

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## Letters to The Editor

**Dear Editor:**  
*Green Energy- A Boost to Our Economy:*  
 President Obama stated it very clearly in his State of the Union address. The world is moving away from fossil fuels and into clean energy. The train is leaving. The question is, "Will we get on, or be left behind?" Many economic studies, including those by Citigroup, show that switching to clean energy will boost our economy, not hurt it. We are America, we are the head of the free world, and we must now take the lead or risk China leaving us behind! We cannot allow this! Many of our major corporations, the World Bank, the WMF, and a growing number of countries around the world agree that putting a fee on carbon is the best way to do this.

The Citizens Climate Lobby's carbon fee and dividend plan is one such innovative idea. The well respected REMI study of this plan shows that a slowly increasing price on carbon, with all the money returned to the citizens of America, will both stimulate the economy as well as decrease greenhouse gas emissions by at least 53 % over a 20 year period. It would increase the spendable income of 2/3 of Americans, add 2.8 million extra jobs, increase the GDP by \$1.375 trillion, and save 227,000 American lives over those 20 years. This is certainly a WIN/WIN answer!

Vernon Dixon, MD

## The Middle Path

by Don Perry

We live in an area that is almost ideally suited for the enjoyment of snow. It doesn't happen often here, or as often as some of us kids would like. It happens more often, perhaps, than some who moved here to escape such weather would like. When it does happen, however, it is an all-consuming event. Grocery stores are emptied of staples; milk, bread and water disappear from the shelves. This year there was hardly a grapefruit to be found, as if our herding instinct needed them to sustain us with the promise of sunshine over the cold days to come.

The media takes a short break from crime and misfortune when a snowstorm approaches. The meteorologist takes center stage. Junior reporters put on heavy coats and stand outside by the side of the road, or talk to the camera during those "live" drives up and down the interstates. Snow is a media event, and if the storm is big enough, it's almost like a national holiday.

A holiday, perhaps, but only for those of us whose power did not go out, and those who didn't put themselves into harm's way keeping the power on, or law enforcement and emergency responders who don't have the luxury of staying home and watching snow falling on television. We are forever grateful to those who keep us safe and warm when the snow and ice come.

It's not a holiday for those under-appreciated heroes, and it's not a cause for celebration when your car slides into a ditch, or your pipes freeze, or you bust your bottom sliding on an icy stair. A snow-

storm is also not a happy event for a struggling business that is forced to close its doors or an employee whose paycheck will be smaller on the next payday. We should always remember as well that the same force of Nature that makes snow ice cream possible also kills people every year.

But for most of us who live in this gentle and blessed part of the world, a little snow on a Friday night is better than a holiday. Holidays can be stressful. They are full of expectations and potential disappointments. A few inches of snow, however, bestow the benefits of a holiday without the responsibilities. We are not compelled to go anywhere or do anything, simply because we cannot.

For the lover of Nature, falling snow is nothing short of magical. Stand in the deep forest and listen to the sound made by a multitude of unique tiny crystals falling to earth. It is a peaceful sound, and compelling, quiet, but immense and pulsating with energy. Witness the intense red of a cardinal silhouetted against a background of white, or the cold radiance of billions of tiny suns refracted by a world shining with ice. See the intimate contours of mountains undulating beneath the trees, sculpted by the invisible hand of time.

Best of all, a little snow can bring out the kid in us, and if you have forgotten the natural wisdom of children, just watch and listen for enlightenment. If you need further instruction, consider the wise words of Diane Arbus who said, "Ladies and gentlemen, take my advice. Pull down your pants and slide on the ice."

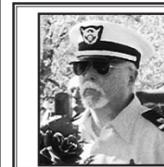
tunnel houses.

These field days will be presented by experts on tunnel houses so the citizens who use the structure can maximize their yields with minimal cost and produce vegetables with the most nutrition for their families. The goal of this project is to show young people where food comes from, how it is grown, and to encourage citizens to get back to the basics and grow some of their food for a healthier lifestyle. These Tunnel houses have been approved by the USDA NRCS for the EQUIP program in Georgia and Alabama so the design and quality meets the standards set by the USDA NRCS. They can also be purchased without going through EQIP. Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council is one of two authorized dealers for these Seasonal High Tunnel Houses in Georgia.

