

Towns County Herald

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Sheriff's Christmas Parade kicks off the season of giving

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Many Towns County residents celebrated the night of Saturday, Nov. 24, with the annual Sheriff's Empty Stocking Fund Parade.

The parade began at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds and moved down the highway until reaching the Hiwassee Town Square.

With a "Making Spirits Bright" theme for the parade, people got into the Christmas spirit by decorating floats and other vehicles to fit the holiday and bring joy to the families that attended the event.

Children gathered around and cheered with excitement as they watched the large parade coming down the road.

As each vehicle passed by, candy was handed through the air and landed at the feet of

children who lined Main Street ready to jump in and load up on the sweet stuff.

The hard work and dedication of parade participants was evident to all, as many hours clearly went into the making of floats for the event.

With excitement building among the children, families eagerly awaited the arrival of the most important person of the parade in many people's eyes – Santa Claus.

The kids waved and yelled as the float with Santa passed by, and Santa returned holiday greetings while tossing candy out for the guests to collect.

The purpose of the parade was to kick off the Empty Stocking Fund drive, which raises money to give presents to children who may otherwise go without gifts on Christmas morning.

"It is a lot of fun for participants and spectators alike, but most importantly, it's an opportunity to help a child in Towns County have a merry Christmas," said Sheriff Chris Clinton. "Not all of Towns County's children are as fortunate as many of us, and this is the time when the community really unites to help these children have hope amid hardship."

"I am thankful to share in this time-honored Towns County tradition that has helped so many families each year. I thank the community for always supporting these children."

To help meet the goal of providing for children in need, each float builder and parade participant provided a new and unwrapped toy as an entry fee in the parade.

To complement the season
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Santa Claus riding at the head of the Towns County Lions Club parade float on Saturday, Nov. 24.
Photo by Jarrett Whitener

Mountain Country Christmas in Lights returns for a third year



Horses are fun to ride, but how about riding a camel in Lights at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds?
Photo by Lowell Nicholson

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds officially began celebrating the holiday season with the Thanksgiving night opening of the Third Annual Mountain Country Christmas in Lights.

This event runs every Thursday, Friday and Saturday

through December, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., and brings a massively jolly walkthrough Christmas light display to the Fairgrounds for people looking to embrace the upcoming winter season.

And while the event has a large variety of Christmas lights for visitors to enjoy, it also provides a number of activities for families and friends as they

move through the Christmas decorations.

One such activity is the playing of Christmas tunes via antique reed organs by Towns County Historian Jerry Taylor.

"I'll be here most every night," said Taylor during opening weekend. "I may not be here the entire time, but I'll stay until I give out or freeze"

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Runoff early voting ends Friday; vote at precincts on Dec. 4

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

Early voting in the Dec. 4 General Election Runoff began on Monday, Nov. 26, and will continue through Friday, Nov. 30.

The runoff election features Republican Brad Raffensperger facing off against Democrat John Barrow for Secretary of State, and Republican Incumbent Chuck Eaton will be vying for re-election to the District 3 Public Service Commissioner seat against Democratic challenger Lindy Miller.

Between now and Friday, all registered Towns County voters who were eligible to vote in the Nov. 6 General Election can take part in runoff early voting from 8:30 a.m. until 5 p.m. at the Towns County Board of Elections Office.

There will be one day of extended early voting, on Thursday, Nov. 29, from 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The board office is located in Suite A of 67 Lakeview Circle in Hiwassee, and it will remain open to voters even during lunchtime.

Runoff Election Day will be on Tuesday, Dec. 4, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., and instead



of voting at the board office, voters should report to one of the four pre-assigned Towns County voting precincts: Hiwassee, Young Harris, Macedonia and Tate City.

The Macedonia Precinct has changed from the campus of Towns County Schools to Macedonia Baptist Church.

"Georgia law requires registered voters to show photo identification in order to vote in person," according to the Secretary of State's office. "When you vote in person, you must show one of the following photo IDs:

"A Georgia driver's license, even if expired; any valid state or federal government issued photo ID, including one issued by the Department of Driver Services or your Voter Registrar; valid U.S. passport; valid employee photo ID from any branch,

department, agency, or entity of the U.S. Government, this state, or any county, municipality, board, authority or other entity of this state; valid U.S. military photo ID; valid tribal photo ID."

As previously reported, Republican Brian Kemp will be the next governor of Georgia, after Democrat Stacey Abrams ended her bid in the gubernatorial race on Friday, Nov. 16.

The drawn-out governor's race was a contentious one, involving close vote margins and interventions by a couple of U.S. District Judges to ensure every vote counted.

In the end, Abrams acknowledged that she didn't have the votes to continue her challenge of Kemp, the majority vote getter.

