

Library...from Page 1

The newly renovated library is scheduled to be completed this summer and library staff is looking forward to welcoming you there.

Voters, Commissioner Kendall, State Sen. Wilkinson and State Rep. Allison were instrumental in making the project a reality.

Voters came out in droves to support the SPLOST initiative, Commissioner Kendall committed the necessary SPLOST funds necessary for the project, and Sen. Wilkinson and State Rep. Allison went to

bat at the State Capitol for the necessary state funding for the project.

All-in-all, it was a community effort to get the project on the right path.

Please visit the library's temporary location in the old Towns County Senior Center building located next to the Towns County Courthouse while construction is in progress.

For more information, please call the Towns County Public Library at (706) 896-6169.

Weather...from Page 1

ed to be in the mid-to-upper 40s Monday and Tuesday next week, with sunny skies expected on Monday, and rain/snow mix on Tuesday.

Of course all that seems rather warm after last week's deep freeze.

The Towns County Road Department worked in split shifts keeping roadways free of black ice situations throughout the county during the extreme

temperatures.

The road conditions and arctic temperatures were enough to close Towns County Schools on their first two days back from holiday vacation days.

Students could get at least one more day off this week, but that remains to be seen.

Let's keep our fingers crossed that the frozen precipitation will miss Towns County.

Wilkinson...from Page 1

convene "on Monday, January 13th." Following which, Sen. Wilkinson believes will be "a quick and intense session" due to the fact that the deadline to qualify for elections soon will be in March 2014.

Not to mention the fact that incumbents cannot raise money for elections until after the session ends, Sen. Wilkinson feels that the session will be completed in a more timely fashion than in the past, and this is also a good thing because "it will not be wasting time or taxpayers money for additional session days."

Sen. Wilkinson expressed that Georgia "is a great state in many different ways," and he wanted to express his gratitude to be able to represent his constituents.

According to Sen. Wilkinson, his priorities for keeping Georgia a great state are by protecting the traditional and conservative values that this constituents hold dear, by promoting the growth of jobs through business friendly policies, in order to protect jobs for all Georgians.

In addition to job protection, Sen. Wilkinson expresses this belief that job protection can be obtained by protecting our water sources.

Last but not least, the Senator's goal is to "protect our American Freedoms and the rights of the unborn."

In order to achieve all that Sen. Wilkinson proclaims, he states that he tries to live by example and feels that "a person should do what they say they are going to do, when they say they are going to do it."

By being a credible person with a "genuine concern for others" who is competent and "willing to make a commitment" is Sen. Wilkinson's personal idea on what characteristics make "a good leader" for the people of Georgia.

After his brief address, the Senator gladly welcomed questions and comments from those in attendance.

The first to express concerns to Sen. Wilkinson was Towns County Sheriff Chris Clinton.

Sheriff Clinton said that he had heard recently that Georgia was attempting to "do away with the common core," and asked the Senator about his opinion regarding this issue.

Sen. Wilkinson responded by saying that he serves on the "Education and Youth Committee," and believes that a vote on the status of the common core in Georgia "should come up for a vote."

Although, the Senator said that he "is not a fan of the common core," at this point "it would be a shame (to make another change to common core standards) because of the many people that have been involved, spending time and money on this issue."

"If it does come to a vote and is voted against, then all that time and money will be lost," he said.

However, Sen. Wilkinson said that there will continue to be issues in regards to educational changes and many other issues "if we continue to have the same type of federal

government that we have currently."

Sheriff Clinton also expressed his concerns regarding whether or not there is "any chance that legislation might be passed" to allow children that are home-schooled to participate in school sports after the age of 12.

Sen. Wilkinson said that he respected "people and the right to make educational decisions for their kids," but in regards to whether or not something could be done to allow home-schooled children to play sports at the public school is not something that legislation will change.

Although, it would help, the Senator continued "any legislation would then have to go for a vote before the Georgia High School Athletics Association," and the issue would then be their decision.

In addition, there were other concerns regarding education and why funds have not been distributed to the Education budget, if revenue in Georgia has increased over the past few years.

Sen. Wilkinson explained that this is due in part to the fact that "Georgia has not raised taxes, and funds have not been reallocated over the years. The Quality Basic Education (QBE) Funding, has technically "not been fully funded in almost 30 years because the formula for funding under the QBE has not been changed since the act's adoption."