The Seasonal High Tunnels also require an irrigation system since it is covered from rain and most growers use drip

tape to effectively keep the plants moist and watered. I collect rain water from gutters on my house and barn and pipe it into an underground storage tank where it is then pumped up to a holding tank and fed into the drip tape and to the plants by gravity. This natural watering process works very well and the operating costs are practically zero. Check this column for locations where these tunnel houses will be erected in your area.

For more information on Seasonal High Tunnels or the Chest/Chatt project, contact Frank Riley, Executive Director, and Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council at info.cercd@gmail.com.



## The Veterans' Corner

By Scott Drummond, USCG Veteran

### Additional veterans care facilities available

As our Veteran population ages, it becomes obvious that some, maybe many of our Georgia Veterans may need nursing care, especially if no other help seems to be available. In our Georgia towns of Augusta and Milledgeville we have quality, skilled nursing care available for Veterans who meet qualifications.

Since 1969 in Augusta we have the Georgia War Veterans Home, with 192 beds thanks to an agreement between GDVS and Augusta University. This first of a kind facility also provides a teaching environment for medical care givers as well as high quality health care for eligible Veterans. Nearby is the campus of Augusta University and right across from the Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center.

In Milledgeville our Georgia War Veterans Home provides 550 beds and specialty care for Alzheimer's patients. Located on 17 acres, this facility has been made available via an agreement with the United Veterans Services of Georgia, affiliated with UHS-Pruitt Corporation.

Eligibility requirements: The Veteran must have been a Georgia resident for five or more of the past fifteen years, and resided here for two years immediately prior to applying. The Veteran must have served in our armed forces during one of our wartime eras, as follows: 1- WW II, 7 December 1941 through 31 December 1946. 2- Korea, 27 June 1950 through 31 January 1955. 3-Cold War, 31 January 1955 through 1 July 1964. 4-Vietnam, 1 July 1964 through 7 May 1975. 5-Persian Gulf 2 August 1990 through today.

Any Veteran with a discharge under dishonorable conditions will NOT be eligible for care in either of these two homes. And finally, the Veteran must be approved by our US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Veterans with contagious, infectious diseases and psychiatric, behavioral type problems will NOT be admitted to either of these facilities. Veterans with mechanical life maintaining equipment such as tubes or lines are not eligible. There will be reasonable daily fees for those who qualify. Certain eligible Veterans may also apply for a federal Aid and Assistance benefit in order to pay or help in paying these fees. IMPORTANT: For Veterans with a disability rating of 70% or higher or who have a service connected condition resulting in the need for admission, the daily fee is paid entirely by the VA.

Application for admission is through either of these nursing homes or any GDVS Veterans FSO.

Any family member or friend of a Veteran who may be approaching the need of health care as described above, and have little or no other resources, please be proactive in this regard, as it seems obvious that as our Veteran population increases and so many age, these two unique facilities will have a backlog of applicants.

Thanks to our American Legion and DSO Shelly Ann Simpson for education on these nursing homes for our Georgia Veterans. The American Legion is a very worthwhile VSO, and simple to join, and all members receive educational, worthwhile and interesting articles each and every month.

Semper Paratus

## Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D seasonal high tunnels

In 2015 Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council, along with the other 11 RC&D councils in Georgia, was the recipient of a \$10,000 grant from the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority due to efforts of our Senator John Wilkinson and others in the State Capitol. The guidelines for how to use these funds were somewhat loose and RC&D Councils could use the funds for most anything that would enhance their mission in the counties they serve. Chest/Chatt RC&D's mission is to "Assist local people in planning and carrying out activities that conserve natural resources, support economic development, enhance the environment, and improve the standard of living for all citizens in the 13 counties of Northeast Georgia".

