

# Towns County Herald

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## BRMEMC to host Town Hall meetings in Clay, Union counties

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Former Blue Ridge Mountain EMC Board President Terry Board's company, Taylor & Taylor Construction, Inc., no longer exists.

Conducting a business search on the Georgia Secretary of State's website shows that Taylor & Taylor Construction, Inc. dissolved on Dec. 31, 2015.

According to the most recent public financial records made available by the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC, dating to Dec. 9, 2014, Taylor & Taylor Construction, Inc. owed \$37,343 toward the debt of \$47,643.53 awarded in May of 2014 to the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC following a civil suit the EMC brought against Taylor & Taylor Construction, Inc.

The current balance of the

Taylor & Taylor Construction, Inc. debt is not public record, according to BRMEMC Interim General Counsel Larry Ford, who stated that it was against general EMC policy to discuss individual member accounts.

Furthermore, since Taylor & Taylor Construction, Inc. no longer exists as a legal entity, the fate of the debt has been thrown into question.

"Based on that new information, I will have to research what legal effect the dissolution has on the situation under discussion, report to the board my findings, and then the board will consider what should be done in the best interest of the EMC and members," said Ford in an email to the North Georgia News.

On Tuesday, Jan. 12, members of the news media were invited to the BRMEMC boardroom to ask direct questions of the board



The Blue Ridge Mountain EMC Board of Directors entertain the media in a Question and Answer session before commencing the first meeting of the New Year in the BRMEMC boardroom

of directors, just before the start of the first board meeting of the New Year.

This latest move toward transparency comes

after BRMEMC Board Vice President Mickey Cummings announced two upcoming Town Hall Meetings in which the membership will be able

to ask questions directly of the board.

"I passed it was last month, we passed a new policy that requires Town

Hall Meetings to be held periodically throughout the year," said Cummings in the Q&A. "And the first two of

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## New Tennis Courts Open at Foster Park

Staff Reports  
Towns County Herald  
editor@nganews.com

Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall presented the keys to recreation Director Wes Hooper creating the new tennis courts at Towns County Recreation Center located at Foster Park.

David Sellers and John Denton played the first tennis match on the new courts.

All recreational facilities, including the tennis courts, pickleball court, fitness center, beach and ball fields are open



Wes Hooper and Bill Kendall with David Sellers and John Denton

to Towns County citizens at no charge.

The only time facilities are unavailable to the public

are when tournaments or special events are approved and scheduled by the Towns County Recreation Department.

Those using the tennis courts and pickleball courts must provide their own tennis rackets, pickleball paddles and balls and wear proper shoes that don't mark the playing surface and abide by the rules posted at the courts.

Kendall and Director Hooper both say there was some misunderstanding or

See Tennis, Page 10

## Board of Education SPLOST referendum

By Mason Mitcham  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

The Towns County Board of Education is hoping to embark on a huge maintenance project, and they hope the community will understand on May 24.

Finding that the schools are in great need of system-wide maintenance, the board recently voted to take action.

In the January BOE work session, the five-member board voted to approve a SPLOST referendum to be sent to the Towns County Board of Elections to be included on the May 24th General Primary Election ballot.

This referendum will allow residents of Towns County to decide whether or not to institute another 1 cent of sales tax per dollar countywide,



Dr. Darren Berrong

increasing the sales tax to 8 cents on the dollar as early as July of this summer.

The biggest and most pressing issue currently facing the school system is a badly damaged roof of the joined middle and high schools.

See SPLOST, Page 10

## Get ready for Basketball Homecoming

By Mason Mitcham  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Those feeling nostalgic over last semester's Football Homecoming Court can look forward to next week's Towns County High School Basketball Homecoming Court.

"It's not as big of a deal as football, but it's still a big deal for the girls and the guys," said Sarah Vardo, teacher and Homecoming sponsor. "We do five seniors, four juniors, three sophomores and two freshmen, and it's just a way for us to get underclassmen involved, because football is only for seniors, and they enjoy it. They



Towns County High School Homecoming nominees

enjoy getting dressed up and they enjoy getting together, and it's just a great honor for

them to be selected by their classmates."

just like football, like we have a lot of basketball players

"And the crazy thing is, See Homecoming, Page 10

## Ronnie Milsap packs The Hall on his 73rd birthday

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Country Music Crossover legend Ronnie Milsap celebrated his 73rd birthday with more than 2,000 fans in Anderson Music Hall at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds on Saturday, Jan. 16.

