# Towns County Herald

*Legal Organ of Towns County*

www.townscountyherald.net

**Your Hometown Newspaper Since 1928**

**50 Cents**

Publication Number 635540 Volume 88 Number 44

Wednesday, September 6, 2017


# Franchise tax to bring thousands of dollars to Hiawassee

**By Shawn Jarrard**
**Towns County Herald**
**Staff Writer**

Thanks to its recently adopted Franchise Tax Ordinance, the City of Hiawassee is set to collect thousands of dollars in tax revenues from Blue Ridge Mountain EMC by March 2018.

The Hiawassee City Council met in a pair of called meetings last month to pass the ordinance.

Councilmembers gathered initially on Aug. 8 to conduct a first reading of the ordinance, and then on Aug. 11 to hold a second reading and adoption of the ordinance.

The new ordinance is based in state law that gives the city "the power to grant franchises or make contracts with … electric light or power companies … and other public utilities for the use and occupancy of the streets of the city, for the purpose of rendering utility services."

According to the ordinance, and among other conditions, the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC will be required to:

"Pay into the treasury of the City on or before the first day of March 2018, a sum of money equal to 4 percent of the gross sales of electric energy to customers located within the corporate limits of the city and served under residential, commercial and industrial rate schedules … from lines located on the streets, alleys and public places of the city during the calendar year 2017."

The same terms apply every year thereafter for at least 50 years, wherein the city will receive 4 percent of gross sales of electric energy based on the locations of lines during each preceding calendar year.

So, in 2019, the tax will take into account the infrastructure located within the city during the calendar year 2018, and so on, to account for gross sales made through future expansion by the EMC.

The terms of the ordinance also require the EMC to pay the City a tax equal to 5 percent of its gross revenues generated from cable and fiber services inside city limits, under the same terms outlined above.

"Blue Ridge Mountain EMC shall, within 45 days from the approval of this ordinance,

See *Tax, Page* 6A

**Hiawassee Councilmembers Kris Berrong, Anne Mitchell and former councilmember Liz Ordiales in an Aug. 11 called meeting at Hiawassee City Hall. Photo/Shawn Jarrard**

# The envelope, please; three EMC directors to be decided Saturday

**By Charles Duncan**
**Towns County Herald**
**Editor**

Here goes – and the envelope, please...

Bert Rogers, Preston Cabe, Karen Pirie, and Tommy White are on the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC Board of Directors ballot thanks to an Enotah Judicial Circuit Superior Court judge. So are five other candidates, including two incumbents.

The initial rejection of the four candidates from the annual Election Ballot by the Credentials Committee in July resulted in an Enotah Circuit Superior Court judge issuing an injunction to prevent the EMC's September elections from happening.

**Jeremy Nelms BRMEMC General Manager**

The Board's Credentials Committee reconvened on Aug. 3 and reconsidered, allowing Rogers, Cabe, Pirie, and White to appear on the ballot. The four had been deemed "members not in good standing" because of previously late power payments.

Senior Superior Court Judge Murphy Miller was asked to decide the meaning of "member in good standing," because there wasn't a definition included in the Cooperative's bylaws.

Because the Credentials Committee reversed its previous decision, Judge Miller dismissed the court-ordered injunction on Aug. 7.

Rogers, who felt wronged, pursued the legal action and rightly so, as there is no legal definition of "member in good standing."

So now, two incumbents will face opposition on the Board of Directors ballot of Blue Ridge Mountain EMC's elections to be decided Sept. 9 at the Union County Schools Fine Arts Center.

Jason Waldroup, a 15-year resident of Towns County, will now face Rogers in the seat that Vice Chairman Steven Phillips resigned from for personal reasons.

Danny Henson will seek to unseat Incumbent Charles Jenkins as one of the Union County representatives on the BRMEMC board. However, there are two other candidates seeking that seat in Pirie and White.

And Jeff Ledford hopes to unseat Incumbent Chris Logan as one of the Clay County, North Carolina, representatives on the BRMEMC board. He also must beat Preston Cabe.

Henson was a board member for a short while in 2015. The BRMEMC Board of Directors disqualified him because of a business partnership with then fellow board member Greg Owenby.

Today, Henson is back, ready to seek another seat on the board. This time, Henson was nominated by the EMC's Nominating Committee to again earn a seat on the Board. Pirie, White and incumbent Charles Jenkins, also in the race for the Union County seat, join Henson on the ballot.

Jenkins rode the wave of petition ballot winners in 2014. He has almost completed his first term as a board member.

Pirie currently is a

See *BRMEMC, Page* 6A

# A Country Boy Survives at Hiawassee's Anderson Music Hall

**By Charles Duncan**
**Towns County Herald**
**Editor**

If Heaven ain't a lot like Dixie, you won't find Bocephus there.

The Legendary Hank Williams Jr. packed out Anderson Music Hall, and packed out the hills outside its doors on Saturday night, Sept. 2.

Inside and out, Hank helped raise thousands for Hurricane Harvey relief aid, signing and raffling off a hat already autographed by the likes of Merle Haggard, Willie Nelson and Kris Kristofferson.

His fans poured into Anderson Music Hall like ants following a trail of sugar.

Bocephus, as his father, Hank Williams Sr., called him in his youth, did not disappoint the crowd of almost 4,000 people.

He started off with George Thorogood's "Move It On Over." Of course, that song doesn't belong to Thorogood – it belongs to Hank Williams Sr., who wrote and recorded it in 1947.