In addition, Sen. Wilkinson feels that the funding "has been tweaked so many times, it has become distorted, and a new funding formula is absolutely needed."

To conclude this discourse, Sen. Wilkinson said that the "most important thing Georgia constituents can do" in 2014 is "to get out there and vote" because "elections this year are important and numerous, and if you don't vote and stay home, we will end up with a democratic government who is pro-abortion, and will affect your second amendment rights, so the number one thing to do is show up and vote."

At the conclusion of the meeting, Sam Fullerton, co-founder of the Movers & Shakers thanked Sen. Wilkinson, and "commended him for his dedication" to the people of Towns County.

Sen. Wilkinson represents District 50 which includes Towns County along with five other counties and portions of two other counties.

He joined the Georgia State Senate in 2011 during a special election.

Sen. Wilkinson is the Chairman of the Agriculture and Consumer Affairs committee, the Vice Chairman of the Education and Youth Committee, in addition to being a member of the Appropriations Committee and the Government Oversight Committee.

In addition to his committee memberships, Sen. Wilkinson is the primary sponsor of 167 bills. Recently, he was named "Policy Maker of the Year" by the Georgia Association for Career and Technical Education.

Blaze...from Page 1

ity of the neighboring houses, and the winds that continued to blow off of the lake.

The presence firefighters of Engine 1 remaining to keep an eye on the smoldering structure provided peace of mind to neighbors in the area who were concerned that the high winds might reignite the fire and pose a threat to other homes.

The extreme weather conditions also caused additional problems as the water spillage from the refilling of the tankers, and the water from the fire hoses caused ice to begin forming on the driveway, walkways, and the road leading down to, and in front of the house, made additional dangers for all emergency personnel.

In addition, Fire Chief Floyd said that "the high lake winds fueled the structure fire causing the siding on a neighboring house to melt."

The actual cause of the fire is still under investigation, but according to statements made by the homeowner to firefighters, the water pipes within the home were frozen when the homeowner awoke that morning, and the homeowner was attempting to thaw the pipes using a hair dryer.

Unfortunately, the constant heat from the hair dryer caught insulation on fire.

According to Fire Chief Floyd, "after the insulation ignited, the fire may have been



Firefighters battled the elements to put out this blaze on Hidden Valley Road last week in Hiawassee.

fueled by the high winds," as the home's location is right on the lakeside, but "the cause of the fire remains under investigation."

The fire damage resulted in "a total loss of the house" according to Lt. Rosser, which also included an attached garage, but Lt. Rosser said that fast and dedicated work of the firefighters on scene, contained the damage before the fire completely entered the detached garage, which is located closest to the road.

According to Lt. Rosser, the detached garage damage is very limited, but the insurance representative for the residence's homeowner's insurance will be at the site again survey-

ing the damage to all of the homeowner's property.

Both Chief Floyd, and Station 1, Lt. Rosser expressed that they have been extremely busy before, and after the Hidden Valley fire.

The National Fire Protection Association, correlates with the Towns departments' reports of increased activity in winter, stating that "roughly one in three reported home fires occur in December, January, and February."

In addition, the NFPA reports that "heating equipment fires caused the largest percentage of direct property damage," which seems to have been the case with the Hidden Valley house fire.

Although, the hair dryer can loosely be considered "heating equipment," it still remains a potential cause for house fires, and numerous articles can be found to support the damage done by hair dryers. However, there are almost as many home real estate, and even fire department websites on the Internet that recommend using hair dryers to thaw frozen pipes.

However, the Towns department recommends safe practices when it comes to any and all electrical appliances within the home and strongly recommends multiple smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, and common sense in safety as the best way to prevent structure fires.

Robotics...from Page 1

only gets to learn about engineering and computer programming in general, but they also get to learn how to manage a budget, how to function as a team, and most important of all how to problem solve and they learn to use critical thinking."

The robotics team has also been using the skills that they have learned to mentor the younger middle school students in the FLL.

In addition, Coach Van Vliet proudly explained that "the coach of the NC team has asked the team to mentor them this year and to show them how to get an FTC team going in their part of NC."

The FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC) is for grades 7-12, and is a "challenging mid-level robotics competition designed for young people who want a hands-on learning experience to develop and hone their skills and abilities in science, technology, engineering, and math."