The show featured Milsap's one-of-a-kind piano talent backed up by his six-member band, all of whom came together to produce an

enthusiastic, uplifting concert performance.

Milsap spared no expense, hitting a large number of his 40 No. 1 hits, including "Pure Love," "Daydreams About Night Things," and of course, "Smoky Mountain Rain."

At the start of the concert, Milsap's band led the audience in a heartfelt rendition of the "Happy Birthday" song for Milsap, and Country Music

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Ronnie Milsap with Towns County Deputy C.J. Worden

## Youth Tour delegates visit BRMEMC board

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Every June, the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC sends area high school students to serve as delegates in the Washington Youth Tour, and the three students who made the trip in 2015 spoke to the BRMEMC Board of Directors on Tuesday, Jan. 12.

Madeline Walker of Union County High School, Shea Underwood of Towns County High School and Collin Worley of Hayesville High School were three of more than 1,500 students from around the country who visited the nation's capital last summer.

Byron McCombs of the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC

has served as a chaperone and photographer on many of these trips, and he introduced

the three high school seniors to the board of directors, just prior to the start of the board's first

meeting of the New Year.

"One of the privileges

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## Councilman Smith wants to clean up Hiwassee

By Mason Mitcham  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

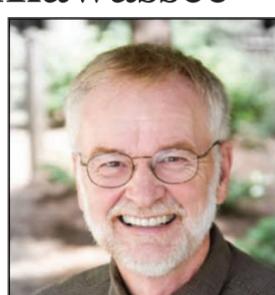
For Hiwassee City Councilman Stephen Smith, a new year means changes.

Although the idea to clean up the city of Hiwassee is not his alone, he's always been one of the biggest proponents of the annual "Hiwassee City Clean-Up."

Anyone up in the wee hours of the morning might see Smith going for his daily jog, but what he or she might not see is how often he stops to pick up trash.

"Usually what I have to do is have a trash bag in my hand and I pick up that spot and I wait till I get home and throw it in my own garbage bin," he said.

Smith would like to



Stephen Smith

expand the scope of the city's cleaning efforts.

"I had a couple of thoughts. One thing I would think, we could beef up the Adopt-A-Street Program that was announced about a year ago. We really haven't had anybody sign up officially for it, so I'd like to see that done,"

See Hiwassee, Page 10

## BOE approves facilities plan

By Mason Mitcham  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

The Towns County Board of Education met for the first time this year on Monday, Jan. 11, to discuss pressing business.

Towns County Superintendent Dr. Darren Berrong had some good news for teachers, specifically those that have several years of experience.

"We passed the personal leave policy for the teachers. We had to lay that on the table for a month, so that policy did pass," said Dr. Berrong, referring to extended personal leave days.

Next, the Board approved the current Five Year Facilities Plan, which details potential problems with infrastructure and recommends fixes.

"The Board has to approve for the Georgia Department of Education to work with us on our Five Year Facilities Plan. Our Five Year Facilities plan is coming to an end and that's another reason why we have all the projects that we have. Because we're doing that Five Year Facility Plan, we can see what are the things coming up that we need to be replacing," he said.

He explained that the plan explains what maintenance the school should look into in the near future.

"The plan working with the DOE sits down and kind of says, 'Okay, here are your old all the things are in your building, and what do you need to be replacing or looking at fixing?'"

What may be about to

See BOE, Page 10

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Blue Ridge Mountain EMC TOWN HALL MEETING  
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Towns County Homeowners Association meeting  
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SPORTS BASKETBALL  
Tues Jan 19 @ Tallulah Falls 6 & 7:30 PM  
Fri Jan 22 @ Commerce 6 & 7:30 PM  
Sat. Jan 23 vs. Providence 6 & 7:30 PM