Bocephus pulled on his "ICON" baseball cap and belted out one of his anthems, "Whiskey Bent And Hell Bound."

He followed that anthem with a song that rattles the cages in the South – "If Heaven Ain't A lot Like Dixie." The partisan Hank crowd roared as both songs came back-to-back.

However, you must understand, Bocephus has had more than 40 top-performing songs in his career, and he's still going strong.

The Master of the Hat Change and four-time Entertainer of the Year switched hats to a wide-brimmed Stetson, and made the standing room crowd jump with delight as he sang "All My Rowdy Friends (Have Settled Down)."

He promptly switched to an orange Tennessee Vols hat and rang out "Kaw-liga,"

**Hank Jr. played all the hits that evening, and even auctioned off an autographed hat to raise money for Hurricane Harvey victims. Photo/Lowell Nicholson**

a song made famous by his father, Hank Sr.

"Kaw-liga was a wooden Indian standing by the door. He fell in love with an Indian maiden over in the antique store. Kaw-liga just stood there and never let it show,

so she could never answer 'yes' or 'no.'

"Poor ol' Kaw-liga, he never got a kiss. Poor ol' Kaw-liga, he don't know what he missed. Is it any wonder that his face is red? Kaw-liga, that poor ol' wooden head."

The show started a moment before 8 p.m., and Bocephus played countless

See *Hank, Page* 8A

# Community responds to those in dire need in Houston

**By Charles Duncan**
**and Todd Forrest**
**Towns County Herald**

Blairsville – Keep those donations coming in for Hurricane Harvey victims – Gooch Trucking will make sure they get to Texas.

And Towns County can get involved, too. Just contact Lori at Gooch Trucking at (706) 745-4460.

Currently, there is an outpouring of support countywide as churches from one end of Union County to the other are all putting together supplies for the families caught in the mire of Hurricane Harvey and the eminent flooding that followed with the storm surge.

Kris Gooch of Gooch Trucking said the Blairsville hauling company is more than eager to help those in need in south Texas.

Gooch Trucking will have a truck for collection efforts at Transplanted Treasures, 110 Gainesville Highway, Blairsville, between the hours of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, Sept. 8.

"We even may have enough for two truckloads," Kris Gooch said. "We are going to have the truck placed at Transplanted Treasures, our thrift store. We're accepting donations of food, clothing, diapers and supplies.

"We've found a church out there accepting donations," Kris Gooch said. "It's extremely hard to find places accepting donations, but we've found one."

Donations are accepted at Transplanted Treasures only between the hours of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Kris Gooch said.

"We want this drive to be organized, with someone here to accept the donations during the hours we are here – from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. through Friday, or until the truck or trucks are filled," Kris Gooch said.

Kris Gooch said her family's business, and the good folks in Union and Towns counties, are helping Americans, not just Texans.

"I just think that even though they are in Texas, and we are in Georgia, we are all Americans," she said. "Everybody should get together and pitch in and do whatever they can. That's the way I was raised. We can't do everything, but everybody can

See *Houston, Page* 6A

**Diapers collected at the Woman's Enrichment Center to be donated to Hurricane Harvey victims. Photo/Todd Forrest**

# Hayesville, NC, man charged with aggravated battery

**By Charles Duncan**
**Towns County Herald**
**Editor**

A 21-year-old Hayesville, North Carolina, man is behind bars charged with aggravated battery, Towns County Sheriff's reports show.

Sonny Freyre Jr., 21, of Hayesville, has been arrested and booked into the Towns County Detention Center on one count of battery, sheriff's reports show.

The charges stem from an altercation at the Sand Bar on US 76 in Hiawassee on Sunday, Aug. 20, during a fight at the business, sheriff's reports show.

On Wednesday, Aug. 30, Freyre was arrested and booked into the Towns County Detention Center on one count of aggravated battery, sheriff's reports show.

See *Freyre, Page* 6A

**Sonny Freyre Jr.**

# Former senior center director charged with financial transaction card fraud

**By Charles Duncan**
**Towns County Herald**
**Editor**

The former director of the Towns County Senior Center has been arrested and charged with seven counts of financial fraud, according to the Towns County Sheriff's Office.

Investigators say that a report was made to the Towns County Sheriff's Office in June 2017 in reference to the misuse of funds as related to the operation of the Towns County Senior Center, which was operated by Legacy Link, Inc.

Following an extensive investigation by Towns County Sheriff's investigators, Barbara "Bobbie" Parker, age 44, of Hiawassee, a former employee of Legacy Link, Inc., was arrested on Friday, Sept. 1, and charged with seven counts

See *Parker, Page* 6A

**Barbara "Bobbie" Parker**

**2 Sections 16 Pages**

**Lake Levels**

| | |
|---|---|
| Blue Ridge | 1,679.77 |
| Chatuge | 1,921.93 |
| Nottely | 1,769.74 |

**Inside**


| | |
|---|---|
| Arrests | 2A |
| Chamber | 3B |
| Church | 4B |
| Classifieds | 6B |
| Opinion | 4A |
| Legals | 7B |
| Obits | 5B |
| Sports | 2B |


**Softball**
Sept 5 @ Rabun 5 PM
Sept 7 vs. Providence 4:45 PM

**Football**
Sept 8 @ Prince Ave 7:30 PM

*Patriot Day &*
NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE
*September 11*