

Lampert appointed to health advisory council

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall appointed Roger Lampert to be a representative for Towns County on the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities Region One Advisory Council on Tuesday, Nov. 22, at the Towns County Courthouse.

According to the website, the DBHDD provides treatment and support services to people with mental health challenges and substance use disorders, and assists individuals who live with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Lampert will act as a liaison on behalf of the county to help area residents in need of substance abuse or mental health assistance to find a suitable outlet of support and proper services to live full and normal lives.

Lampert's term serving on the DBHDD Advisory Council will run until Nov. 21, 2019.

"I was asked to be on the council through my involvement with SMART Recovery," said Lampert. "We help people with substance abuse. It's open to the public, to anyone who wishes to further their recovery or anything like that. SMART Recovery services everyone, it doesn't matter. We help with all types of addictions, not just alcohol, but also any other kind of substance abuse or addictive behavior that anyone might want to leave behind."

"We operate on a hierarchy of values, basically a scientific-based method of recovery. We use tools like cross-benefit analysis and unconditional self-acceptance."

"I have found it to be very complete as far as educating people about their substance abuse and maintaining motivation to continue on the road to recovery."

SMART Recovery stands for Self-Management and Recovery Training, and is a program that offers a safe place to discuss behavioral patterns, addiction triggers and any type of behaviors that might be self-harming or harmful to others.

SMART Recovery



Roger Lampert of SMART Recovery with Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall. Photo/Lily Avery

operates on a four-point program that combines various techniques of addiction management.

The steps are: building and maintaining motivation; coping with urges; managing thoughts, feelings and behaviors; and living a balanced life.

"This is more or less what the state of Georgia's definition of recovery is," said Lampert. "The first thing is of course your health, and then the second most important thing is your purpose in life, followed by family and community. One of the reasons why I was so excited about this appointment to the Georgia Behavioral Health was because we share the same goals."

"I believe with a little patience, practice and a little training that I'll do just fine. The fit, to me in my opinion, is an excellent fit. I believe that it will be a great community service."

A typical SMART Recovery class is unlike most addiction recovery classes in that the focus is not on the type of addiction, nor the critical analysis of the addiction problem, but in finding understanding about the problem and situation.

"At a typical meeting we usually start by asking people to go around the room and talk about how their week has been, if they have any

kind of issues that they'd like to have addressed," said Lampert. "After that, two or three subjects are picked from the (discourse) and we brainstorm and go through the tools of SMART Recovery to try and make sense of it."

"We encourage crosstalk - not crosstalk that is critical of someone's behavior or of them or what they're doing, but to help support the other person. Maybe someone else has dealt with a similar issue, and what they've done to overcome that issue might be helpful to another person."

"We try to make sure that we're treating each other with respect and kindness, because it's enough with the stigma that's attached to someone who has this kind of abuse problem, we don't need to embarrass or shame anyone while they're in there."

Lampert hosts SMART Recovery classes at the Red Cross Building in Young Harris on the second and third Wednesdays of each month, at 7 p.m. He also holds classes in Blairsville at the Haralson Memorial Civic Center on the first and third Mondays of each month at 7 p.m.

All of these services are completely free, though donations are welcomed and accepted. For more information on SMART Recovery, visit www.smartrecovery.org.

Drought...from Page 1A

in the water would damage your pipes. Turn the softener off while on vacation.

Insulate your water pipes to reduce heat loss and prevent them from breaking.

Kitchen:

Operate automatic dishwashers only when they are fully loaded.

Hand wash dishes by filling two containers - one with soapy water and the other with rinse water containing a small amount of chlorine bleach.

Clean vegetables in a pan filled with water rather than running water from the tap.

Start a compost pile as an alternate method of disposing of food waste or simply dispose of food in the garbage. (Kitchen sink disposals require a lot of water to operate properly).

Store drinking water in the refrigerator. Do not let the tap run while you are waiting for water to cool.

Avoid wasting water waiting for it to get hot. Capture it for other uses such as plant watering or heat it on the stove

or in a microwave.

