

# HAPPY NEW YEAR!

# Towns County Herald

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## Shop with a Hero remains faithful to Wright's vision

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

BLAIRSVILLE – Jimmy Wright would be proud of those who have carried on his legacy with Shop with a Hero.

It's been two full years since the former Hiwassee police chief passed away, and the third Shop with a Hero event to occur without him, though his memory continues to live on in the joy the program brings to children of the county.

The Heroes assembled again at Walmart on Tuesday, Dec. 19, to respond to the annual call issued by Amy Rosser of Family Connection and new Hiwassee Police Chief Paul Smith – it was once more time to gather for Shop with a Hero.

Towns County first

responders of every make and model attended the Christmas shopping experience, which treats Towns County schoolchildren to an afternoon of shopping with some of the best role models the county has to offer.

"We had another successful year with Shop with a Hero," said Chief Smith. "With help from the Towns and Union County Sheriff's Offices, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Towns County Fire, Department of Juvenile Justice and more, the Hiwassee Police Department was able to take 27 Towns County Middle School students on a Christmas shopping spree.

"As always, everyone involved had a great time. I hope to see the program continue to grow in the years to come. We thank everyone for their generous donations,

which allow us to continue this great program."

One of the many benefits of Shop with a Hero is that it provides positive interactions between law enforcement/public safety workers and the children, often giving kids hope for brighter futures while helping to set the stage for continued positive interactions into adulthood.

DNR Ranger First Class David Webb attended Shop with a Hero on his day off, and he said it never ceases to amaze him how selfless the children of Towns County can be.

"Most of these kids, they'll end up buying things for family members rather than themselves," said Webb. "To me, that says a lot about the spirit of Christmas."

Union County Sheriff's Lt. Daren Osborn hails  
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Hiwassee Police Chief Paul Smith rounding a corner in one of the more popular sections of the store that Tuesday. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

## COPS Task Force LEO compensation recommendations

By Charles Duncan  
Towns County Herald  
Editor

Members of a statewide task force to study the salaries and compensation of Georgia's local law enforcement officers and jailers have come up with a series of recommendations to take to the Georgia General Assembly.

Created by Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle, along with State Sen. Greg Kirk, COPS, the Compensation of Police and Sheriff's Task Force study, came to life in May.

This task force, in partnership with counties, cities and chief law enforcement officers, examined the importance of attracting and retaining experienced officers throughout Georgia, and looked at needed reforms in officer compensation.

"The service and dedication of our law enforcement officials is



Towns County Sheriff  
Chris Clinton

nothing short of heroic," said Lt. Gov. Cagle. "We must make every effort to ensure local compensation packages are both competitive and fair to those who protect and serve. COPS will help local governments identify ways to

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## VFW honors students, others in inaugural awards banquet

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

When it comes to patriots, Towns County has them in spades, which is why the Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen essay competitions enjoy such great participation year after year.

The competitions, formerly conducted by the late VFW Quartermaster Glen Greenwald, are sponsored by the Veterans of Foreign Wars Garrett-Owenby Post 7807, and act as a bridge between veterans and the youth of the community.

Each year, the VFW invites students of the county to demonstrate their patriotism for a chance to win some scholarship money.

In recognition of the many remarkable entries into this year's competition, the VFW held its first ever awards banquet on Monday, Dec. 11.

For the veterans, the purpose of the banquet was



Winners and participants in the VFW's 2017 Voice of Democracy audio-essay competition. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

multifold: to honor the students who competed in the competition; to recognize public safety and educational leaders who perpetually give back to their communities;

and to break bread with the aforementioned fine folks of Towns County.

All across the country this year, thousands of high school students composed essays for

the Voice of Democracy audio-essay competition, writing on the topic, "American History: Our Hope for the Future."

Fifteen Towns County  
See VFW, Page 6A

## Georgia commissioners visit D.C. on presidential invitation

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

President Donald J. Trump's administration extended an invitation to the commissioners of all 159 Georgia counties to visit Washington, D.C. in early December.

The purpose of the trip was to introduce Georgia commissioners to members of the Trump administration, in an effort to put names and faces to potential future resources.

Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris welcomed the invitation, and decided it would be a unique

opportunity to coordinate a trip with his fellow sole commissioners, including neighboring Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw.

Sole commissioners are a rare breed – the majority of Georgia counties are governed by a board of commissioners, and there are only eight counties in the state with sole commissioner-style governments.

Furthermore, Georgia is the only state in the Union to retain the sole commissioner office, and though many of Georgia's commissioners traveled to the nation's capital earlier this month, Paris

and Bradshaw went with a rather small party of six sole commissioners.

The sole commissioners who traveled together to D.C. were Paris of Union County, Bradshaw of Towns County, Jason Winters of Chattooga County, Robert Brockman of Bleckley County, Shannon Whitfield of Walker County and Steve Taylor of Bartow County.

They caught the same flight up, stayed in the same hotel, ate meals together and toured the various areas of renown inside the District of Columbia during their multi-day journey.

As only six of eight

sole commissioners currently serving, the men bonded over the course of the trip, sharing ideas and struggles unique to their elected office.

And though every county in Georgia faces its own population-specific issues, each sole commissioner stands to benefit in forging relationships with his or her peers, especially in an office of such uncommon status.

The group arrived in Washington D.C. on Sunday, Dec. 3, and returned on Wednesday, Dec. 6, and filled all the time in between.

While there, the sole

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Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris with Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw in front of the White House during the first full week of December.

## Foster children receive gifts through kindness of strangers

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

For nearly two decades, volunteers with the Towns & Union Foster Children's Enrichment Program have made it their mission to help foster kids feel special at Christmastime.

And as many hours as these volunteers put in every year, they couldn't do what they do without their community partners – individuals, groups and businesses who come together to donate, sponsor and

See Foster, Page 7A



Lorena Johnson, Pam Curley, Pat Elliot and Richard Paolillo with the Foster Children's Christmas Program. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

## Commissioner welcomes Lee, talks budget in county meeting

By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw spoke briefly on the 2018 tentative budget in his Dec. 19 regular meeting.

His comments came just days before a Dec. 22 public hearing on the budget, which will be covered in the Jan 3, 2018, edition of the Towns County Herald.

"If you want a copy of the budget, you can come by the office and we can give you a hard copy," said Bradshaw in  
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Brody Barrett, 8, giving the invocation before the Dec. 19 county commission meeting. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

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**Battle of the States  
Basketball Tournament**  
Hosted by Towns County High School  
December 27th - December 29th