

# Towns County Herald

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## EMC membership puts forward amendments on elections, meetings

By Charles Duncan  
Towns County Herald  
Editor

Blairsville - The Blue Ridge Mountain EMC membership will have two amendments to the cooperative's bylaws to vote on in 2018, resulting from discussion at the Sept. 9 EMC Annual Meeting.

Former BRMEMC legal counsel Larry Sorgen proposed an amendment that would allow voters in each of the EMC's five-member counties to be solely responsible for electing their home county representatives during the election process.

Currently, candidates are elected by voters in all counties in Georgia and North Carolina.

Sorgen's proposal, however, would allow voters in Union County to decide which candidates would represent them on the board of directors, without votes from other counties counting toward the Union County director races.

Likewise, the amendment would require the candidates from each of the four other counties to be elected only by members from their respective counties.

The number of board representatives for individual counties is determined by

the size of a county's service population. Union County has the largest served population and has three representatives on the board. Towns County, and Clay County, North Carolina, both have two representatives. Fannin County, and Cherokee County, North Carolina, both have one representative.

The amendment to change the election process and put it on the 2018 ballot was approved by the membership.

A second amendment was proposed by former Towns County Republican Party Chair Chuck Luca. Likewise, it was given the seal of approval to place on the 2018 election ballot.



Jeremy Nelms, General Manager of Blue Ridge Mountain EMC

That amendment to the bylaws would change what the board hears in executive session, and would effectively open EMC board meetings to the membership if approved.

It would require the board to follow the state Sunshine Laws regarding executive sessions. Following state law would allow the board to go into executive session for only three reasons – personnel, real estate decisions, and litigation matters.

In other business, EMC General Manager Jeremy Nelms announced that TVA, or the Tennessee Valley Authority, would increase its rates beginning Oct. 1 by 1.25

percent. The increase means each EMC customer's bill would rise by \$1.40 a month.

Nancy Mitchell, general manager of TVA's Customer Service for the Southeast Region, told the membership that TVA is working on a five-year plan that focuses on debt reduction, and reduction of power rates.

Young Harris Mayor Andrea Gibby broached the subject that she's looking forward to helping Blue Ridge Mountain EMC in any way she can to sell the old headquarters located squarely inside Young Harris City Limits.

Several of the See Membership, Page 8A

## Three new members elected to EMC Board of Directors



Meet the new members of the BRMEMC Board of Directors, L-R: Danny Henson, Union County; Bert Rogers, Towns County; and Jeff Ledford, Clay County, NC. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

By Charles Duncan  
Towns County Herald  
Editor

Blairsville - On Sept. 12, 2014, Steven Phillips, Charles Jenkins and Chris Logan became the first petition candidates in the history of Blue Ridge Mountain EMC to be elected as directors of the cooperative.

The trio opened the door that totally changed the leadership of the cooperative.

In July, Phillips, the vice chair of the cooperative's board, resigned for personal reasons. On Sept. 9, 2017, the membership decided once again that it was time for a change.

Logan, who represented

Clay County, North Carolina, was ousted by Jeff Ledford. Jenkins, who represented Union County, was ousted by former director, Danny Henson.

The race to replace Phillips resulted in Bert Rogers claiming the seat by defeating Jeff Waldroup.

Of the cooperative's See Elected, Page 8A

## Mayor Gibby and council members ready for 2018

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Every person who qualified in August to run for office in the Young Harris General Election did so unopposed, meaning they will assume those posts in January 2018.

That's Andrea Gibby returning as mayor, along with returning Councilman Dr. John Kelley, welcoming back former Councilman Donald Keys and new Councilwoman Lynne Nation to the City Council.

Come swearing-in time in January, Mayor Andrea Gibby and City Council Member John Kelley will remain in their same leadership roles for at least four more years of service.

Donald Keys has served on the City Council in the past, so he, too, will be returning to City Hall alongside Gibby and Kelley in January.

Keys will start his full term in January, though he will be swearing in early at the next Council meeting in October to fulfill the remainder of the term vacated by Angi Smith



L-R: Lynne Nation, Andrea Gibby and Donald Keys. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

in July.

Nation is a newcomer to Young Harris City Hall, though she is no stranger to the city or county. She has served on the Towns County Board of Elections and Registration in the past, and recently, she retired as a math professor of 31 years at Young Harris College.

