Road in Young Harris. He was arrested and charged with possession of methamphetamine and possession of drug-related objects.

On Monday, June 1, a deputy made a traffic stop on Georgia 17 in Young Harris on a Ford Explorer.

Upon further investigation, Leisa Marie Ledbetter, 26, of Hiawassee, was arrested for possession of marijuana, D.U.I., possession of drug-related objects, obstruction of a law enforcement officer, and failure to maintain lane.

On Wednesday, June 3, a deputy made a traffic stop on US 76 in Hiawassee on a Ford Mustang. Upon further investigation, driver Vickie Allen, 64, of Hayesville, North Carolina, was arrested and charged with possession of methamphetamine.

On Wednesday, June 3, investigators and deputies searched a residence off Georgia 288 in Hiawassee. Upon completion of the search, Roxanne Wodarski, 51, of Hiawassee, was arrested and charged with possession of methamphetamine.

On Monday, June 8, investigators and deputies conducted a search of a residence off Georgia 66 in Young Harris. Upon completion of the search, the following suspects were arrested:

Ramona Montgomery, 51, of Hiawassee, for possession of methamphetamine and possession of drug-related objects.

Lessie Montgomery, 21, of Young Harris, for possession of methamphetamine, possession of marijuana, and possession of drug-related objects;

Brittany Gilbert, 28, of Young Harris, for possession of methamphetamine and possession of drug-related objects.

On Monday, June 8, deputies responded to a residence off King Cove Road in Young Harris. Upon further investigation, deputies arrested Danny Shook, 66, of Young Harris. He was charged with possession of methamphetamine.

On Tuesday, June 9, deputies located and arrested Cody Michael Crane on outstanding warrants for possession of methamphetamine and possession of untaxed alcoholic beverage. The warrants were in reference to an earlier investigation.

On Wednesday, June 10, a Towns County deputy responded to an accident on Georgia 17 in Young Harris. Upon further investigation, Peyton White, 19, of Hayesville, North Carolina, was arrested for possession of a controlled substance (Ecstasy), D.U.I., and failure to maintain lane.

On Sunday, June 14, deputies assisted a Hiawassee Police officer on a traffic stop on a Dodge Durango within the city.

Upon further investigation, deputies arrested Josh Smith, 27, of Hiawassee, for possession of methamphetamine with intent to distribute, possession of drug-related objects, and possession of marijuana.

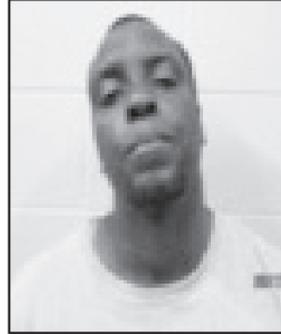
On Tuesday, June 16, a deputy made a traffic stop on a Pontiac Grand Am on US 76 in Hiawassee. Upon further investigation, the driver, Chet Wheeler, 20, of Hiawassee, was arrested and charged with possession of marijuana and defective equipment.

On Tuesday, June 16, a deputy made a traffic stop on a Honda Civic on US 76 in Young Harris. Upon further investigation, driver Donald Earl Rien, 39, of Stockbridge, was arrested and charged with possession of marijuana, possession of drug-related objects, and defective equipment.

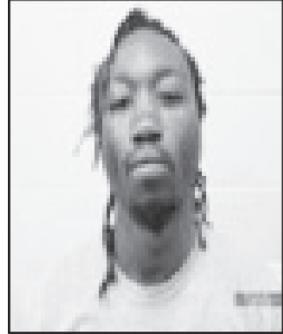
On Wednesday, June 17, a deputy made a traffic stop on a Honda Accord on US 76 in Young Harris. Upon further investigation, three suspects were arrested.

The driver, Jillian Burrell, 38, of Brasstown, North Carolina, was arrested and charged with possession of methamphetamine, possession of drug-related objects, D.U.I., failure to maintain lane, and driving with a suspended driver's license.

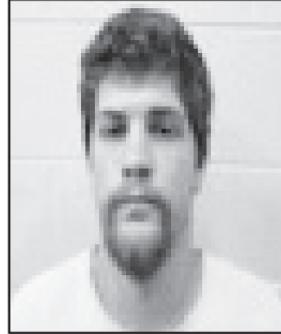
Marquis Gwan Ford, 39,



Marquis Ford



Joaquin Mosley



Chet Wheeler



Donald Rien



Cody Crane



Peyton White



Lessie Montgomery



Brittany Gilbert



Gregory Stroud



Jason Garrett



Vickie Allen



Roxanne Wodarski



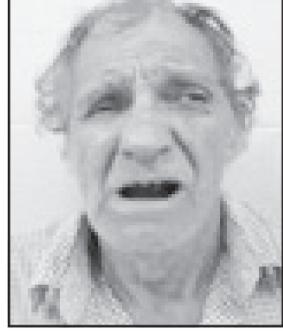
Joshua Smith



Ramona Montgomery



Jillian Burrell



Danny Shook



Leisa Ledbetter

of Bennettsville, South Carolina, a passenger, was arrested and charged with possession of methamphetamine and possession of drug-related objects.

Joaquin Mosley, 26, of Murphy, North Carolina, a passenger, was arrested and charged with possession of methamphetamine and possession of drug-related objects.

These cases have been forwarded to the Enotah Judicial Circuit District Attorney's Office for prosecution. All suspects are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.