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Library to debut \$1 million renovation on Nov. 5

News Special to
Towns County Herald

YOUNG HARRIS – Mountain Regional Library is unveiling the results of its \$1 million renovation.

The library will host an open house and ribbon-cutting ceremony for the public on Saturday, Nov. 5, from 10 a.m. until noon.

Since December of 2015, residents have had to go to the library's temporary location within the old Blue Ridge Mountain EMC to check out their books, while the entire Miller Street location was

gutted for new office space, windows, flooring, lighting and shelving arrangements.

The new library design will feature an enclosed children's area, an enclosed computer lab, a brand new community room with space for a used bookstore.

"This is the culmination of many years of effort," said Vince Stone, director of the Mountain Regional Library System. "The fundraising part of this project took place before my arrival, for which I am truly grateful. With the funding, we are able to provide the community with a facility we can all be truly proud of."

Stone added that, though the current building was not expanded, the renovations have made much better use of the existing space.

"This building was constructed back in 1978," said Stone. "We had to use a large portion of our budget regarding things up to date regarding current building codes and making it ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant."

"But after those things were taken care of, we also were able to do some really cool things that we can't wait to show our patrons."

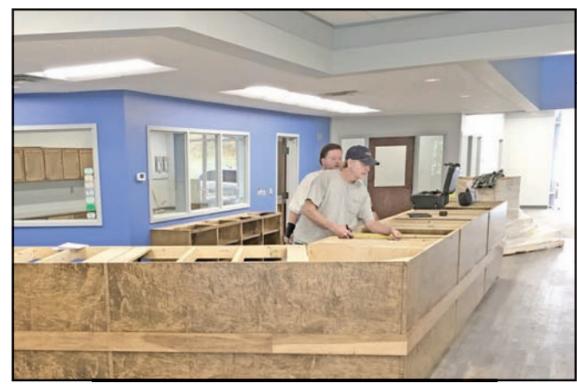
The library has

implemented a combination of old-school construction such as aged woodwork and mountain stone, with modern touches in lighting and technology.

Electrical outlets accompany study desks for those wanting to charge their laptops or phones at the library, and the Wi-Fi technology has been boosted site-wide to give patrons better access in the parking lot for afterhours use.

Plus, the new community room portion of the building is now a state-

See *Library*, Page 6A



Here is a sneak peek inside the \$1 million renovation at the Mountain Regional Library. The look is a mix of modern and mountain aesthetics

Fairgrounds serves up craft brew, stew and barbeque

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Nothing says fall quite like a festival at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds, with the crisp mountain air and beautiful turning leaves. Joining the ranks of the popular fall events this year, the fairgrounds hosted its first Appalachian Craft Brew, Stew & Que Festival on Saturday, Oct. 22.

Craft brew festivals have been gaining popularity over the past decade, with the rise of Shop Local and D.I.Y. (Do It Yourself) culture, and Fairgrounds General Manager Hilda Thomason did not want to miss out on all the fun.

"I've been to all these craft beer festivals in all these cities, and how many people attend them and how big the craft breweries are



The crisp fall weather served as the backdrop for the first ever Appalachian Brew, Stew and Que Festival at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds on Saturday, Oct. 22

getting to be, especially in Georgia, North Carolina and a lot of the surrounding states," said Thomason. "So I thought, well, we have this great venue

and we need to have a craft beer festival.

"It's something I thought would go over really well here

See *Fairgrounds*, Page 6A

Ballot initiatives aim to amend state constitution



Dr. Darren Berrong

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Official General Election Ballot for the state of Georgia features four proposed amendments to the Georgia Constitution.

Voters will be directly responsible for deciding whether or not these amendments pass or fail at the ballot box, meaning that voters will be deciding which, if any, amendments will make it to the state constitution.

Therefore, it is important that voters understand what each amendment means in order to make informed decisions about

potentially changing the state constitution.

The four amendments were placed on the ballot by Georgia legislators with the purpose of garnering support from Georgia voters.

With Voters Election early voting well underway

and Election Day rapidly approaching, here's a look at each of the proposed constitutional amendments and what they actually mean.

Amendment 1
Ballot Title: "Provides greater flexibility and state

See *Ballot*, Page 6A

Early voting continues through Nov. 4



Early voting is a popular option for many residents during this year's General Election season.

