

Bailey...from Page 1A

ranked-choice voting for primary and federal elections in Maine; the 2018 people's veto campaign to protect ranked-choice voting for primary and federal elections in Maine; and the 2019 legislative campaign that expanded Maine's ranked-choice voting law to include presidential primary and general elections, another first-in-the-nation.

Bailey also served on the leadership team of the 2012 campaign that won Maine's first-in-the-nation ballot measure victory for same-sex marriage and opened the door for other states to follow; and, ultimately, for the Supreme Court's decision in Obergefell that expanded the freedom to marry to all same-sex couples in the U.S.

The Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee had named Bailey to its "Spotlight" list as a race to watch during the 2020 cycle. Bailey attended Towns County Comprehensive Schools, having graduated Towns County High Class of 2001, and is a graduate of both Young Harris College and the University of Georgia.

School Board...from Page 1A

and 50 catfish fertilizing three grow beds, where tomatoes, peppers, herbs, coleus, strawberries, ginger, zinnias, okra and bananas are harvested and sold in the community. Camp was one of 50 teachers in the nation to receive a \$2,000 grant through the Voya Unsung Heroes Award, and he was chosen as the only teacher in the nation to receive the Grand Prize of \$25,000 in additional funding in 2020.

In other news that Tuesday, Superintendent Dr. Darren Berrong delivered another promising update on COVID-19 in the school system, reporting just one current positive case among students in all grade levels.

strong, even in the face of an ongoing public health issue. "I've been thinking about all the things our teachers continue to do to provide the best education for our students, and that's not just true of kindergarten through fifth, that's true of middle school and high school as well," Moss said. In her report to the board, Middle School Principal Dr. Connie Hobbs said that teachers have been trying to make the classroom experience more rewarding for students with various activities to make up for the fact that the usual routine has largely been upended in 2020.

"In August 2019, I applied for this grant and got an email this August saying, 'Congrats, you're one of the 50 - you won for Georgia, and you're in the running for the \$25,000 grand prize.' I kind of put that out of my mind, because I'm like, what's the likelihood of that, 1 in 50? "Lo and behold, we won. The plan right now is just, instead of having to engineer everything out of barrels and MacGyver everything, to get some nice equipment. And some of our goals that I wrote in the grant, just keep integrating it into the biology, the chemistry and the dual enrollment curriculum.

"Out of 934 students, to date, we've only had 17 total student positive cases in the entire system," Berrong said. "For the staff - and this is where the percentages get skewed, which gives me an idea of kind of what's happening. But we currently have seven positive staff cases up until today. "So, we've had 20 total staff positives to date out of 194 staff members. What I'm seeing (here) kind of matches the information we're starting to get from others as well, that it's passing way easier among the adults, that it's not passing as easily among the students and young individuals.

"It's tough," Hobbs said. "Especially in the fall and at Christmas, they're used to going on field trips and going to see different things, so they're trying to bring things into the classroom instead. "Fall sports have ended, and we start with wrestling this Thursday at home, and then middle school basketball begins next week. "Counselor Lana Parker is conducting our Teen Safety Matters program, rotating in classrooms. This past week, they learned about digital safety, and being on the web and being on their phone, and their screen time and internet usage and being safe."

"I want to author a bunch of labs in ecology, microbiology, zoology, botany. Really, we just take a trip down the hill. And to my knowledge, I think Towns will be the only thing north of Macon with an aquaponics program like this. "It gives us a lot of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Mathematics) credibility. We've gotten senior projects out of this ... COVID (put a damper on) that last year, so I hope that picks back up. It's even spawned some career interest as this has gone on, and it's been much more than raising fish."

"To me, the data that we're seeing right now, three to four months into the school year, pretty much proves that to me, that it's not going from student to student as much, but when it gets to the staff, it is highly contagious if you get into close contact with another staff member. "We just keep continuing to tell our staff to please make sure that you're 6 feet away from each other, you're not going and hanging out in each other's classrooms, so that we're not spreading that."