Avoid rinsing dishes before placing them in the dishwasher; just remove large particles of food. (Most dishwashers can clean soiled dishes very well, so dishes do not have to be rinsed before washing).

Avoid using running water to thaw meat or other frozen foods. Defrost food overnight in the refrigerator or use the defrost setting on your microwave oven.

Laundry:

Operate automatic clothes washers only when they are fully loaded or set the water level for the size of your load.

Bathroom:

Consider purchasing a low-volume toilet that uses less than half the water of older models. Note: In many areas, low-volume units are required by law.

Install a toilet displacement device to cut down on the amount of water needed to flush.

Place a one-gallon

plastic jug of water into the tank to displace toilet flow (do not use a brick, it may dissolve and loose pieces may cause damage to the internal parts). Be sure installation does not interfere with the operating parts.

Replace your showerhead with an ultra-low-flow version.

Place a bucket in the shower to catch excess water for watering plants.

Avoid flushing the toilet unnecessarily. Dispose of tissues, insects, and other similar waste in the trash rather than the toilet.

Avoid taking baths - take short showers - turn on water only to get wet and lather and then again to rinse off.

Avoid letting the water run while brushing your teeth, washing your face, or shaving.

Water Conservation Tip:

When purchasing a new appliance, look for one offering several different cycles. This will allow you to select more energy and water efficient cycles when heavy duty cleaning is not required.

Commissioner...from Page 1A

building height code as each now exists in place during the term of this agreement," wrote Commissioner Kendall in a letter to the Young Harris City Council prior to the city's November meeting. "And each local government will vigorously defend this building limitation if subject to judicial review."

At issue here is Commissioner Kendall's fear that, should he grant an exemption to Young Harris and in effect allow the developer to build a "high rise" building, there would be unwanted consequences for the rest of Towns County and its residents.

As far as the commissioner is concerned, granting an exemption in this instance would mean that the county would have to "legally and morally" grant future exemptions for height variances on other proposed building projects in the future, which would in turn cause ISO ratings to go up since it would be costlier to guarantee protection for a greater number of taller buildings.

"With Towns County taxpayers and fire department providing costly fire protection, and ISO ratings being jeopardized as the number of higher buildings increase, Towns County property owners outside the cities would be legally and morally entitled to construct high buildings, leading to the elimination of Towns County Building Height Restriction Ordinance," wrote Commissioner Kendall.

Continued the letter: "The long range impact could drastically change our county with high buildings on our mountains, traffic and noise congestion and higher property taxes."

Currently, the county has an ISO rating of 5, which according to the commissioner saves residents many dollars in insurance premiums over the years.



Young Harris Mayor Andrea Gibby, right, with City Clerk/Finance Officer Shirley Jarrard in the Nov. 1 meeting.

And while he said he wants to work with Young Harris - suggesting that councilmembers get Young Harris College to expand its Overlay District, in which case the developers wouldn't need a variance - the commissioner wants to preserve that ISO rating for as long as possible.

As for the city, one of their concerns is, should the City of Young Harris grant the variance without the county's express guarantee that fire protection will remain in place, they might have to purchase a fire truck to provide fire protection for the building.

Young Harris Mayor Andrea Gibby also stated that changing the Overlay District would require a rework of the city's Zoning Ordinance.

Commissioner Kendall closed his letter saying that it will be up to the next commissioner, whom the county now knows will be Cliff Bradshaw, "to decide and have the authority and flexibility on where they want to lead the county on this issue."

In response to the letter, the council decided in the November meeting to table a second reading of the variance ordinance until the Dec. 6 regular meeting, in order to

give them enough time to speak with both Young Harris College and Commissioner-Elect Bradshaw about the current predicament.

The Provident Group has been waiting for months to get this variance passed in order to finalize their building plans and move forward with the project.

Some on the council have expressed their displeasure with the number of setbacks they have faced in trying to give the Provident Group the go-ahead to develop the building and property.