The tie that binds those who ran for office this year is Mayor Gibby – every one of the incoming council members

See Mayor Gibby, Page 8A



John Kelley, Young Harris City Council

## Hiawassee City Council goes over water meter readings and leak study

By Lily Avery  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Updates to water meter readings and an ongoing water leak study within the city were topics of discussion during the Hiawassee City Council meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 5.

Over the last several months, former Hiawassee City Councilwoman and Mayor Pro tem Liz Ordiales had been working diligently to address the issue of misread water meters throughout the city.

These meters were having a significant effect on customers throughout the city and had been a reoccurring problem for months. At the beginning of the year, in an effort to decrease the number of misread meters, the city installed new meters.

However, due to a



Hiawassee City Councilmembers Kris Berrong and Rayette Ross. Photo/Lily Avery

complication with syncing the new meters and the meter equipment properly, numerous misreads continued to occur throughout the city. Since

identifying the issue as being a problem between the meters and the reading equipment, the number of misread meters See Hiawassee Council, Page 8A

## Hackers steal personal info for majority of US adult

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

If you're an adult and reading this, odds are that your sensitive personal information has been stolen.

Your name, Social Security number, birthdate, home address – and potentially even your driver's license and credit card numbers – are likely accessible to criminals at this very moment, somewhere around the globe.

How did this happen? The answer is as simple as it is nefarious: hackers and weak cybersecurity.

On Thursday, Sept. 7, one of the three major credit reporting agencies in the U.S., Equifax, announced that



Equifax

hackers had infiltrated their databases and gained access to the personal identifying information of 143 million Americans.

That's close to 60 percent of the adult population of the United States of America.

Hackers also gained access to credit card numbers of 209,000 people and credit dispute documents of 182,000 people, as well as the personal information of an unreported

number of Canadians and Britons.

The data breach occurred earlier this year in mid-May and was discovered on July 29, though Equifax waited until Sept. 7 to make its findings public.

Equifax has set up a website that is asking Americans to put in more of their personal information – including last names and the last six digits

See Equifax, Page 8A

## Gov. Deal declares statewide emergency over Hurricane Irma

By Lily Avery  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

On Sunday, Sept. 10, Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal expanded Georgia's state of emergency to include all 159 counties for Monday, Sept. 11 and Tuesday, Sept. 12, due to the expected force of Hurricane Irma.

As of press time, Towns County Schools were closed on Monday and Towns County School Superintendent Dr. Darren Berrong was uncertain if schools would be closed on Tuesday as well.

Gov. Deal's executive order said that, "the National Hurricane Center reports the tropical storm wind field extends 220 miles to the northeast and northwest of the



Hurricane Irma approaching Florida on Sunday, with Jose trailing right behind. Photo Credit: NASA/NOAA GOES Project

center of the storm.

"Due to the size of the storm, all of Georgia may potentially be impacted, regardless of Hurricane Irma's

exact track. The network of rural roads may be rendered impassable throughout the state of Georgia, isolating residences See Irma, Page 6A

## Young Harris sets millage, updates water and sewer ordinance

By Lily Avery  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

YOUNG HARRIS – The Young Harris City Council set the 2017 millage rate for the city and discussed updates to city ordinances during the monthly meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 5.

For the 2017 millage rate, the city did not change the rate from last year and will continue with the rate of 2.965 mills.

Also during the meeting, the Council held the second and final reading for the Water/Sewer Rate Ordinance as well as the Master Fee Ordinance. Since City Attorney Marvin Harkins became the new city attorney, the city has been working toward cleaning up



Young Harris City Councilmembers Jared Champion and Stuart Miller. Photo/Lily Avery

old ordinances and making sure everything is up-to-date, meeting all qualifications that the Council deems fit, such as the water and sewer rate ordinance.

Under this revised ordinance, there will now be different fees for temporary meters for residential as well as commercial temporary meters.

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Lake Levels  
Blue Ridge 1,679.61  
Chatuge 1,922.08  
Nottely 1,769.46

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Softball  
Sept 14 vs. Hebron 4:45 PM  
Football  
Sept 15 @ Riverside Military 7:30 PM

Puttin' on the Dog  
Benefiting the Towns & Union County Humane Society  
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Free Food Distribution  
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