"The middle school also conducted school shooter and severe weather drills recently, and Hobbs said Oct. 30 was Paraprofessional Vicki Turner's last day. "She's been with the Towns County Middle School for 12 years," Hobbs said. "She's done a fantastic job and will be greatly missed."

When Camp is not busy in the classroom and building the aquaponics program, he's also coaching the Academic Team, serving as an assistant coach on the Football Team, performing duties as an AP Reader and more. This isn't Camp's first foray into writing grants, either. He's gotten money for a community garden at a past school, and he said he plans on looking for even more opportunities moving forward. He's also gratefully accepted a hoop house from Chest-Chatt RC&D Council.

The apparent increased rate of transmission among adults has presented somewhat of a problem for the school system, since it has become increasingly difficult to find substitute teachers willing to work amid COVID-19, though the school system is making do. Elementary School Principal Shannon Moss said in-person instruction was right at 349 of 400 students, meaning 51 students were currently doing online-only classes. He reported on happenings inside the school, such as virtual fieldtrips to Jaemor Farms, lessons in thankfulness ahead of the upcoming Nov. 26 holiday, and community partnerships, like the Georgia Mountain Research and Education Center providing bird feeder kits for students.

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Night Market...from Page 1A

"We want to continue, and we hope it grows. We have some different vendors this month, a lot of them are consistent, but we have added some. "We have a lot of interest in this, and it is going to keep growing. Everybody loves it. I haven't heard anything negative about it, and everyone thinks it is great that we are having it. "They like the caliber, the vendors that are here and the music that is played. It is nice to have a big outing like this in town in the evening."

Hutchinson said. "It is nice for people to get out and just come visit. It has been really great for me." The market has been popular in the community as well as the region, drawing in people from out of town who've heard about the good things coming out of Hiawassee. Katie Smith of Andrews, North Carolina, said the event was something that all communities should be doing to encourage public engagement. "Something like this is wonderful," Smith said. "My friends told me about this a couple of months ago and we decided to come down and check it out, and it is great. I hate that I didn't get to come down here sooner and be more involved in this, but there is always next year. "Although I am not from Hiawassee, I think it is

wonderful when any community gets involved with the public and provides something for them for free. This is something you don't pay for, and it allows the community to come out and come together. "It also draws people like us into the city and makes us want to be more involved. It is great, and I am glad to be here for it." Looking ahead, the city will host its annual Light Up Hiawassee event on Saturday, Dec. 5, from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m., with various activities for the public like painting rocks, listening to Christmas music, decorating cookies, writing letters to Santa, touring the Old Rock Jail and more. Volunteers who would like to help decorate the square for the family-friendly event may do so on Nov. 21 starting at 1 p.m.

Vendor Steve Hutchinson sells canned produce and has attended the event since the first month, and he finds the offering to be a terrific opportunity for making the community connect. "This Friday Night Market has been a big success this year in the mountains,"

provisions in play, noting they had at least two years to further amend the ordinance before packaged liquor stores might find themselves on a ballot for approval. Other council members, however, didn't want to enact an amended ordinance they knew they were going to have to revisit down the road. Ordiales asked if the council would like to table the issue until the November work session, and everyone agreed. Multiple past petitions to bring packaged liquor sales to a local vote have failed over the years, including in 2020. In other business, the council approved a resolution to submit an application for \$600,000 in grant funding through the Appalachian Regional Commission, to include a required local match

of 30%. The money will go toward renovating the buildings at Paris Plaza, which the city purchased earlier this year with the idea of introducing spaces for businesses to rent downtown. The city will be putting the cost of the building purchases and design work, currently \$117,350, toward its 30% local match. "We would be obliged to contribute \$62,650 if we get \$600,000, so it's a pretty good tradeoff," Ordiales said. "The total project is going to be \$1.1 million. "So, we're going to get hopefully \$600,000, of which we'll put in an additional \$62,650, but the (Hiawassee Downtown Development Authority) is going to have to come up with almost \$500,000 to complete it."