The council discovered that granting this variance would be in violation of the consent agreement between the county and city in the October meeting, at which point they reached out to the commissioner and thereafter received his reply.

"The county wants to work with Young Harris while at the same time not jeopardizing Towns County's building height ordinance, which was approved by Towns County voters 494

to 23 in order to protect the mountains, the quality of life of our citizens, and our ISO rating," wrote Commissioner Kendall.

Donations...from Page 1A

is over in Dillard, Georgia, and Clay County and Macon County, North Carolina. The terrain is just so rough and it's jumped the line up there. We've closed our commands right now, though.

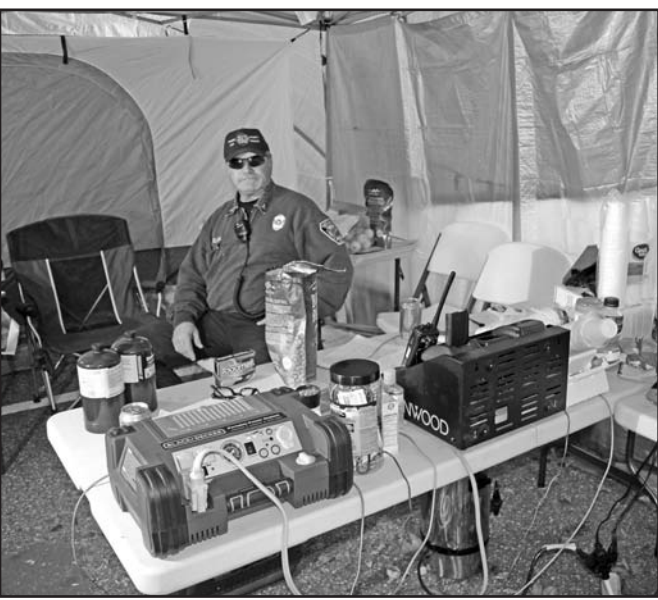
"We're prepared to go back if we need to, but at this time there's nothing on our side. There aren't any fires on private land in Towns County."

While the fires are at bay at this time, the county is still under a strict burn ban, with fines of up to \$1,000 if violated.

On Nov. 21, the Georgia Department of Natural Resource announced Towns County as being under a Level 1 Drought Declaration, urging residents to remain conscious of water usage in the coming month, though no official restrictions have been declared.

Throughout the course of these fires, both the county's firemen as well as the firefighters with the U.S. Forest Service have received outpourings from the community that are beyond comparison.

From churches opening their doors to provide shelter, to donations of water and supplies, the support has been endless, and all those working to control the wildfires would



Towns County Fire Chief Harold Copeland inside the Hightower Command Post at Mount Pleasant Church of God on Saturday, Nov. 19. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

like to express their gratitude to everyone who has donated or helped in any way.

"People have been wonderful," said Roberts. "Hiawasse Hardware, I'd call them and tell them what we needed and they would have it ready for us. It's just been unreal the amount of support and the outpouring that we've received from everyone in the

community.

"A lot of these firefighters, they're from all these different states, and they told us that they had never seen a community do for everybody like we've had here. It's just been amazing to see all these people give to us."

"If anyone ever saw that we needed anything, in a minute they'd be back with it in their hands or have it figured out how to get it. A lot of them would go to their homes to find what we needed. It's good to live somewhere that people look out for each other."

While Towns County is currently safe, donations are still being accepted to be taken to the nearly 500 firemen from the U.S. Forest Service who are working diligently just across the state line.

Water, canned goods and the like are all graciously welcomed and can be taken directly to the Towns County Fire Station No. 1 or to any of the other fire stations in the county.

The Towns County Food Pantry has also offered their services as a donation drop-off point.

The food pantry is located on 1294 Jack Dayton Circle in Young Harris, just up the road from the Towns County Chamber of Commerce.

Livestock...from Page 1A

Furthermore, having to purchase hay to feed livestock when normally the animals would be grazing in non-drought conditions also causes financial losses for the producer.