Our goal is not only to help people improve their way of life in these counties but to help teach our young people how to provide for themselves out in the real world. Many kids these days think food comes from the grocery store and not actually from the ground. Chest/Chatt wanted to make use of these funds to make a difference in people's lives so we decided to donate one 20'X16' Seasonal High Tunnel, or Hoop House, to each of the 13 counties in our work area, plus The Blue Ridge Soil & Water Conservation District that covers Union, Fannin, Towns, and Rabun Counties kicked in some of their funds to double the size of the donated tunnel house up to 20'X32'.

Upper Chatt Soil & Water Conservation District also kicked in funds to increase the 5 tunnel houses in their area, as did Broad River S&WCD. A High Tunnel or hoop house is an unheated greenhouse with sides and doors that roll up for ventilation during the warm months and roll down when the temperatures drop. These

### Executive Director of RC&D

Frank Riley



structures maximize vegetable, fruit, or flower output from a small area since the plants are protected from winds, rain, sun, and animals. A high tunnel can extend the growing season by a month on each end of the season. These growing houses will be placed in public places where they can be a benefit to the community by demonstrating to people how they can produce their own locally grown food, flowers, or fruits. We think this is a worthwhile use of your hard earned tax money as it circles back into the community thru the RC&D from the Gold Dome, even though a lot of it was filtered out before it came back but we'll take what we can get.

The Counties are putting these tunnel houses at Senior Centers, Veterans Homes, with FFA clubs, 4H clubs, Master Gardeners, local colleges and with many other groups that will use the houses to teach others how to provide for themselves. These tunnels are easily installed in a couple of days and our proposal is to include the people using it to help construct it and also get FFA, 4H and other student groups involved in the construction process. The tunnels are delivered as a complete kit to the site even down to the screw driver bits. These projects will provide citizens who don't have a garden spot a controlled environment where they can have a garden and grow fresh food for their families or to sell. With each Wiregrass Tunnel House built, Chest/Chatt RC&D will also provide a field day to demonstrate how to best operate the

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# Community Calendar

**American Legion Post 23** meets 1st Tuesday of each month at 4 PM at VFW Post 7807, Sunnyside Rd., Hiawassee. Call 706-896-8387 for details. We need your support!

**VFW Fish Fry** April - October on 2nd & 4th Fridays each month from 4:30 - 7. \$10 per plate.

**Towns County Water Board Meeting** 3rd Monday of each month at 6 p.m. in the TC Water Office Building.

**Mountain Community Seniors** meet the second Thursday of each month at the Senior Center in Hiawassee at 1 p.m.

**Towns County Republican Party** meets at 6:30 PM the 4th Thursday of each month at the new Senior Center. For more info call 706-994-3919.

**Democratic Party of Towns County** meets 2nd Tuesday of each month at 5 p.m. at new Senior Center. Newcomers welcome. Questions please contact the T.C. Dem's at Townscountydemocrats@gmail.com.

**Towns County Planning Commission** is held the 2nd Monday of each month at 7 p.m. in the Courthouse.

**Towns County Commissioners** meeting is the 3rd Thursday at 5:30 p.m. in the courthouse.

**School Board Meeting**, 2nd Monday each month at 7 p.m. in the auditorium.

**Hiawassee City Council** 1st Tuesday of month 4 p.m., at City Hall.

**Young Harris City Council**, 1st Tuesday of month at 7 p.m., Young Harris City Hall.

**The Unicoy Masonic Lodge #259** meets on the 2nd Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m.

**Stephens Lodge #414 F & AM** meets the 1st Thursday of each month at 7:30 PM in Young Harris. Sat. morning breakfast 2nd Sat. of each month from 8 - 10:30 AM. \$6 adults, \$3 12 & under.

**Towns County Board of Elections** holds its monthly meetings on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 4 p.m. at the Elections Office (Old Rock Jail).

**Towns County Historical Society** meets the 2nd Monday of each month at the old Rec Center in Hiawassee at 5:30 p.m. 706-896-1060, www.townshistory.org

**Bridge Players** intermediate level meets at 12:30 p.m. on Mondays & Fridays at the Towns County Rec Center.

**Mountain Regional Arts & Crafts Guild** meets 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. at Calvary Chapel on Hwy. 76 in Hiawassee. All local artists and crafters are welcome, for information call 706-896-0932.

