

# Taxes...from Page 1A

Bradshaw and Kiker have been unable to locate documentation confirming Olin Hughes Road as a county road, Bradshaw said.

"There are two ways that roads become county roads," Kiker said. "It's by deed, or court order, eminent domains or something of that nature."

"The other one is called implied access. Implied access is when the public starts using an access, and the county starts maintaining that access, and actually, many of our roads have been established that way for public roads."

According to the records, the county has never maintained Olin Hughes Road, and there is also no record of the general public using that street for any purpose at all, Kiker said.

After the hearing, Kiker and Bradshaw opened the meeting for public comments.

Property owners Becky and John Landress, who live on land that borders a small part of Olin Hughes Road, opposed abandonment.

Landress said that making the road a private road would prevent her family from using the back part of their land as a point of access.

"We bought our house 18 years ago with that road being public," Landress said, providing Kiker with several pictures of what she said was the general public using the road.

The son of Olin Hughes, Cecil Hughes, argued for the abandonment of the road.

Hughes said his family constructed the road decades ago for people to access their Hughes Sorghum Syrup Mill, and that the family now wants to make the road private to prevent anyone from accessing the road other than the Hughes family.

After hearing both comments, Bradshaw said he wanted to spend more time on the issue to allow him and Kiker to examine everything carefully, so he decided to table the matter.

Enotah CASA Executive Director Della Lago and Towns County CASA Supervisor Gina



**Cecil Hughes, right, attended the Aug. 20 Olin Hughes Road abandonment hearing to encourage the county to go through with the abandonment. Also pictured: County Attorney Robb Kiker, left, and Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw.**  
Photo by Chad Stack



**Becky Landress, left, objected to the abandonment of Olin Hughes Road in the Aug. 20 public hearing, saying it would negatively impact access to her property.** Photo by Chad Stack

Bennett gave a presentation about CASA, standing for Court-Appointed Special Advocate, in the August meeting.

"What we do is, we advocate for children in foster care," Lago said, adding that Enotah CASA provides services for kids living in the counties of Towns, Union, Lumpkin and White that make up the Enotah Judicial District.

In the event that a child becomes the victim of abuse or neglect, he or she is removed from their home, and a judge will assign a CASA volunteer to advocate for the best interests of the child as they enter and navigate the legal system.

"We swore in eight new

CASAs last year. We have 88 CASAs right now," Lago said.

Last year, CASA served 347 children circuit-wide, with 52 of the children coming from Towns County, according to figures provided by Lago.

"We have saved the county and taxpayers over \$430,000," Lago said. "That money does not come out of the taxpayers' pocket or out of the county budget."

CASA is hosting their annual "Dancing with North Georgia Stars" fundraising event for Towns and Union counties on Oct. 26.

The next county meeting will be held on Tuesday, Sept. 17, at 5:30 p.m. inside the courthouse.

# Watershed Coalition and Mountain True celebrate merger



**Around 165 people attended the HRWC-MountainTrue merger celebration at Stauroлите Farm.**

Members of the Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition (HRWC) and MountainTrue came together for a celebration of the recent merger of the two organizations at the Stauroлите Farm Barn in the Trout Cove community in Brasstown, NC on Saturday, August 17.

There was food, games, music and fun and the event was open to the public. MountainTrue and HRWC staff were on hand to meet and greet the 165 attendees and answer questions about the merger and future plans. Tony Ward, now MountainTrue's Western Region Program Coordinator, led a tour of one of the Coalition's oldest stream restoration projects, Trout Cove Branch.

A catfish dinner was served banquet style, in addition to a wonderful coleslaw and pasta salad brought by longtime coalition member Brenda Hull. Beer was graciously donated by Valley River Brewery of Murphy and Hayesville. The event's organizers would like to thank the owners of Stauroлите, Mary Jo Deck, Mary and Dave Gonos, and Lou and Barbara Lanwer-meyer, for inviting us to use the barn and doing so much work to help get ready for the event! Another big thank you to Dave Gonos for donating the handcrafted birds for the raffle.

