

TCSO...from Page 1A

of the Year Award, Conner talked about the great group of officers working at the jail, highlighting one in particular – Ben Velasquez.

Velasquez was awarded Officer of the Year for always going above and beyond in helping out in every way he can and filling in whenever asked.

Supervisor of the Year was awarded to Sam Thornley for his efforts and hard work at the detention center. Above all, Thornley's No. 1 concern is safety, Conner said, adding that Thornley does an excellent job making sure the officers and inmates are always safe.

Following honors for the detention center officers, Conner presented awards to patrol deputies, and Rookie of the Year went to deputy Patrick Riley. Deputy of the Year was



Santa stopped by to visit with children of deputies and jailers in the Sheriff's Office Christmas Party at the Civic Center last week.
Photo by Lowell Nicholson

awarded to Ryan Forsyth, who is also the department's K-9 handler. Forsyth has been working with a new K-9 named Kota who will help the Sheriff's Office with its ongoing fight against drugs in Towns County,

Forsyth said.

Kota still has more training to complete before he is certified to go to work with Forsyth, but the Sheriff's Office is hopeful he will receive his certification shortly.

Deputy Mason Shook was honored with Supervisor of the Year. Shook is one of the department's field training officers.

Following the awards ceremony, the Sheriff's Office recognized Deputy J.R. Murray, promoting him to the position of corporal. Murray also just finished his field training

certification.

Murray started working with the Sheriff's Office in 2014, Clinton said, noting that he is a dedicated officer and a great person.

Ending the night, Sons of the American Revolution Vice President Sid Turner presented a Law Enforcement Commendation Medal to Deputy Forsyth.

Turner said that Forsyth deserved the medal because he serves and protects with a passion and has been instrumental in combatting drugs in the county. He is a

get-the-job-done type of officer and is always willing to stay on duty till the task at hand is completed.

Also during the Christmas dinner, CLEA Officer David Marrella received the Brain Wilson Service Award for all the volunteer hours and service he provides to the department every day.

After dinner, Marrella served as helper to Santa Claus for children and families to visit and take pictures with Old Saint Nick.

Firefighters...from Page 1A

thanked and given pins for their years of service, with Towns County Fire Chief Harold Copeland receiving his pin for 35 years of service.

Nicholson earned his 25-year service pin that night, while Cody Shelton received his 5-year pin, and Edward Berrong, son of Bruce Berrong, earned his 15-year service pin.

Wayne Ledford was awarded a commemorative pin and Fire Safety Commendation Award by Sid Turner and Jared Ogden of the Blue Ridge Mountains Chapter Sons of the American Revolution, "in recognition of accomplishments for outstanding contributions to protect human life and property by preventing injuries or casualties due to fires."

Rick Stanford received the Rookie of the Year Award, and Lownie was honored with the Chief's Award on Friday night.

Towns County Schools Transportation Director Scott Hamilton received the Citizenship Award for his



Santa took requests and posed for pictures with many a young'un on Friday, Dec. 13, at the Towns County Fire Rescue Christmas dinner.
Photo by Lowell Nicholson

years of service with the Fire Department.

Copeland made sure to give thanks to Bob Nichols for his regular \$50 monthly donation to Towns County Fire Rescue.

A few years ago, a house caught fire in Young Harris, and at the time most of the

firefighters were in Rabun County helping with a wildfire. Copeland said they were still able to save Nichols' house.

Representatives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church volunteered to greet guests as they walked in, and Hiwassee Mayor Liz Ordiales was also in attendance.

Brasstown Manor...from Page 1A

kind words for all the veterans in attendance.

McClain highlighted the importance of thanking all active and retired service men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces, reminding everyone of the freedoms secured by veterans and fought for every day by active duty troops.

The event featured live music entertainment by volunteer veterans Gary Lindblom on bass and Ash Todd on guitar. An abundance of Christmas spirit was evident at this year's celebration, as the band played lively Christmas tunes for everyone to enjoy.

Volunteers lined up at tables to hand out refreshments and snacks as residents made their way to seats. With song sheets in hand, members of the crowd requested their favorite Christmas songs to sing along with the Veterans Band.

Midway through the show, Metzler asked Moss to read a story from the scripture. With Christmas just around the corner, Moss said he wanted to read from Matthew 1:18, recounting the story of Jesus' birth.

The band performed a few more songs, and as the band played, Santa brightened everyone's spirits even more by coming through the front door with sleigh bells jingling.

Santa and the staff



The senior residents of Brasstown Manor love it when the local veterans come by to visit, as they did on Thursday, Dec. 5.
Photo by Chad Stack

members at Brasstown Manor passed out small bags of toiletries as gifts for everyone in the room.

With so many veterans residing at Brasstown Manor, Drummond said the volunteers make sure to visit the retirement community the first Thursday of each month.

Music has many therapeutic benefits, Drummond said, noting that when they have the band there playing, everyone's spirits hearts and spirits are lifted.

The staff members and administration at Brasstown

Manor have noticed all the positive and therapeutic benefits from the visits and music, and Drummond said he would one day like to be able to have the band perform every month.

And though the Veterans Band may not be able to make it out each month, Drummond said he and his fellow volunteers will always make their monthly visits to spend time with the residents of Brasstown Manor.

After the band ended its performance with "Silent Night," residents and their families took turns posing for pictures with Santa Claus.

Library...from Page 1A

have shelves in it with adult books on top and books for children.

"We want people to use this and take books from it and read them and bring it back here. If they don't bring it back, then that's no big deal, but we want it to be something that people use."

Garrett and her Agricultural Mechanic and Future Farmers of America students worked on the project, which took time and effort to complete.

"We tried to put as much detail into it as possible," Garret said. "We made the shelves, put new floor in, and made a roof for it to keep it watertight and make sure that the books don't get wet."

"These students have worked on it a lot, and it is solar-powered, so the lights aren't going to cost anything to run. We had a bunch of them that helped with the project, and it took a lot of effort to finish."

For the students, the project was beneficial because they got to learn things that will help them with other projects around their homes and in their free time, and it also served to get students more involved with their community.



Towns County High School students delivered this phone booth library to its new home on the Hiwassee Town Square on Friday, Dec. 13.
Photo by Lowell Nicholson

"It was a really good project for us because we learned a lot of new skills while working on it," TCHS senior Seth Nichols said. The phone booth library is doubling as Nichols' senior project.

Continued Nichols, "It was rough because we broke a lot of stuff trying to fix it, and it looked really rough when we got it, but it turned out nice and has been a great project."

"It has been pretty cool to see how it turned out. I'm probably looking into going into the electrical field after high school, and this is something that has helped sharpen new skills."

With the project being a community effort, Mayor Liz Ordiales is more than happy to welcome the new free library to the square.

"It is a great new addition and something really cool," Ordiales said. "We are thankful to the Rotary Club and the school for working to put this here in the square for people to use."

"And hopefully people do use it, because it took a lot of work and effort from our students to bring this to the community. I think the community will appreciate it, and it's great for everyone to have it here."