

# Towns County Herald

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Wednesday, January 15, 2014

## Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thu: Clouds	43 26
Fri: Snow	36 15
Sat: Sunny	40 22
Sun: Clouds	44 21
Mon: Sunny	46 29
Tue: Rain/Snow	48 24
Wed: Clouds	45 20



Upstream Elevation Predicted 01/15/14	
Lake Chatuge	1,917.98
Lake Nottely	1,761.49
Blue Ridge	1,670.16

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## Summer Youth Work Program Information

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## National Mentoring Month is January

see page 6

## Teen Movie Night!

Thurs. Jan 16

Towns County

Library

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## Free One on One at local Libraries

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## WRESTLING:

Sat. Jan 18 @ Town

Youth, Middle,

Highschool

4 PM

## BASKETBALL:

Tues. Jan 14

vs. Hebron 6 PM

Fri. Jan 17

@ George Walton 7 PM

## Fire displaces Towns family

By Azure Welch  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

The morning of Tuesday, Jan. 7 was a busy one for the Towns County Fire & Rescue, as the department responded to a structure fire on Hidden Valley Road in Hiawassee.

The home, which is just off of Mull Road, was a total loss, firefighters said.

According to Station 1 Lt. James Rosser, after the call came in, the department responded to the scene at 11:23 a.m., and the fire was under control a little after noon.

The time controlling the fire was in direct response to the lake winds changing direction.

Responding to the structure fire were members of the fire department, which includes about 25 Towns firefighters and volunteer firefighters.

In addition, Clay County, NC sent an engine and a tanker to assist, and were on standby, along with Towns sheriff's deputies, and Towns EMS personnel, who responded to the structure fire, along with neighbors and spectators trying to get a view of the blaze.

Lt. Rosser said that in response to the structure fire, Engine 1 was on scene as the "attack engine," along with Engines 2 and 6, which were both "support engines."

In addition, to the fire engine response, Tankers 1, 2, and 3 responded as well.

Due to the small one lane road and the numerous houses built close together in the Hidden Valley area, also made it difficult for the department, but their experience with all types of situation allowed the firefighters to do their job regardless of the situation.

In addition, to making things difficult, water had to be shuttled by the tankers on the scene to and from the actual scene of the structure fire.

According to Fire Chief, Mitch Floyd, this fire was par-



Firefighters with Towns County Fire & Rescue battle this blaze on Hidden Valley Road in Hiawassee. The home was a total loss.



Fire Chief Mitch Floyd

ticularly difficult because "they were dealing with the extreme cold temperatures, and high winds coming off of the lake,

both of which hampered the efforts of the fire department."

Although, the cold temperatures, and high winds caused additional obstacles for those fighting the blaze, Lt. Rosser estimates that it took about 45 minutes to get the structure fire under control, and luckily the homeowners were not harmed during the initial start of the structure fire, and neither were any of the emergency personnel during the subsequent efforts to extinguish and subdue the fire.

However, Engine 1 stayed on the scene for more than 24 hours to watch for hot spots.

This decision was also made due to the close proxim-

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## Ground breaking for Towns County Library

Towns County Herald  
News Special

The Towns County Public Library Renovation and Addition Project is now officially underway.

The official ground-breaking ceremony will be held Saturday, Jan. 18 at 10 a.m.

Everyone will meet in the Towns County Courthouse courtroom for the opening remarks, the ground-breaking will be across the street at the library, with refreshments to follow in the courthouse hallway.

Randy Smith, of Gardner, Spencer, Smith Tench & Jarbeau Architects, is the project architect and the construction contract has been awarded to Winkler & Winkler Construction of Blairsville.

The project is funded by local Towns County SPLOST and a state capital outlay grant awarded by the state legislature.

Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall, District



State Sen. John Wilkinson

50 State Sen. John Wilkinson, House District 8 State Rep. Stephen Allison, along with State Librarian Lamar Veatch will be on hand to help officially launch the project.

Donna Howell asks that the public please join the celebration as the library celebrates this long-anticipated project to improve the Towns County Public Library.

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## More ice and snow on the way for Towns

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

The coldest January in what seems like forever has thawed out, but don't put that salt mix away just yet.

The National Weather Service is calling for a wintry mix Wednesday night into Thursday morning, with temperatures dropping to 19 degrees. The weather service calls for a 40 percent chance of frozen precipitation in Towns County.

The wintry mix would come just eight days after the region experienced its coldest temperatures in almost 40 years as temperatures in Towns County were recorded at 3 degrees below zero. Add in the wind chill factor and the real feel was almost 30 degrees below zero, according to the weather service.

