



# Veterans Day

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# Towns County Herald

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## Senate runoffs coming Jan. 5; PSC runoff possible Dec. 1 Anderson wins Tax Commissioner seat with 66%

**By Shawn Jarrard**  
Towns County Herald  
Editor

The eyes of the nation were on Georgia last week as it worked to complete counting in some of the more densely populated areas of the state. And by Monday, two things had become clear.

First, Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger had announced a yet-to-be-scheduled recount in the presidential race due to the razor thin margin, with Joe Biden leading Donald Trump by about 10,000 votes at press time.

Second, the margins in other races featuring three or more candidates were comparably

tight, forcing two federal-level runoffs and a potential state runoff, as no one in those races garnered more than 50% of the vote by press time.

For U.S. Senate, Republican Incumbent David Perdue was leading Democratic challenger John Ossoff with 49.75% of the statewide vote, though Perdue won Towns County handily, earning 6,291 votes to Ossoff's 1,451.

In the special election race to fill the unexpired term of Sen. Johnny Isakson, who resigned last year for health reasons, Republican Incumbent Kelly Loeffler and Democrat Raphael Warnock were the Top Two vote getters in a crowded field of

candidates.

Loeffler at 25.92% trailed Warnock's lead of 32.9% after Tuesday's election, though both candidates are expected to pick up considerable support in their upcoming 1-on-1 contest.

Towns Countians chose Republican Doug Collins with 3,999 votes to fill this seat, followed by Loeffler with 2,036 votes and Warnock with 1,017 votes.

Runoff elections for the two U.S. Senate races will take place on Jan. 5, 2021, with three weeks of early voting to start Dec. 14.

The statewide District 4 Public Service Commissioner race had Republican Incumbent

Lauren Bubba McDonald Jr. leading but lacking a needed majority vote with 49.93%, so it's likely this race will go to a runoff election Dec. 1, with early voting slated to begin "as soon as possible," according to the Secretary of State's website.

McDonald Jr.'s opponent in a runoff would be Democrat Daniel Blackman, who had earned 46.95% of the vote by press time. The Georgia Public Service Commission has exclusive power to decide what are fair and reasonable rates for services under its jurisdiction, including aspects of electric, natural gas and



Michael Anderson  
Tax Commissioner-Elect

See Elections, Page 6A

## School Board congratulates Camp, hears principal updates

**By Shawn Jarrard**  
Towns County Herald  
Editor

In their Nov. 2 regular meeting, Towns County Board of Education members welcomed Science Teacher Ken Camp from Towns County High to discuss his recent accomplishment – winning \$27,000 in grant funding for his "Aquaponics Greenhouse."

Camp will use the funding to expand the aquaponics program he started several years back to provide even more opportunities for students to perform hands-on practical research projects that reinforce many of the concepts they learn in biology.

The current aquaponics system consists of tanks of around 300 tilapia, 150 goldfish



Ken Camp and Roy Perren spoke in the Nov. 2 school board meeting to announce a major piece of good news.  
Photo by Lowell Nicholson

## TCHS graduate Kyle Bailey wins seat in Maine House

**News Special**  
Towns County Herald

GORHAM, Maine – Kyle Bailey, who grew up in Hiawassee, Georgia, won a seat in the Maine House of Representatives Tuesday, Nov. 3.

Bailey built a people-powered campaign that united Democrats, Republicans and independents and won 58% of the vote in the swing district.

"It's an honor and a privilege to be elected to represent my community in the Maine House," Bailey said.

"I look forward to working on the issues that matter to my community, including defeating COVID-19, rebooting our state's economy, lowering health care costs and creating opportunities for young people to live and earn a good living in Maine."

Bailey is the only person to have ever led a successful statewide ranked-choice voting campaign in the United States.

Additionally, Bailey managed the 2016 citizen's initiative campaign to win



Kyle Bailey

See Bailey, Page 6A

## Hiawassee Night Market comes to a successful end until 2021

**By Jarrett Whitener**  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

The City of Hiawassee and the Downtown Development Authority hosted their monthly First Friday event, aka the Hiawassee Night Market, on Nov. 6.

Ever since the inaugural event in August, the Night Market has brought vendors together with live music and people from all over the area looking for something to do on a Friday Night.

The Nov. 6 market was the last of 2020, but with so much positive feedback on the event, local Economic Development Director Denise McKay said everyone is looking forward to its return in 2021.

"People have really been loving it, and we are going to start it again next year, probably around May," McKay said.



