

Mathis...from Page 1A

and negotiate with such third parties, and present proposed contracts to the city council for approval after review by the city attorney."

Mayor Mathis said that she has full faith in Ordiales' ability to run the city between now and the November election, and that she's already been a big help at city hall during this time of transition.

As to why Mayor Mathis has decided to retire sometime in the next two months, she said that the timing just feels right.

"Spring, summer - I want to enjoy it, and I want to go ahead and retire before (the end of the year), to where I can enjoy the spring and summer months," said Mayor Mathis. "And I'm expecting my first great-grandchild in July, and I want to enjoy it."

Her message to Hiawasse residents, after 21 long years of service as their mayor, is one of solidarity.

"I just want to tell them how much I've enjoyed working with them," said Mayor Mathis. "The city is my major concern. I live in the city and I love the city, I love the people in the city, and I just want to see it grow and thrive."

Ordiales said that she is ready to carry out the business of the city as the mayor works toward retirement, so that she may, as the authorization document states, "facilitate the transition as to benefit the public health, safety and welfare."

"I'd like to thank Barbara for her many years of service to our city," said Ordiales. "She has represented us very



Hiawasse City Councilman Jay Chastain Jr. gives a presentation in the Tuesday, March 7, regular monthly meeting.



Councilwoman Rayette Ross

gracefully, and I wish her all the best in her retirement.

"I want to assure the citizens of Hiawasse that we will continue to do what is right for the city. I will strive to fulfill my campaign slogan, 'TEE it up for Hiawasse,' and ensure we have Transparency, Effectiveness and Efficiency."

In last week's regular

meeting of Mayor Mathis and Hiawasse City Council, the council held a second reading and adoption of the 2017 Hiawasse Sign Ordinance, and the first reading of an ordinance to have the county take back the running of the city's elections.

Post Office...from Page 1A

busy Main Street.

She decided to do a little research after witnessing that collision, and she discovered through the Hiawasse Police Department that there had been 18 documented motor vehicle accidents at the post office in just the last six years.

Along with improved traffic safety conditions, another side effect of the new one-way is an added drive-up mail drop box for post office customers, which the post office didn't want to install before because it would have been in the way of inbound traffic from Ingles.

In order to get the one-way moving, Ordiales had to contact and get permission from all parties involved, including GDOT, the Hiawasse Postmaster, Ingles Corporate and the landowner who leases the property to the U.S. Postal Service.

Shane Giles of GDOT, who also lives in Hiawasse, is coordinating the signs for the city, and he said that GDOT was glad to see the post office adopt a one-way traffic flow because it would make that congested area of Main Street safer to navigate.



In light of the new one-way designation, the Hiawasse Post Office installed a drive-up mailbox last week for customers who don't want to get out of their cars.

Plans to re-stripe the parking lot are in the works, including slanted parking spots to make the one-way that much more apparent to post office customers.

This is the second safety improvement to that particular area of Main Street, as in recent months, the city completed a new crosswalk at

the Hiawasse Post Office. That project had been in the works for several years, and finally saw construction begin last October.

"I hope that people see we're trying to do things to help the city, and to help us progress and develop and do the right thing for the citizens," said Ordiales.

Zoning...from Page 1A

potentially alter the topography of the county if this exemption lent to an increase of taller buildings throughout the county.

Since the denied request, the council and Young Harris Mayor Andrea Gibby have been working toward a solution that would allow YHC to build in the overlay district while still adhering to the ordinance. During last month's meeting, the council decided to move forward with an amendment to the zoning ordinance that would allow the college to begin construction.

After the February meeting, Young Harris City Attorney Marvin Harkins began working on a draft for the amendment and presented it to the council during last week's meeting.

"This is a variance request," said Harkins. "Last month, the council tabled a variance request in favor of a zoning ordinance that would change the text of the overlay to allow the height that the college wants for construction."

"The request was to change the name of Zone A, which is the interior part of the campus, to core campus. What I did instead was basically take the name out of Zone A and Zone B. There is no geographic name for each zone now."

"This will be changing the text of the ordinance as well as the map of the overlay district."

As it stands, the overlay district is split into two separate sections, Zone A and Zone B. Up until this point, Zone A has consisted of the YHC core campus and Zone B has been the property across the street, located on the intersection of Main Street and Murphy Street.



Young Harris Mayor Andrea Gibby

After the amendment of the zoning ordinance for the overlay district, both districts will be under the same height requirement, allowing for Zone B, where YHC intends to build, to no longer be under a height restriction that was previously the cause of denied construction.