Thankfully, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, under the 2014 Farm Bill, has a program to help livestock producers recuperate some of the losses incurred because of drought conditions.

The current year 2016 Livestock Forage Disaster Program, or LFP, provides compensation "to eligible livestock producers who have suffered grazing losses for covered livestock on land that is native or improved pastureland with permanent vegetative cover or is planted specifically for grazing," according to the USDA's most recent Farm Bill Fact Sheet.

Eligible livestock under the LFP include alpacas, beef cattle, buffalo, beefalo, dairy cattle, deer, elk, emus, equine, goats, llamas, poultry, reindeer, sheep or swine that have been or would have been grazing the eligible grazing land or pastureland, according to the Fact Sheet.

The Livestock Forage Disaster Program is administered locally by the USDA's Farm Service Agency, or FSA. Each county has an FSA representative, and since 1996, that representative for Union, Towns, Fannin and Gilmer counties has been FSA County Executive Director P.

Kevin Thomas.

"This is one of the quicker programs that the government has to compensate cattle farmers," said Thomas, who urges livestock producers to sign up for LFP assistance. "If you've got acres and you've got cows, we'll get you some money."

Added Thomas: "We've done livestock forage programs before, but the magnitude of this drought seems a lot worse (than in years past). This is probably one of the longest lasting droughts we've had, because it started in March, actually, as far as below normal rainfall."

Jesse McKeral of Fannin County, who stopped by the Farm Agency office in Blairsville last week, said he has felt a real impact on his cattle operation since the start of the drought.

"Everybody's having to start feeding hay earlier," said McKeral. "The grass just didn't last. I started feeding hay in September, when normally I wouldn't start feeding hay until the end of October."

"Of course, the value of hay has shot up, because more people are buying hay - no one has any. So that's really why I need the program. It's either buy hay or sell cattle, and cattle are cheap (right now)."

And aside from causing grazing issues, the drought has begun to take a toll on water sources that farmers have historically relied upon.

"Little branches and creeks, I've never seen them this

low," said McKeral. "Wherever you've got cattle, if their branch dries up, that's what I'm worried about. I've got a couple of branches that are pretty low."

For more information and/or to apply for LFP assistance, residents should reach out to Thomas by the end of January. His office is located inside the Haralson Memorial Civic Center at 165 Wellborn St. in Blairsville, and the office number is (706) 745-2012.

According to a previous release issued by Thomas:

"Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFDP) provides compensation to eligible livestock producers who suffer grazing losses for covered livestock due to drought on privately owned or cash-leased land."

"Livestock producers in Union, Fannin, Gilmer and Towns counties are eligible to apply for 2016 LFDP benefits on grazing land."

"To participate, eligible livestock producers must complete a CCC-853 and submit the required supporting documentation for 2016 losses."

"Producers with cash-leased land are required to provide written lease agreements from the land owner containing specific information on the rented land."

"In addition, grazing land for which benefits are requested under LFP are required to have been reported to the FSA office; if the land has not already been reported, a late-filed acreage report can be accepted, but a 'late-filing' fee will be assessed (\$31)."

Lighting of Love Light Tree 2016

Chatuge Regional Hospital Love Light Scholarship Program: Thursday, December 1st at 6:30 p.m. The Chatuge Regional Hospital Auxiliary will hold our annual tree lighting ceremony in the inside lobby of the hospital. Everyone is invited! The scholarship fund is possible only by donations in memory of or in honor of a loved one, in any amount. This helps to provide scholarship

funds to our Towns County High School students who are going into any medical field. There will be a program with the message given by Rev. David Tinsley of Sharp Memorial United Methodist Church and entertainment by the Sharp Tones, led by Pam Leslie.

The public is invited and refreshments will be served. A donation form is attached for your convenience. T(Nov30,F1)SH

Love Light Scholarship
Chatuge Regional Hospital Auxiliary
P. O. Box 98, Hiawassee, Georgia 30546

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Acknowledgement to be sent to:

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