Kemp's final margin of victory was about 55,000 votes, or 50.22 percent of the statewide vote to Abrams' 48.83 percent.

Robert Crittenden, former commissioner of the Georgia Department of Human Services, is serving out the remainder of Kemp's term as Secretary of State.

Appointed by Gov. Nathan Deal on Nov. 8 after

See Runoff, Page 6A

Hiwassee to light up Town Square for Christmas on Dec. 1

By Mark Smith
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

For the second year running, the City of Hiwassee will be hosting its Christmas event on the Town Square known as "Light Up Hiwassee."

Featuring many family-friendly activities, Light Up Hiwassee is a cooperative effort between the city and Enotah CASA, and everything is set for the Saturday, Dec. 1, event that will begin at 4 p.m.

"This year is the first year we'll have vendors that will be selling their Christmas wares, so people can do some Christmas shopping there," said Hiwassee Mayor Liz Ordiales. "Hamilton Gardens will have poinsettias for sale."

"And then, of course, our great partners in the community. Angles will be doing cookie decorating, the local churches will be ornament making, and I believe they'll have caroling. We'll have live music as well as DJ music."

There will also be hot chocolate and coffee to ward off the cool temperatures.

"We'll have rock painting, so they'll have kids finding the rocks," said Ordiales. "We'll have a table so that the kids can write their letters to Santa. We'll have a mailbox on the square so they can deposit their letters."

"We'll have a golf cart parade that will start at around 4 p.m. And then, of course, the

2018

Light Up Hiwassee

Join us at the Town Square to start the holiday season at 4:00pm on December 1, 2018

- * Vendors - Food & Crafts
- * Kid's Activities 4:30
- * Golf Cart Parade 5:30
- * CASA Luminaries 6:00
- * Light up Hiwassee 6:15
- * Welcome Santa 6:30
- * Christmas Carols 7:00

City of Hiwassee

big man arrives in the fire truck at around 6:30 p.m., and he'll take orders from kids under the gazebo until there's no more kids left."

Ordiales said Hiwassee City Councilwoman Nancy Noblet headed up organizing the event this year, with help from more than two dozen volunteers decorating the square on Saturday, Nov. 17.

"We're in the process of finishing up," said Ordiales. "We still have tons of lights to put up, but we figured we'd take a break over Thanksgiving and then hit it hard and heavy next week."

Ordiales will serve as Master of Ceremonies during the event, and Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff

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Taylor brings the past to life with Hiwassee Academy presentation

By Mark Smith
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Towns County Historian Jerry Taylor presented the story of Hiwassee Academy, the precursor to Towns County High School, at the Towns County Historical Society's November meeting on Monday, Nov. 12.

For his presentation, Taylor dressed in the garb of the day and delivered a first-person accounting of Rev. Ferdinand Coello McConnell, who founded Hiwassee Academy in the late 1880s.

McConnell was born here in the north Georgia mountains in 1856, shortly after Towns County was organized.

Known as "Ferd" to his friends, Rev. McConnell "was a legend to the mountain folks, a favorite son. He loved the place of his roots, and the people loved him," said Taylor.

His memory is carried on throughout regionally with the namesake McConnell Memorial Baptist Church in Hiwassee and the Truett-McConnell College in Cleveland, among other locations scattered across the country.

After graduating from the Hicks School in Hayesville, North Carolina, McConnell went on to attend and graduate from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary at Louisville, Kentucky, and Mercer University in Georgia.

There is a monument at Mercer University inscribed



Jerry Taylor dressed in 19th century garb in the November meeting of the Towns County Historical Society.
Photo by Mark Smith

with "The Lord Save Us From An Ignorant Ministry," which Taylor said might well have been McConnell's motto and was certainly a guiding principle in his life.

McConnell conceived of Hiwassee Academy, and classes began in the spring of 1887 under the sponsorship of the Baptist Denomination.

Joining him in the endeavor, George W. Truett assumed charge of the school at just 19 years of age.

"The leadership of the early period of the school

consisted of such renowned Mercer graduates as George W. Truett, T. W. Kelley, John G. Harrison, Y. W. Jones and A. B. Greene," said Taylor.

Classes met in the Towns County Courthouse, "which at the time stood on the square, and in the old Masonic Lodge, which stood on what is now Mr. J. L. Hooper Jr.'s residential lot, until a building could be erected," said Taylor. "Classes also began meeting in the old Baptist Church in order to accommodate the expanding

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SPORTS

BASKETBALL
Nov. 30 @ Athens Christ. 7 PM

WRESTLING
King of the Mtn.
Nov. 30 @ 5 PM Dec. 1 @ 9 AM

FREE Smoke Detectors

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Hamilton Gardens Christmas Flower Sale

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Love Light Tree Lighting

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