"This will protect the intent of Zone B," said Mayor Gibby. "Zone A was to allow for more dense building in the core part of the campus and Zone B was to protect homeowners."

"So, the change would reflect what was discussed last month while still maintaining the intent of both Zone A and Zone B in the overlay district."

Because Zone A lies inside what is now known as the YHC proper campus, the height restriction is 55 feet, whereas District B has a height restriction of 40 feet. However, after the amendment, both properties will fall under the restrictions of Zone A.

As long as YHC abides by those restrictions, the intended

construction on Zone B will be in compliance with the ordinance. However, under the new zoning, there will not be a 50-foot setback requirement from residential homes for Zone B since that was never a requirement for Zone A. According to Harkins, this is the only foreseeable problem he has found thus far. After conversation concerning the setback, the council decided that they wished to wait until a public hearing was held to determine whether they wanted to keep with the 50-foot setback and simply grant a variance for buildings currently in place that may be in violation of the requirement.

This would not apply to all of YHC campus because not all of the college lies within either Zone A or Zone B because there was never a re-zoning of certain areas.

The council will be holding a public hearing concerning the amendment of the zoning ordinance on Tuesday, April 4, at 6:45 p.m. at Young Harris City Hall.

BRMEMC...from Page 1A

aboveboard with me.

"Now, I'm trying to draw those employees out of the foxholes. We've had three years of opportunity cost lost because everybody's been so scared."

"It's a new day. The sun is shining. We need to get out there, we need to thump our chests again and say, hey, we're the EMC. We are your trusted energy advisor, we're here to provide great things to the North Georgia and Western North Carolina mountains."

Much of Nelms' message that Thursday was focused on what he and the board have been working on lately, including continued transparency, but also organizing the upcoming town hall meetings in Union and Towns counties.

The meetings are meant to give the membership direct access to EMC board members, to ask of them questions and to share with them concerns that people have about their membership.

In Union County, the

town hall will take place on Thursday, March 23, at 6 p.m. North Georgia Technical College will host the meeting, which is located at 121 Meeks Ave. in Blairsville.

The Towns County town hall meeting will be held on Thursday, April 13, at 6 p.m., hosted at the Towns County Recreation and Conference Center at 150 Foster Park Road in Young Harris.

Nelms also announced a change of scenery for this year's annual meeting, the venue for which has changed from Anderson Music Hall at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds to the Union County Schools Fine Arts Center.

This spring, Nelms said the EMC will hold strategic planning sessions, where the board and EMC staff will gather to forge common goals.

"Right now, engineering's working on one thing, operations is working on their thing, finance on theirs, and I'm working on some things," said Nelms. "But if

we're not all singing off the same sheet of music, we're not combining forces - we're just all working on our own disparate things."

"I feel like we need to have a common focus, and I think that's where the strategic planning will come in and certainly help."

Fiber-optic internet was another topic of the meeting, and Nelms readily addressed concerns about access to the much-heralded internet delivery service.

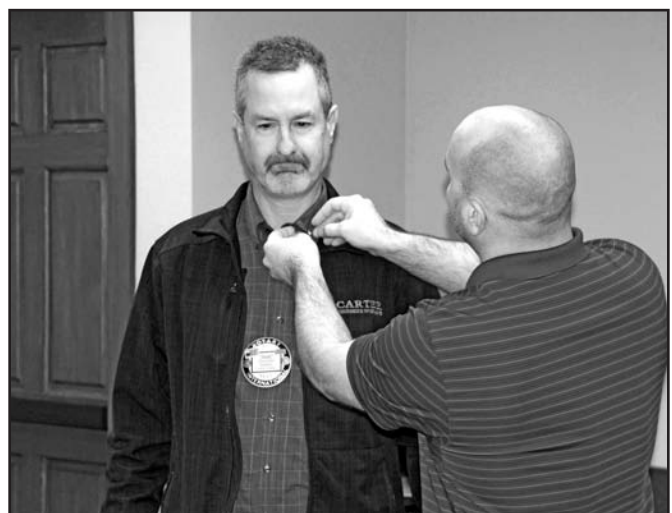
"I don't know that many residents know, but we've got 1,100 miles of fiber already installed," said Nelms. "Those 1,100 miles cross about 20,000 homes, and we've only got 6,000 people signed up."

"So, the issue I'm facing is, do I continue to grow and have a 30 percent take rate? Or do I figure out my marketing, and do I up that take rate to make sure I'm getting the full value of the infrastructure that I already have installed so that then I can have more revenue to build out?"

"And the latter is what I've chosen. We're working right now with North Georgia Network, our provider for our bandwidth, to try to develop a new marketing strategy so that we can sell things a little better."