Music was provided by local musicians Gnarly Fingers, who got the whole room singing and dancing.

Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition (HRWC) merged with Western North Carolina conservation nonprofit MountainTrue on July 1. Both organizations share a commit-



**Guests wait patiently for Callie Moore (second from right) to cut the cake.**



**Donna McAuliffe joins Gnarly Fingers band member Pat List in singing "Will the Circle be Unbroken" at the end of the merger celebration.**

ment to protecting our waters and forests. The merger is an important step toward building one organization that can effectively advance the interests of our mountain region through a combination of grassroots organizing, community-driven planning and strategic advocacy.

HRWC is maintaining its Murphy, NC office, and its work in North Carolina and

Georgia will continue under the name MountainTrue.

HRWC Executive Director Callie Moore has taken on the expanded role of MountainTrue's Western Regional Director with the support of MountainTrue's experienced staff of 20 professionals who can provide HRWC volunteer/member engagement, communications, and management support.

# TVA Rates...from Page 1A

us to reduce our debt to its lowest point in 25 years and still invest in our generation and transmission system," TVA Chief Financial Officer John Thomas said. "That same financial discipline will now allow us to maintain stable rates through 2030 and implement the initiatives recommended by the IRP."

TVA's updated Integrated Resource Plan, or IRP, looks forward 20 years and calls for a continued reduction in TVA's carbon footprint, partially through the inclusion of up to 14 gigawatts of new solar capacity by 2038.

"The energy market continues to evolve, and the IRP helps provide us flexible ways to keep delivering safe, reliable and cleaner power at the lowest feasible cost while supporting efficient use of energy," Lyash said. "More importantly, the IRP reflects the collective thoughts and suggestions of the more than 1,200 people who commented on the plan, as well as the hundreds more who attended public meetings and webinars—all individuals who will directly benefit from the improvements the IRP recommends."

The board also approved two actions that will further

strengthen the Tennessee Valley public power model. The first is the adoption of a long-term partnership agreement option between TVA and local power companies to better provide competitive rates and the flexibility to meet changing market needs.

A second board-approved initiative modifies TVA's regulatory policies to provide local power companies options in financing investments to support broadband while maintaining oversight to ensure electric system operations do not subsidize other utility functions.

"For 86 years, our unique public power partnership has successfully served the needs of the people and, as those needs change, we must have the right tools to take advantage of new opportunities," Lyash said.

In other business, the board approved:

- FY20 corporate performance goals and scorecards that continue to emphasize safety, financial health, operational excellence and economic development.

- Final FY19 tax equivalent payments to the eight states impacted by TVA's operations that are 4.6 percent higher than FY18.

- Authority for TVA to issue power bonds and enter into other financial arrangements.

- An agreement to provide over 100 megawatts of firm power to an existing directly-served customer.

- Modifications to TVA's large generator interconnection procedures.

- Changes to TVA's performance-driven compensation plans to better align with industry standard metrics and goals.

- Selection of an external auditor for FY20.

The Tennessee Valley Authority is a corporate agency of the United States that provides electricity for business customers and local power distributors serving nearly 10 million people in parts of seven Southeastern states.

TVA receives no taxpayer funding, deriving virtually all of its revenues from sales of electricity.

In addition to operating and investing its revenues in its electric system, TVA provides flood control, navigation and land management for the Tennessee River system, and assists local power companies and state and local governments with economic development and job creation.

# Labor Day...from Page 1A

Night Concert there on the Historic Square.

The band that will be performing will be Pickxen, which is known for playing both original songs and popular song covers.

And closer to home, there will be another free concert on Saturday, Aug. 31, where attendees can enjoy the live music of Bill Rinaldo's Veteran Tribute, which will serve as the latter part of the Hometown Heroes banner celebration in Hiwassee.

