

Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

Your Hometown Newspaper Since 1928

50 Cents

www.townscountyherald.net

Publication Number 635540 Volume 85 Number 8

Wednesday, January 1, 2014

Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thu: Rain	45 23
Fri: Clouds	35 19
Sat: Sunny	44 25
Sun: Clouds	49 29
Mon: Clouds	45 21
Tue: Sunny	37 21
Wed: Clouds	42 26



Upstream Elevation Predicted 01/01/14	
Lake Chatuge	1,918.92
Lake Nottely	1,763.92
Blue Ridge	1,670.38

INDEX 12 Pages

Arrests	2
Chamber News	5
Church/Obits	8, 9
Classifieds	11
Editorial	4
Letters	4
Legals	11

SPORTS Page 6



From the staff of Towns County Herald and West Printing Company

Lady Indians' repeat year's Top Story

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Two Cross Country championships in a row. It's hard enough to win one championship. Repeating is a different story.

That's why the 2013 Cross Country Championship by the Towns County Lady Indians rings in the New Year as Towns County's Top Story of 2013.

Nothing could have prepared Towns County Head Coach Jeannie Ledford for the emotional impact of that news she received at the end of the Class A Public School Cross Country State Championship race in November.

The team traveled to Carrollton to compete for their second consecutive state title on Nov. 9, running against familiar powerhouses Trion, Commerce, and Gordon Lee.

Coach Ledford was by turns giddy and nervous all day. Because Class A schools ran at the very end of the day, the tension stretched on and on. She paced, put her team



It was an emotional scene in Carrollton as the Lady Indians claimed their second straight team Class A Cross Country Championship.

through their warm-ups, and called them in for a final pre-race huddle, where she spoke to them quietly, but with her typical urgency.

As the sky darkened and a slow chill crept into the air, the Class A schools took the starting line. Ledford's boys ran first. The girls ran shortly

afterward. Together, the races that Ledford had trained her team all year for in the case of her seniors, many years, took barely an hour.

When the dust from many running shoes cleared, the Towns County girls' Cross

See Top Story, Page 10

Top Stories of 2013

By Charles Duncan
Towns County Herald
cduncan.tch@windstream.net

Today's edition of the Towns County Herald proudly brings you the Top Stories of 2013.

From educational triumphs to triumphs on the field of high school athletic competition.

Your Towns County Lady Indians Cross Country team repeated as State Champions. Towns County Middle School was named a Georgia School of Excellence and a new football coach brought excitement back to Frank McClure Stadium.

On the local front, Towns County residents were witness to just what Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax dollars can do.

The December opening of the Towns County Recreation and Conference Center put on display the 27,000 square-foot facility meant to finally give the home folks a recreation facility they could be proud of for years to come.

It was a dream come true

for Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall, as he promised such a facility when he took office as sole commissioner.

In law enforcement, the Towns County Sheriff's Office worked around the clock to solve the county's only murder of 2013.

Brittany Ledford and Rebecca Ann Stokes are behind bars awaiting their day in court on charges of the brutal murder of Diane "Dee Dee" Adams Donaldson, who was murdered in June.

Public Safety, especially the Fire Adaptive Communities project, has brought notoriety to Towns County.

Towns County is one of only eight communities in the United States chosen to be a pilot community to help develop the Fire Adapted Communities Wildfire Learning Network concept.

There are many more stories that made 2013 a special year, including Gov. Nathan

See Review, Page 10

TCMS a School of Excellence

By Azure Welch
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Georgia State School Superintendent Dr. John Barge arrived in Hiwassee Dec. 12 to present Towns County Middle School with its 2012 Georgia School of Excellence Award.

The ceremony was held in the school auditorium.

TCMS was named the Highest Performing schools in the 9th Congressional District based on the College and Career-Ready Performance Index.

When the new College and Career Readiness Index scores were released several months ago, TCMS ranked No. 1 in the state when compared to 180 other middle school systems in Georgia with an overall score of 99.4. When compared to an estimated 400 individual middle schools, TCMS ranked second overall only one tenth of a point below the top school.