Nelms also reiterated his commitment to challenging the Tennessee Valley Authority on incremental annual rate hikes that will increase electric bills by greater than 10 percent from current rates after all increases have gone into effect by 2023.

Joseph Goble, president of Union County Rotary, gave Nelms a warm introduction in the noon meeting, and lunch was prepared by Amazing Grace Catering.



Union County Rotary Club President Joseph Goble pins a Paul Harris Award to fellow Rotarian Scott Carter's shirt.

Judd...from Page 1A

while there are many talented musicians in the world, Judd takes one of the top spots for him because of her incredible voice and powerful lyrics.

"I don't really care what song she plays, I love them all," said Phillip. "She's just so talented, I can't sit down and say I like one song over the next because they're all fantastic. Anything she plays will be a joy to listen to."

The Mosses were not the only ones thrilled to be in the same music hall as Wynonna Judd. Of the two opening acts for the evening, Ashley McBryde and the Kurt Thomas Band, McBryde said she could hardly believe that she was in the same building as Judd, let alone performing on the same stage.

"It's knee wobbling," said McBryde. "She's one of my heroes. I grew up trying to be like her so it's just unbelievable to even be on the same stage as her. I really can't believe it."

McBryde was recently signed to William Morris booking agency and has toured with Willie Nelson, Hank Williams Jr., and many more but, for her, Saturday's concert was the most amazing she had ever performed.

The audience clapped their hands and bobbed their heads and danced the night away as Judd put on an electrifying concert. But while fans thought they were the lucky ones for seeing her, Judd made sure everyone in the building knew she was the who was truly fortunate.

"I'm so glad to be here," said Judd. "There isn't anywhere I'd rather be tonight. Thank you so much for coming out tonight. After 35 years, thank you for still showing up



Wynonna Judd



The Hall was packed on Saturday night, as Judd fans poured into Hiawasse to see her fabulous performance.

to support me.

"You've been there for me for a long time and I think you all believed in me more than I believed in myself sometimes. I don't know where I'd be without you guys, honestly. So, thank you."

Next on the roster for

the Anderson Music Hall is renowned modern Christian group, Mercy Me, who will be playing on Saturday, March 25. Tickets are still on sale and can be purchased at www.georgiamountainfairgrounds.com.

War I war veterans into one of the most influential nonprofit veterans group in the nation.

Now, there are local posts in almost every county across the U.S., spanning across all 50 states as well as Washington D.C., Puerto Rico, Mexico, the Philippines and France with more than 2.4 million members in 14,000 posts around the world.

To qualify as an American Legion member, a person must have served active duty for at least one day during an eligibility period determined by the federal government and have been honorably discharged or discharged with honorable circumstances.

For more information on the American Legion, visit www.legion.org.

Celtic Concert

The Brasstown Concert Association presents The Celtic Company with Susan Clearman at 2:30 p.m. Sunday, April 2 in Keith House, John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, NC. No reservations required. Tickets \$18 adults, \$10 students. For information contact a BCA Board member at 828-837-1863, brassstownconcertnews@gmail.com or find us on Facebook.

Hoyt...from Page 1A

said John Harkins, American Legion Post 23 Commander. "Based on national files, each post is given the opportunity to give this certificate to members of your post who qualify."

"Members who are to receive this certificate are to be honored in an appropriate ceremony to recognize their long-time service and support of the ideals and principles of the American Legion."

"Surpassing this milestone in the American Legion exemplifies the endurance of our organization as a leading advocate for veterans rights. Your American Legion very much appreciates your continuous support and your achievement proves that you are still serving America."

"It gives me great pleasure in presenting a certificate for 60 years of continuous service to one James Hoyt."

Hoyt was unaware of the award he was receiving and was humbled by the men and women in the Post who thought to bestow him with the plaque. However, according to Hoyt, it was simply his duty to serve, as he served many years ago in the

United States Military.

"I can't believe it's been 60 years," said Hoyt. "Of those 60 years, the 60th has by far been the best of them all, the best that I ever had. This is because we have one big family - the legion, the auxiliary, the Sons of the American Legion and the riders."

"There aren't many posts in all of North America that can say they have a full family. So, thank you very much for supporting me as your commander and helping me to achieve those pentacles. It will always be with me until I hit the ground."

Hoyt is only one of many brave men and women who have served in the United States Military and continued to serve their communities through the valiant efforts of American Legion posts across the country.

The American Legion began as a charter through the United States Congress in 1919 as a veterans organization for patriotic citizens who served their country. Throughout the years, the legion progressed from a small group of World