Rinaldo's concert will be part of the Enchanted Music on

the Square series, and it will be held inside the Towns County Civic Center at 7 p.m.

Music fans can attend both of these events for no charge and enjoy two nights in a row of live music, though attendees may want to bring their own chairs to the Hayesville concert.

The Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds will also be hosting Sawyer Brown and Exile on Saturday, Aug. 31, and tickets for that show can be purchased at georgiamountainfairgrounds.com.

Of all activities in the

area, the most popular are often the recreational ones, where people come to enjoy the outdoors and take in the nature of the mountains. And folks are still traveling for camping around Lake Chatuge and other areas to do some sightseeing this time of year.

"Because of the warm weather, there is still plenty for people to do outside, and I think that's still what most people do when they come here," Lee said. "We have been really busy telling people about the hiking trails and about boat rentals."

"We have been getting a lot of people, too, asking about where to put kayaks in and canoes and stuff like that. Even though kids are back in school, they are still coming up here to get outside, because it's still warm enough and the lake is still up."

"So, even though there may not be a lot of festivals and stuff like that, there is plenty to do."

Local businesses and other organizations post activities and events that they are hosting on the chamber website, so for more information on these types of activities, visit GoLakeChatuge.com.

# Census...from Page 1A



**Members of the Towns County Complete Count Committee in their first meeting ahead of the 2020 census.**  
Photo by Mark Smith

online, by mail or by phone," Malone said.

The census will take place on April 1, 2020, and invitations and reminders will be sent to the public at large both online and/or by mail between March 12, 2020, and April 27, 2020.

Any households unaccounted for after April 27, 2020, will be visited by an in-person follow-up census worker.

Also in the Aug. 22 meeting, Malone discussed some of the difficulties likely facing the 2020 census process, conceding that, because the census is a government function, there may be publicly-held trust issues.

However, Malone assured committee members that the information individuals put on census forms is never used for any purpose other than general enumeration and is very closely held. Census information is not even shared with any other government agencies, he said.

As mentioned above, with the exception of Malone, all committee members are unpaid volunteers looking to help their communities, including the elected officials who are considered ex officio members by virtue of the offices they hold.

"I think the county and the city – all cities, not just Hiwassee, but Young Harris as well – are working together to make sure we are well counted and that we're well represented in the census," said Hiwassee Mayor Liz Ordiales. "It means a lot to us for what's available to us – moneys and grants and different organizations that can help us."

"We're very happy to be working together on this. This is a joint effort. We're trying to do as much as we can together because we're so small, so it's a great effort for all of us."

Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw is also an ex officio committee member, and he

attended the Aug. 22 meeting as well.

"It's a joint effort," reiterated Bradshaw, adding that Towns County's census participation rate in 2010 was 87.3%. "That's a lot higher than a lot of the other counties in Georgia."

"We have a lot of responsible citizens, and we want to make sure that we can get maybe 95% or more (this time around)."

The 13 volunteer members of the Complete Count Committee are as follows: Joe Ruf, Mel Halfon, Betty Phillips, Byron McCombs, Loyd Massey, Candace Lee, Hilda Thomason, Michael Courey, Kris Berrong, Nathan Noblet, Jody Anderson, Danny Byers and Gerry Gutenstein.

Joining Commissioner Bradshaw and Mayor Ordiales as an ex officio committee member is Young Harris Mayor Andrea Gibby.

# Heroes...from Page 1A



**Mayor Liz Ordiales standing with the new Worn Flag Drop Box that will be stationed on the Hiwassee Town Square.**  
Photo by Chad Stack

in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning," according to the U.S. Flag Code.

# Foster Program

Seeking individuals for rescue dogs to foster for possible adoption. Payment of \$125 will be paid to individual that takes dog into their home (fenced yard a requirement). This payment goes toward paid training for the dog with individual taking him once a week for four weeks.

For more information call 678-630-0452. NT/Aug28/ZJ/CJA