It's "so long" for the regular Hiawassee Night Market season in 2020, though the city plans to bring it back in 2021.  
Photo by Jarrett Whitener

## City, TCWA continue settlement talks; alcohol ordinance tabled

**By Shawn Jarrard**  
Towns County Herald  
Editor

Hiawassee City Council and Mayor Liz Ordiales went into executive session to discuss the city's recent settlement with the Towns County Water Authority during the Facebook Livestreamed regular city meeting Nov. 5.

For years now, the city and Water Authority have been at odds over the city's inability to collect on past due sewer accounts in the "Commercial Corridor" along US 76 between Sunnyside Road and The Junction.

The city has been arguing its right to provide water to new customers to enforce sewer collections based on an agreement giving Hiawassee control of new water accounts there, but the Water Authority has contested that right because it owns the water delivery infrastructure in that area.

Things came to a head earlier this year when the city increased the wholesale rate for treated water it sells to the Water Authority, going from \$1.81/thousand gallons to \$4.12/thousand gallons, citing

a need to make up for sewer losses in recent years.

A judge issued an injunction to stop the increase, but the move appeared to get ball rolling on stalled negotiations, as the two parties were finally able to outline an agreement amenable to both sides.

Following the Nov. 5 meeting, Ordiales said both parties were confident that a long-term agreement was within reach, including a stipulation that the Water Authority would cover the city's sewer account costs in the Commercial Corridor moving forward.

In a gesture of goodwill, the city recently lifted its moratorium on new sewer accounts the city does not also provide water to inside the Commercial Corridor, and talks continue unabated.

The outline agreement has the city providing water to the Water Authority at a wholesale rate to be adjusted annually based on actual cost of water production and operating expense reserve, with a new current cost of \$2.12/thousand gallons.



Liz Ordiales

"The Authority has agreed to assist the city with joint customer sewer billing and collections," Water Authority Attorney Eddy Corn said. "The Authority and the city are pleased to have reached this outline of agreement to serve our customers and hope to have the final agreement approved by each entity soon."

Also that Thursday, the council once again tabled a second reading of the amended Alcohol Ordinance.

The ordinance includes

See City Council, Page 6A

## Missing juvenile recovered at home of Young Harris man

**By Shawn Jarrard**  
Towns County Herald  
Editor

A 25-year-old Young Harris man has been arrested in connection with a 14-year-old girl who went missing from Hayesville, North Carolina, on Friday, Oct. 30. She was reunited with her family Nov. 2.

Leonardo Daniel Torres-Barios was arrested without incident at his job in Towns County Nov. 2 and

charged with interference with custody.

The juvenile had been missing for about four days when she was safely recovered from Torres-Barios' Young Harris residence the evening of Nov. 2, with the Towns County Sheriff's Office assisting in the case.

At press time, Torres-Barios remained in custody at Towns County Jail, where he was awaiting transport to Clay County, North Carolina, to

face felony charges there. He has been charged only and is presumed innocent until found guilty in a court of law.

The girl's family reported her missing around 7 p.m. Oct. 30, at which point the hunt began. The Clay County, North Carolina, Sheriff's Office put out a BOLO for the teen around 10:15 that night, quickly following up by entering her information into the National Crime Information Center.

Clay County Sheriff

Bobby Deese also notified the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children and requested an AMBER Alert.

The next day, Deese turned to the public via Facebook to ask for anyone's help in locating the missing girl.

The sheriff posted a public timeline of possible sightings and developments in the case, and he and his department worked around the clock to chase down leads and monitor video surveillance

systems in the area.

She was reportedly seen at the Dollar General in Hayesville and near Valley River Brewery in Murphy, North Carolina, on Oct. 30; at Downtown Pizza in Murphy on Halloween; and at a residence in Graham County, North Carolina, also on Oct. 31.

None of the sightings turned out to be her, though the Clay County Sheriff's Office did ultimately locate her after



Leonardo Daniel Torres-Barios

See Missing Juvenile, Page 6A

<p>2 Sections 16 Pages</p> <p>Lake Levels</p> <p>Blue Ridge 1,675.39</p> <p>Chatuge 1,920.88</p> <p>Nottely 1,765.99</p>	<p>Inside</p> <p>Arrests 2A</p> <p>Church 4B</p> <p>Opinions 7B</p> <p>4A</p> <p>Legals 7B</p> <p>Obits 5B</p> <p>Sports 2B</p>	<p><b>SPORTS FOOTBALL</b></p> <p>11/13 vs. Social Circle</p> <p>7:30 PM</p>	<p>TCSO Empty Stocking Parade</p> <p>November 28</p> <p>See page 2A</p>	<p>Towns County Schools Child Find</p> <p>See page 2A</p>	<p>Unofficial Towns County Election Results by Precinct</p> <p>See page 3B</p>
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