See *Voting*, Page 6A

Commissioner turns over key to Towns County's Old Rock Jail

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Preservation of Towns County's historical sites and buildings is something that Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall holds dear. Commissioner Kendall brought such matters to light at the county's monthly meeting on Thursday, Oct. 20.

In September, the Towns County Historical Society presented a proposal to use the Old Rock Jail as a museum of local history as well as a research center for residents and visitors wishing to further explore native culture.

Under the proposal, the Historical Society would restore the jail, and open it up to the public on a weekly basis for tours, free of



Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall presents the keys to the Old Rock Jail to Towns County Historical Society President Sandra Greene in the Thursday, Oct. 20, county meeting

charge.

In an effort to perpetuate the restoration of historical

locations, Commission Kendall held the first reading of a county

See *Jail*, Page 6A

County officials talk disaster planning

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

First Responders met with Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall and Towns County Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) Emergency Coordinator, Oct. 19, at the Towns County Courthouse to discuss plans for the county in case of a natural disaster or severe weather storm.

According to its website, ARES consists of licensed amateurs who have voluntarily registered their qualifications and equipment with their local ARES leadership for communications duty in the public services when disaster strikes.

Essentially, these individuals will provide



Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall called a meeting in his office on Wednesday, Oct. 19, to talk about what the county would do in different crisis situations.

means of communication for all county first responders to assist residents if need be during a crisis. Such crises would include hurricanes, tornadoes, flooding, cold weather storms and

normal radio communication knockouts.

If such circumstances were to arise, they could

See *Disaster*, Page 6A

Young Harris discusses comprehensive planning

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

YOUNG HARRIS – Residents, including people who live just outside of the city limits, attended a meeting earlier in October at Young Harris City Hall to discuss the joint 2016 Comprehensive Plan Survey.

The survey is an effort being conducted by the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission to get Towns County, Hiwassee and Young Harris all on the same page for the purposes of future development and capital projects.

GMRC Regional Planner Joe Rothwell attended the meeting to discuss the survey, as well as to answer questions afterward.

"Want to tell your civic leaders what your community should be like in 20 to 30 years?"



Joe Rothwell with the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission spoke with residents in an October comprehensive planning meeting

from the survey. "Want to tell them which issues you feel are most important? Here's your chance!"

The survey continues: "Your hometown can only

achieve its vision if it knows what that vision is, so please take part in this process and tell us your vision for the future of

See *Planning*, Page 8A

Smith delivers 4-H update in weekly meeting

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

YOUNG HARRIS – Towns County Extension Associate Andrew Smith shared upcoming 4-H projects and endeavors with the Mountain Movers and Shakers at the weekly meeting on Friday, Oct. 21, at Mary's Southern Grill.

While this is not the first time Smith has spoken to the Movers and Shakers, having introduced himself to the group when he first joined the extension office back in July, this was Smith's first go at sharing the ins and outs of his job.

Since taking over the Towns County 4-H program, Smith has dedicated himself to making sure all students have the opportunity to find their niche within 4-H.

One way he wishes



Andrew Smith is the Towns County 4-H coordinator and office manager.

to accomplish this goal is through countless projects that span across a vast array of topics, from terrariums to care packages to speech competitions.

"We started school back

in August with just my fourth, fifth and sixth-graders," said Smith. "That's the easiest 4-H club to start with because state education standards require me to be in the classroom. So, those kids have to see me whether they like me or not. That makes for a great and easy 4-H program."

Smith visits the fourth, fifth and sixth-grade classrooms once or twice a month, depending on what the students are working on at the time, and teaches a program that overlaps with current class curriculum.

4-H is a supportive contributor of the Georgia Performance Standards, allowing the students to be graded on the project produced through the 4-H programs. Each grade level focuses on different projects throughout the year that is specific to their

See *4-H*, Page 8A

2 Sections 16 Pages
Lake Levels
Blue Ridge 1,668.65
Chatuge 1,916.95
Nottely 1,761.38

Inside
Arrests 2A
Church 4B
Classifieds 6B
Opinion 4A
Legals 7B
Obits 5B
Sports 2B

Fall
Wellness
Tailgate
Party
See page 7A

Dancing with
the N. GA
STARS
Nov. 5th
See page 1B

Sponsor a
Foster Child
for
Christmas
See page 2A

Football
Fri. Oct. 28 @ Lakeview
7:30 PM
Cross Country
Thurs Oct 27 2:15 PM
Georgia Military College