"Words can't express how happy I am for my teachers and these students," said TCMS Principal Dr. Darren Berrong. "What a testament to the hard work they have put in over the past few years. Many of the schools on this list are either Magnet or Charter schools. When I see Towns County Middle School listed side by side with these schools I am



Georgia State School Superintendent Dr. John Barge presents Towns County Middle School Principal Dr. Darren Berrong with the school's Georgia School of Excellence trophy during a ceremony in December. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

simply overcome with pride for this school and this community. In my opinion, there is no greater achievement or recognition than being named a Georgia School of Excellence in Student Achievement."

Towns County Schools Superintendent Melissa Williams was just as proud of the honor bestowed upon TCMS.

"I join with Dr. Berrong in congratulating the

students, faculty and staff at Towns County Middle School on receiving this outstanding honor," Williams said. "This is a testament to the entire community and the value Towns County places on providing a quality education for our students. These teachers and students have worked hard. What a fitting reward for their

See Excellence, Page 10

Harrison ignites Indians on the gridiron in 2013

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Towns County Indians celebrated a successful second half to their season on Nov. 1, with a solid 34-19 season-ending victory over Hebron Christian.

The Indians scored 24 unanswered first half points before the Lions tacked on a touchdown late in the first half.

Until Head Coach Blair Harrison arrived, the Indians had only dealt with the Wing-T offense on defense. It was a learning process, and a process that found them 0-5 to begin the season.

Obviously, the Indians caught on to the Harrison offense and made a go of it in the second half.

They finish the season 4-6 with bright prospects for the 2014 season.

In the season finale, the



Blair Harrison

Indians hit the locker room with a 24-6 lead, and the comfort that Hebron didn't have a history of come-from-behind wins.

The Indians put 10 points on the board in the first quarter, thanks to a Harrison Hobbs touchdown. Kicker Shea Underwood added the extra point

See Coach, Page 10

A place to call their own

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

When Commissioner Bill Kendall started to run for office, he had a proposition for the people of Towns County.

"When I started to run for office, I wanted to give the county a recreation facility that would serve the public for 50 years to come. That's how I described and designed it," he said.

Eight years later, that dream has come true.

The new Towns County Recreation and Conference Center held its ribbon-cutting ceremony on Dec. 14 to the delight and satisfaction of the involved community.

Just before the ribbon

See Recreation, Page 10



The new Towns County Recreation and Conference Center is now home to county Recreation League indoor sports. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Deal leads 63rd GMF Parade

By Charles Duncan
Towns County Herald
cduncan.tch@windstream.net

Significance returned to the Georgia Mountain Fair on July 20, 2013.

Gov. Nathan Deal, House Speaker David Ralston and Christian Taylor made sure of that.

Following behind Towns County Sheriff Chris Clinton, the trio led the largest parade in the 63-year history of the Georgia Mountain Fair.

When the horseless carriages carrying Taylor, Gov. Deal and Speaker Ralston crossed the Robert Anderson Bridge, the last leg of the parade

See Parade, Page 10



Georgia's First Lady Sandra Deal, and Gov. Nathan Deal lead the GMF Parade in July. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

TCSO says goodbye to Lt. Brian Wilson, Deputy Amy Burch

By Libby Shook
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

It's never easy for any law enforcement agency to say goodbye to one officer.

The Towns County Sheriff's Office had to say goodbye to two officers in 2013, Lt. Wilson, and Deputy Amy Burch.

Lt. Wilson, a deputy sheriff with the Towns County Sheriff's Office, passed away Friday afternoon, May 3, 2013, following a one car motor vehicle accident which occurred on April 28, 2013.

Lt. Wilson was transported to the Chatuge Regional Emergency Room and then to North Georgia Medical Center in Gainesville, where he remained until his passing.

Friends, family and fellow law enforcement officers paid their last respects to Lt. Wilson at Burch Cemetery on Sunnyside Road, Georgia 288.

The final tribute and farewell to the beloved, young marine and peace officer, who served his country and his county with great honor, valor, and unflinching dedication, was one of highest regard and great respect.

Sheriffs, deputies, police officers, and state troopers from all over the Southeast lined the drive leading up to the burial site. The officers stood military-style and saluted as the hearse traveled up the narrow drive with family members and friends following close behind.



Lt. Brian Wilson



Deputy Amy Burch

As Lt. Wilson's flag-draped coffin was removed from the hearse, the peace officers maintained their salute until the coffin was placed at his final resting place.

Pastor Anthony Dye provided a moving tribute and memorial to this beloved

See Farewells, Page 10

TOWNS COUNTY HERALD

