

## Gala...from Page 1A

throughout the lake, something that could be attributed to a number of things, including wastewater treatment.

Throughout his career, Kendall committed to working with the coalition through means of ordinances that would protect the environment and Lake Chatuge from erosion and harmful waste.

He also increased Towns County's financial support of the coalition from \$2,500 to \$5,000.

Finally, Kendall sponsored the coalition's application to the Section 319 Nonpoint Source Pollution Grant that would allow the coalition to hire a full-time watershed coordinator for Lake Chatuge.

When accepting his award, Kendall thanked Moore and the coalition for their continuous efforts to protect and preserve Lake Chatuge and all of the Hiwassee River Watershed.

"It is indeed an honor to be awarded this stewardship," said Kendall. "One of the reasons I decided to run for office was to protect our mountains and lakes.

"Lake Chatuge was built 75 years ago, and I'd say there have been more things put into the lake in the last 15 years than any of the former 60 years. This group here tonight is very important to protecting Lake Chatuge."

In regards to Mayor Mathis, her contributions toward protecting Lake Chatuge included city ordinances as well as allowing the Hiwassee Wastewater Treatment Plant staff to analyze samples provided by the watershed coordinator.

However, the city's main contribution boiled down to one major decision to assist in decreasing the excess nutrients in the lake.

In conjunction with the team at the Hiwassee Wastewater Plant, Mayor Mathis revamped the plant with a nutrient reduction system that would remove excess nutrients from the treated wastewater before being recycled back into Lake Chatuge.

According to Moore, in doing this, Lake Chatuge's excess nutrients caused by treated wastewater decreased from one-third to next to nothing.

When accepting her award, Mayor Mathis thanked all those with the coalition for working with the city and county to better Lake Chatuge, especially in regards to nutrient reduction.



**Hiwassee Mayor Barbara Mathis also received the Holman Water Quality Stewardship Award that evening, for her dedication to the preservation of Lake Chatuge.**



**Tim Ryan, a local auctioneer, held the event's live auction to end the evening.**



**More than 100 people attended the gala, which was held at Brasstown Valley Resort.**

"I want to thank all of you for this award," said Mayor Mathis. "We are so happy. I cannot begin to tell you how important this is to our current city staff and to the council members who have worked for many years to make the

protection of Lake Chatuge a priority for our city."

After the Holman Water Quality Stewardship Awards were presented, guests were treated to a live auction by local auctioneer and entertainer Tim Ryan.

## Mathis...from Page 1A

expressed their utmost confidence in Paramedic Greg Taylor, who is heavily credentialed in emergency medicine, to become the county's first new EMS director in 33 years.

"There is no finer individual or paramedic that you will find in the state or in the nation or in the world," said Mathis. "This guy knows what he's doing. I would trust him alongside with any emergency room physician."

Mathis received words of appreciation himself that evening, as Bradshaw spoke for several minutes on Mathis' exemplary work history in the county, as well as what he'll be doing in his full-time EMA position.

"What he's going to continue to keep doing for the county is making sure our emergency plans are kept up to date, to be a qualified agency to receive federal and state funding during emergency situations," said Bradshaw, after touching on the tens of thousands of dollars in damages incurred during rain storms at the end of 2015, beginning of 2016.

Continued Bradshaw: "There's a lot of paperwork that goes along with that. It is hard to do dual positions in that. We don't want to lose money if we have an emergency, a catastrophe. We're putting plans in place for FEMA that we make sure we get every dime that is due back to us."

As full-time EMA director, Mathis will also have time to pursue grant funding to bring even more money into Towns County in areas of public safety.

Bradshaw presented Mathis with a plaque recognizing his 40 years of service to the county. He has been an EMT since 1977 and EMS director since 1984, the same year he became Towns County's first paramedic.

"Also under Rickey, he'll be overseeing the safety programs for Towns County employees," said Bradshaw. "That's very big. There's a lot of things that we haven't done that we can do that will help lower our worker's comp, so we're working with Rickey on that in trying to identify these things, and getting policies in place so that we can do that."

Added Bradshaw: "Rickey will also serve as the Drug Policy Enforcement Agent. We are implementing a new drug policy, which Rickey is working on now. Once implemented, he will oversee the random testing and



**Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw**



**Bobbie Parker, Towns County Senior Program Director**



**Judy Moss speaking on Coast2CoastRx discount prescription card.**

updates of that policy.

"Also, he will continue to supervise and oversee the transit employees, and ensure compliance with the federal and transit grant requirements."

Towns County Senior Program Director Bobbie Parker accepted a proclamation signing from Bradshaw in honor of "March for Meals" month in the meeting, and Judy Moss presented the Coast2CoastRx prescription discount card.

Towns County residents can find information about the

free prescription discount card program at public spaces all around town, or can visit [www.coast2coastrx.com](http://www.coast2coastrx.com).

Each use of the discount card, which is not to be confused with insurance, guarantees \$1.25 goes toward helping the Towns County Fire Department.

Check back next week for more coverage of the Feb. 21 county meeting, to include Steve Holmes' retirement award from the county.