City Council...from Page 1A

language concerning packaged liquor sales should city voters ever allow them in town, as well as streamlined hours for alcohol sales, sales permits for special events and sidewalk cafes. Councilwoman Amy Barrett pointed out her primary contention with the amended ordinance, namely that she and others feel the proposed points system for establishing packaged liquor stores inside city limits is anti-free market. For her part, Councilwoman Patsy Owens sided with the points system, saying it would favor local store owners over people with more money coming in from out of town. Councilwoman Anne Mitchell wanted to go ahead and enact the amended ordinance to get the other new

provisions in play, noting they had at least two years to further amend the ordinance before packaged liquor stores might find themselves on a ballot for approval. Other council members, however, didn't want to enact an amended ordinance they knew they were going to have to revisit down the road. Ordiales asked if the council would like to table the issue until the November work session, and everyone agreed. Multiple past petitions to bring packaged liquor sales to a local vote have failed over the years, including in 2020. In other business, the council approved a resolution to submit an application for \$600,000 in grant funding through the Appalachian Regional Commission, to include a required local match

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Missing Juvenile...from Page 1A

surveilling places of interest developed using forensic electronic evidence by the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation, Deese said. All in all, it was a successful effort that led to the safe recovery of the teen, which Deese said was made possible with help from the Towns County Sheriff's Office, Cherokee County, North Carolina, Sheriff's Office, and North Carolina SBI. Sheriff Deese also lauded the Center for Missing & Exploited Children as an important resource in situations like this one. "The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children is a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation whose

mission is to help find missing children, reduce child sexual exploitation, and prevent child victimization," per missingkids.org. "NCMEC works with families, victims, private industry, law enforcement, and the public to assist with preventing child abductions, recovering missing children, and providing services to deter and combat child sexual exploitation." Continuing, Deese stressed the importance of resources like AMBER Alert, which quickly gets word out to the public whenever a child goes missing. The acronym AMBER stands for America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency

Response, which was created more than two decades ago in honor of 9-year-old Amber Hagerman, "who was kidnapped while riding her bicycle in Arlington, Texas, and then brutally murdered," per amberalert.ojp.gov. "AMBER Alerts are emergency messages issued when a law enforcement agency determines that a child has been abducted and is in imminent danger. AMBER Alert instantly galvanizes communities to assist in the search for and safe recovery of an abducted child." Such alerts are broadcast via radio, TV, road signs, cell phones, and other data-enabled devices.

NGTC offers new Electrical Line Program at Blairsville Campus beginning Spring Semester 2021

North Georgia Technical College's (NGTC) Blairsville campus announces the addition of an Electrical Line program beginning spring semester 2021. The college is currently accepting applications for students interested in enrolling

in January, and the program can be completed in less than eight weeks. Application deadline for the spring semester is Nov. 19, and classes begin Jan. 7. Students who need financial assistance may also apply for scholarships available from the NGTC Foundation by Nov. 24.

Blue Ridge Mountain Electric Membership Corporation Interim Manager Erik Brinke has assisted NGTC with the needs of the program from the inception through implementation by providing materials and equipment for student learning. "We are very thankful for Blue Ridge Mountain EMC's partnership and commitment to this program," said NGTC Vice President for Academic Affairs Mindy Glander. "The Electrical Line program offered at our campus in Clarkesville typically includes a waiting list of up to nine to twelve months before students are enrolled, so we are very excited to work with Blue Ridge EMC to offer this program on a second campus. Everyone is eager to enroll more students to provide a workforce in a field that is in such high demand. We are grateful for all the assistance from Mr. Brinke and Blue Ridge EMC."

Additional space at the Blairsville Farmers' Market has been provided by Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris to allow the students to learn to drive the electric line trucks. The Blairsville NGTC campus will be installing poles for the new program outside of the campus pavilion area. "Introducing the Electrical Line program at our Blairsville campus is going to provide more student access to one of our most popular programs," said NGTC Interim President Michele Shirley. "Our students often have jobs secured before they complete the program because of the state-of-the-art equipment and high-quality instruction they receive. We are excited to offer this program to more students in our communities." For more information regarding enrolling in the new Electric Line program at Blairsville or for scholarship assistance, call 706-754-7700 or visit northgatech.edu.