Also, a 40 percent chance of snow comes Friday with predicted 15-degree temperatures, and a high for the day of 36 degrees. Rain or snow is in the forecast through Friday. Temperatures gradually pick up beginning Saturday, with sunny



The water wheel at The Ridges Resort & Marina looked more like an ice sculpture last week. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

skies expected to warm temperatures up to 40 on Saturday, and 44 degrees on Sunday and cloudy skies.

Temperatures are expected to

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## Robotics team ready to compete

By Azure Welch  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

The Dragons & Tiaras are ready for Athens.

On Sunday afternoon, Jan. 12, the Towns County High School's Robotics team, Dragons & Tiaras hosted a scrimmage and open house.

The Dragons & Tiaras team is comprised of students in grades 9-12, and this is the school's "rookie FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC) robotics team.

Their goal for having the Open House was for members of the community to be able to see exactly what the robotics team does.

The scrimmage was a chance to invite other robotics teams to come and practice the challenges set forth by the FTC organization.

In addition, the goals for the Dragons & Tiaras in this rookie year is to "learn more about engineering, computer programming, and project and budget management."

To assist the team with these objectives is their coach, Jo Ray Van Vliet and mentors, Dr. John Van Vliet, a professor at Young Harris College, Dr. Darren King, who is the middle school math teacher and coach for the Towns County



Tiaras Captain Mia Manto gives a robotics demonstration during the team's Open House on Sunday. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Middle School robotics team, and Dr. Darren Berrong, principal of TCMS.

Jo Ray Van Vliet coached the first FLL (FIRST Lego League) team at Towns County, and her husband, Dr. John Van Vliet, Professor of Business and Public Policy at YHC, and is assisting the team

with their 2014 Business Plan which is needed to obtain and utilize the money needed to pay for supplies, registration and qualifying fees, travel fees and other expenses.

According to Dr. Van Vliet, the robotics team, "not

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## Sen. Wilkinson talks Gold Dome

By Azure Welch  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Friday, Jan. 10, Senate District 50 State Sen. John Wilkinson was the guest speaker at the weekly meeting of the Mountain Movers & Shakers at Mary's Southern Grill in Young Harris.

Sen. Wilkinson began by thanking the Movers & Shakers for asking him to be their guest speaker, but stated that he "didn't come here to just speak to all of you, but to speak with you" about concerns or questions that those in attendance might have.

Prior to taking questions and comments, Sen. Wilkinson indicated that he wanted to say just a few things. Starting with the fact that the Senate will

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District 50 State Sen. John Wilkinson speaks to the Mountain Movers and Shakers at Mary's Southern Grill in Young Harris.

## Water and sewer rate ordinance approved

By Azure Welch  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

The Hiawassee City Council has signed off on proposed water and sewer rate increases.

The second reading and adoption of the 2014 Water and Sewer Rate Ordinance raises water and sewer rates within the city and unincorporated Towns County.

"Our new rates must reflect increasing costs of maintenance and upkeep on aging systems," he said. "Generally, we have proposed increasing our base rates by 5 percent and reducing the minimum base to 1,000 gallons monthly," City Manager Rick Stancil said.

"Each customer will see an increase in their monthly bill ranging from under \$1 monthly - the exact increase dependent upon each customer's usage and location," Stancil said. "Higher volume users and those customers located greater distances from the Treatment Plant will see larger increases."

In addition, Stancil also reported that a new restrictive account for Hotel/Motel Taxes would be established later in the week.

It was the first meeting of the New Year for the Hiawassee City Council.

To start the meeting, Mayor Barbara Mathis, and City Council members, Stephen Smith and Junior Chastain took their oaths of Office to begin their new council terms.

Guests Anne Mitchell

and Grace Howard requested time on the agenda to address the joint efforts the City and the Hiawassee River Watershed Coalition are making to improve the boat launch area just south of town off of Highway 76.

Mitchell expressed that she and Howard "are delighted with this plan because our families have been keeping the boat ramp clean for about 20-25 years" because the boat ramp is family property.

Although, the boat launch area is on land belonging to private families, easements have been provided over the years to the TVA, DOT, and the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC.

In addition, the family thought that they would be included in the meetings regarding the plans for the boat launch, which the family would like to have dedicated as "Lloyd's Landing."

Both Mayor Mathis, and Stancil said that they would ensure that during the joint meetings to come, as to the City's role, the family will be included in those discussions and Stancil suggested to the family that they "make a design proposal for the dedication sign" to be submitted during one of the future

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TOWNS COUNTY HERALD