Every year there is an annual game announced across the nation and the



The Dragons and Tiaras Robotics team heads to Athens to compete on Saturday. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

world, and the individual teams "must determine their strategy, develop their plan, and program, build and test their robots."

The Dragons & Tiaras will attempt to take their robot to competitions and advance through local and regional tournaments, with

the chance to compete in the FIRST Championship in the spring.

In addition, to learning and honing educational skills, students who participate in the "FIRST" challenges are eligible to apply for more than \$19 million in college scholarships.

The Dragons & Tiaras team captains are Mia Manto, an 11th grader, captain for the Tiaras, and Devin Wheeler, 10th grader, captain for the Dragons.

The teams also include nine additional students who each have their specialties within the group, such as programmers, robot drivers, designers and builders.

The members are junior Zach Sewell; sophomores, Taylor Underwood, Troy Hatfield, Kyle Buel, Dakota Anderson and A.J. Reynolds; and freshmen, Raven Anderson, Chad Jones, and Thomas Mitchell.

The Dragons & Tiaras are headed to Athens, on Saturday, Jan. 18, for a state qualifier.

City...from Page 1

meetings.

Mitchell and Howard thanked the Mayor, the Council, and the Watershed Coalition for their efforts to improve the boat landing, saying, "as a family, we really want this done."

Stancil updated the Council regarding his City Manager's Report to the Hiawassee Committees from the previous day regarding the following items: 2013 USDA Project, Longview, 2013 Water Tank, water lines, water intake, water treatment plant turbid meter replacement, and the Public Hearing & Report on the 2014 Comprehensive Water & Sewer Rate Ordinance.

A motion was made to approve retail beer & wine licenses. During this meeting, the council unanimously approved the renewal of the retail license for Clipper Petroleum, Inc. (Circle M store), and the renewal of the pouring license for Monte Alban Restaurante Mexicano.

A motion was then made and seconded to name the Hiawassee Mayor Pro Tem, and this was approved naming Councilwoman Janet Allen. The position for Mayor Pro Tem is a four-year term.

Similarly, a resolution designating the Chairman and Vice-Chairman for the 2014 City Council Committee was made and unanimously approved naming council members, Pat Smith as Chairman and Joan Crothers as Vice-Chairman.

A motion was made to adopt and approve the Schedule of Projects financed with Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) for the year ending June 2012, and to amend the SPLOST Budget. This motion was seconded and approved.

Resolutions to autho-



Councilman Junior Chastain, Mayor Barbara Mathis and Councilman Stephen Smith renew their oaths of Office last week at City Hall in Hiawassee. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

ribe the City Manager to receive Banking and Financial information and to establish on-line banking accounts were approved. In addition, a similar resolution was made to authorize Sheila Chapman of Chapman & Chapman, CPA to receive banking and financial information and to access on-line banking accounts.

Following the resolution approvals, the First Reading of the 2014 Financial Ordinance regarding payment of the Hiawassee Series 1999 Bonds, A & B was motioned upon and unanimously approved by the City Council.

Next on the list of agenda items was a motion to adopt and approve temporary intergovernmental fund transfer from the Hiawassee water treatment plant account to the TVA/IGA water improvements fund. This motion

to transfer was approved in order to ensure that outstanding bills for the water lines to the school could be paid immediately. Although, there is grant money coming for this purpose, the decision to transfer funds to use now was made, so all those involved with the designing and construction the water improvement projects can be made timely to ensure the continuation of the projects without interruptions.

Mayor Mathis introduced the guests present at the meeting.

One of these special guests was Dr. Claire Worthy of Worthy & Worthy Dental Practice in Hiawassee. Dr. Worthy was presented with a special award from Mayor Mathis and the City of Hiawassee.

Mayor Mathis present-

ed a plaque to Dr. Worthy, a proclamation of the City of Hiawassee commending the Worthy Dental Practice thanking Worthy & Worthy for "the dedication" they have shown to the city "during these difficult economic times."

This plaque recognizing the Worthy Dental Practice is an expression of gratitude by the Mayor and the Council to recognize "community leaders and business owners who have chosen to commit their time, labor and capital within the City of Hiawassee."

Mayor Mathis expressed her utmost appreciation for "this large private investment in the City," and said that this is "a meaningful improvement to the downtown area, and we know they will make excellent neighbors to the New City Hall."