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Elections...from Page 1A

telecommunications provision, according to psc.ga.gov. Politically speaking, Towns County is in a more conservative region of the state, reflected in the local and district competitions that saw clear Republican winners supported locally by a 74.96% turnout of active registered voters participating in the election. In the only locally contested race for county office, Republican Michael Anderson defeated longtime Democratic Incumbent Bruce Rogers for Towns County Tax Commissioner. Anderson earned 66% of the vote with 5,163 votes to Rogers' 2,653. The Tax Commissioner-Elect is no stranger to politics, having served the county before as a member of the Towns County Board of Education for about 13 years. After taking some time off from elective office while continuing his job as a local dental lab technician and volunteering doing community coaching with high school basketball, he started thinking again about pursuing public service, but in a larger way. Reflecting on his time with the school board, where he took his love of math and applied it toward learning millage rates and big annual budgets, Anderson felt the place he could most make a difference would be in the Tax Commissioner's Office. He replaced J.C. Berrong as the Republican candidate following Berrong's tragic death earlier this year. Anderson said he's thankful to both Berrong and Rogers for all they've done for their communities over the years, and he appreciates his supporters as well. "I just want to thank everyone for all their words of encouragement and support through this," Anderson said. As Tax Commissioner, Anderson will be aiming to maximize tax collections while

expanding the online capabilities of his office, including internet tax payments and countywide parcel searching via interactive maps. The Towns County native will begin his specialized training for the job by attending a "Newly Elected Tax Commissioners Workshop" Dec. 13-18 at the University of Georgia. For District 50 State Senator, Republican Bo Hatchett earned 82% of Towns County's vote to Democrat Dee Daley's 18%. And Hatchett carried that momentum through to the rest of the district, taking 83% of the vote to win the seat. In the District 8 State Representative race, Republican Stan Gunter beat Democrat Dave Cooper with 82% of the vote districtwide to earn the seat. Towns Countians supported Gunter with 82% of the local vote to Cooper's 18%. For U.S. Representative in the 117th Congress from the 9th Congressional District of Georgia, Republican Andrew Clyde defeated Devin Pandy with 79% of the vote to earn the seat. With Towns Countians, Republican Andrew Clyde earned 81% to Pandy's 19%. For President of the United States, despite being behind in Georgia, local voters chose Donald Trump and his running mate Mike Pence to serve another four years, with 80% of Towns Countians voting for the president over candidate Joe Biden and running mate Kamala Harris. Many national media outlets had called the race for Biden as early as Friday, bestowing upon him the title of President-Elect, though it appeared that potential voting irregularities were still being investigated at press time, and votes were still being counted in the national election. For Public Service Commissioner District 1, Republican Incumbent Jason Shaw had a slim 50.14% lead in

the contest, keeping him above the runoff threshold by press time Monday. For the Georgia ballot initiatives, all three enjoyed support at the state level, and Towns Countians voted the following: Amendment 1 carried locally with 83% of the vote. This amendment will ensure that specific fees, such as the \$1 old-tire disposal fee charged in new tire purchases, are dedicated for their intended purpose instead of being allocated elsewhere, as is current practice under state law. Seventy-two percent of Towns County voters said "YES" to Amendment 2, which will enable citizens to freely sue the state in an attempt to challenge "state or local laws that violate the Constitution of Georgia, the U.S. Constitution, or state law." Concerning Statewide Referendum A, 70% of Towns County voters said "YES" to establishing "a tax exemption for certain real property owned by charities," which will benefit some nonprofits like the local Habitat for Humanity. Also on the ballot were uncontested elections for five local offices, with the following incumbent officials set to be sworn in for new terms in 2021: Probate Judge David Rogers, Superior Court Clerk Dye and Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw. Both Kenneth "Ode" Henderson for Sheriff and Tamela Cooper for Coroner won primary challenges earlier in the year to become lone General Election candidates for their offices, and they will be sworn in come January also. No one ran for Blue Ridge Mountain Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor. At press time, all results were expected to be certified at the state level by Friday, Nov. 13.