**Mountain Computer User Group** meets the 2nd Monday of each month. Meetings start at 6 p.m. and visitors are welcome. Details can be found at www.mcug.org.

**Chattahoochee-Nantahala Chapter, Trout Unlimited** meets 2nd Thursday of each month at Cadence Bank in Blairsville. 5 p.m. Fly Tying - 7 p.m. General Meeting. Everyone welcome. www.ngatu692.com.

**Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)** meets the 3rd Monday of each month at various area restaurants. For information call Gary at 706-896-4308 or visit www.moaa.org/chapter/blueridgemountains.

**Alcoholics Anonymous**: meets every Friday and Sunday evening at 7 at Red Cross Building at 1293 Jack Dayton Circle. 24 hour phone line 828-837-4440.

**Chatuge Regional Hospital Auxiliary** on the 3rd Monday of each month, except the months of July, October and December, in the hospital cafeteria at 1:30 p.m.

**The Humane Society Mountain Shelter** Board of Directors meets the last Thursday of every month at 5:30 p.m. at Cadence Bank in Blairsville.

**The Towns County Alzheimer's Support Group** meets the first Tuesday of each month at 1:30 PM in the Family Life Center of McConnell Memorial Baptist Church. For more info call Carol at 706-896-6407.

**The Appalachian Shrine Club** meets the 2nd Thursday of each month at 6 PM at the Shrine Club, Industrial Blvd., Blairsville.

**GMREC Garden Tours** every Monday 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

**Shooting Creek Basket Weavers** meets 2nd Wednesday of every month at 10 a.m. at Shooting Creek Fire Hall Community Center. For more info www.shootingcreekbas-

ketweavers.com.

**Friendship Community Club** meets the 3rd Thursday of the month at 6 PM at Clubhouse, 1625 Hwy. 76, 706-896-3637.

**Goldwing Road Riders** meets the 3rd Saturday of each month at Daniel's Steakhouse in Hiawassee. We eat at 11 and meeting begins at 12.

**Narcotics Anonymous (NA)** meets every Wednesday evening at 7 PM at the Red Cross building on Jack Dayton Circle.

**Caregiver support group** meets 2nd Tuesday of each month, 3 p.m. at Brasstown Manor, located at 108 Church St., Hiawassee. Call 706-896-4285 for more info.

**Enchanted Valley Square Dance Club**. Dances 2nd & 4th Fridays at Towns Co. Rec. Ctr. 7-9 PM. \$5/person to dance. Free to watch.

**Brasstown Woodturners Guild** meets 1st Saturday of month at 9:30 AM in HHS shop. For more info call J. C. at 706-896-5711.

**Mountain Amateur Radio Club (MARC)** meets 6:30 PM the 1st Monday of month at 1298 Jack Dayton Cir. (next to EMS), Hiawassee. For info call AI 706-896-9614 after 6 PM.

**The Board of the Towns County Chamber of Commerce** meets the second Monday of every month at 8 a.m. at the Chamber office, 1411 Jack Dayton Circle, Young Harris.

**The Quilting Bee** at McConnell Memorial Baptist Church in Family Life Center, Room 216. 1st & 3rd Wednesday of each month from 10 AM - 3 PM. Bring a sack lunch. For more information call Kathy at 706-835-6721 or Marilyn at 706-897-4367.

**Mountain Coin Club** meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. at the North Georgia Tech campus in Blairsville. Guests are welcome. For more info, call 706-379-1488.

**Monday morning BINGO** at Brasstown Manor every Monday morning at 9:30 a.m. 108 Church St., Hiawassee. Players meet in the Bradford. Questions 706-896-4285.

**Towns County Lions Club** meets 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. at Daniel's Restaurant, 273 Big Sky Drive, Hiawassee.



"If those pollsters don't stop calling, I may tell them what I really think!"

## Towns County Herald

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