

# Towns County Herald

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## MECHS graduates walk the stage in Fannin County

By Todd Forrest  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

BLUE RIDGE – Mountain Education Center Charter High School hosted its commencement exercises Thursday, May 25, at the Fannin County High School Performing Arts Center to bid farewell to 42 graduates from the Fannin and Union County sites.

Family and friends of the MECHS Class of 2017 packed the auditorium for the hour-long festivities that included a Valedictory Address from Fannin County's Haley Campbell along with a Union Site High Honors address from Justin Anderson.

"It's a great honor to be the Union Site High Honor Graduate from the MECHS Class of 2017," Anderson said during his address. "I would like to recognize my

family and friends who have supported and encouraged me throughout the years. I would also like to express a special thanks and appreciation to all of our teachers that helped us achieve our goals.

"Mountain Education Charter High School has provided a unique learning environment for all of us. Its flexible schedule has allowed many students to go to school while working. MECHS' Mentor program, as well as the staff have taken an active role in helping many of us graduate."

Anderson wrapped up his address with a quote from Leo Tolstoy's novel "War and Peace."

"The strongest of all warriors are these two – Time and Patience."

The exercises opened with the Pledge of Allegiance, led by Abigail Shepard, a



MECHS Administrator Roy Perren. Photo/Todd Forrest

performance of the National Anthem by Mary Kate Dickey, a welcome from Fannin site administrator Betsy Hyde and a greeting from Darion

Kinderknecht.

Following the valedictory address, the County site administrator Roy Perren recognized the 2017

class and its honor graduates then provided a glimpse of the growth that the school has witnessed in its 24 years while paying homage to the founding father of MECHS, former Union County High School Principal Wade Smith.

"In 1993 Mountain Education Charter High School opened in Union County and we graduated 3 students," he said. "Since then we've grown steadily year-after-year and this year, we expect to graduate over 300 students. Mountain Education Charter High School started out as 'Mountain Education Center' in 1993 as the vision of a man who really had a passion for children, and I dare say we wouldn't be standing here today without that vision, and I'd like to recognize him, as he is here with us today, Mr. Wade Smith."

Following Perren's

address, Fannin site administrator Dr. Scott Ramsey awarded honor graduate Kelly Dye for becoming the first Fannin site student to complete the pathway program.

"Kelly walked her Pathway in healthcare and earned her CNA certification," Ramsey said. "This was made possible not only through Kelly's hard work, and the work of the faculty that worked with her, but also, through the strong collaboration with the Fannin County School system."

"Kelly was able to participate in clinical hours at the high school, and she was also able to test at the high school to prevent her from having to go off to take the test. This underscores the importance of a strong working relationship with the (school) system, the county and the MECHS and we all work

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## Farmers Market open for season, looking for vendors

By Lily Avery  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Across from the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds, right next door to the beach, sits the Towns County Farmers Market, stocked with all the fresh local fruits, vegetables, jams and plants that anyone could ask for and now it is open for business.

While Saturday, May 27, marks the market's first day of the season, it will be open every Saturday morning from 9 a.m. until noon, from now until September.

"We have lots of plants," said Joan Crothers, market organizer. "We have Master Gardeners with information on growing everything and anything. We'll have vegetables coming in pretty soon, too. We're having a good attendance for our first day."



Peggy West and Sheleila O'Neal at the Towns County Farmers Market on Opening Day, Saturday, May 27. Photo/Lily Avery

Unlike previous years where vendors were left to fend for themselves against the elements, each merchant

now has the luxury of setting up shop beneath a canopy tent to protect against the hot sun and

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## State says Hiawasse water is good to flow

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

The City of Hiawasse's complete water infrastructure recently received visitors from the state, and all departments passed the three days' worth of routine inspections.

Getting the thumbs up were the city's Water Treatment Plant, Sewer Plant and Water Distribution department.

The flow of water supplying the city's 2,200 customers throughout Towns County is straightforward. Water is pumped out of Lake Chatuge at the Water Treatment Facility, which is overseen by Randy Warne.

There, the water is filtered and treated before heading to homes and



A view of some of the inner workings in the Hiawasse Water Treatment Plant.

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## LandFest to bring new opportunities to Towns County

By Lily Avery  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Not only is the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds hosting a new festival this year – Dailey & Vincent LandFest in the Mountains – now there is a possibility for funding during the fest as well.

On Wednesday, May 24, General Manager Hilda Thomason held an open meeting for public officials and GMF board members to discuss the proposed filming at the Anderson Music Hall this fall.

LandFest, an annual signature event for American Bluegrass group Dailey & Vincent, outgrew its previous location in Denton, North Carolina, lending to the fifth and biggest year yet landing

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Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds General Manager Hilda Thomason, center, with Jamie Dailey, left, and Darrin Vincent, right. Photo/Lily Avery

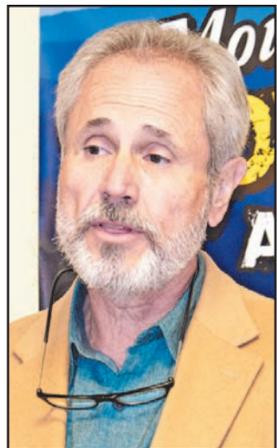
## Cummings visits from Union County, talks Farmers Market

By Lily Avery  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

YOUNG HARRIS – Union County Farmers Market Manager Mickey Cummings paid a visit to Towns County residents to talk vendors, produce and more at the Mountain Movers and Shakers weekly meeting at Mary's Southern Grill on Friday, May 26.

Although Towns County has its own farmers market, Cummings wanted to explain the regional impact of the Union County Farmers Market with locals, and extend a warm welcome to any who wished to get involved.

"When we started at the (Union County) courthouse all those years ago, we had 30 vendors," said Cummings.



Mickey Cummings

"At the new Farmers Market, we have 84 stalls and most of

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## National Poppy Day

By Lily Avery  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Last week, many may have noticed the fine men and women of the various veteran associations around the community passing out small red poppies to passersby and wondered why.

The answer is simple, National Poppy Day. Friday, May 26, the United States celebrated its first National Poppy Day and the Towns County veterans brought that celebration to Hiawasse.

"This is the first year that it's been done nationally," said Scott Drummond, U.S. Coastguard veteran. "We typically only hand out poppies during things like Memorial Day and Veteran's Day. But that was on a small scale



Veterans Bart Rogers and Scott Drummond. Photo/Lily Avery

compared to what it is now.

"There are veterans organizations doing this all across the United States right

now."

Poppy Day has been celebrated in various countries

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## Republican Party hears from Election Board appointees

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

YOUNG HARRIS – Wednesday, June 14, the Towns County Board of Elections will likely vote to do away with the Macedonia precinct.

The move will consolidate Macedonia voters into the Hiawasse precinct, bringing the number of precincts in the county from four to three, including Young Harris and Tate City.

In its May regular meeting, the board held what turned out to be a preliminary vote on the measure.

That vote ended 3-2, with Barbara Shook and

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Rob Murray and Scott Ledford of the Towns County Board of Elections and Registration

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**Home and Garden Show**  
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**Apply Now to Add Veteran's Names to Monument**  
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