

Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

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Wednesday, March 13, 2013

Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thu: Sunny	50 27
Fri: Sunny	61 40
Sat: Clouds	66 45
Sun: Clouds	66 43
Mon: Rain	62 42
Tues: Clouds	58 37
Wed: Clouds	61 41



Upstream Elevation Predicted 03/13/13	
Lake Chatuge	1919.42
Lake Nottely	1763.38
Blue Ridge	1678.95

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NEW HIAWASSEE UTILITY BILLING SYSTEM

Mayor Barbra Mathis has announced that a new Utility Billing System is being implemented this month for city utilities. "We expect a delay in the mailing of our Water and Sewer Bills due to this change" stated, Mayor Mathis. "Customers should receive their bill by the end of this week and we ask that they be aware that the billing cycle for February usage will have several extra days. There will not be any late fees applied this month due to this delay in mailing bills."

"The City apologizes for this delay in mailing. The new Billing System will be more efficient over the long run, will result in lower mailing costs, and will better generate state and federal reports," stated City Manager Rick Stancil. "There will be a change in the billing format with greater usage information and the format should be more user friendly."

The new Billing System will also have greater payment options including bank drafts and online payments over the new City web page. To sign up for Bank Drafts, customers will need to provide a "voided" check to the Utility Billing Department. The City is encouraging water and sewer customers to review their new bill carefully for errors in information due to the conversion of data from the old Utility Billing System.

We also ask our customers to be patient during this conversion. We recognize that errors will be made and apologize in advance for any problems this may cause. Please contact the Utility Department at the new telephone number, 706-896-2885, if you have any questions or concerns regarding your bill.

Hiawassee seeks liquor referendum

By Libby Shook
Towns County Herald
libby.tcherald@windstream.net

The Hiawassee City Council is asking the local legislative delegation to call for a referendum regarding liquor sales in the city.

The action happened on Tuesday, March 5th, as the Hiawassee City Council signed a resolution calling for a "local legislative delegation" made up of House District 8 State Rep. Stephen Allison (R-Blairsville), and Senate District 50 State Senator John Wilkinson, (R-Toccoa) to introduce local legislation in the Georgia General Assembly calling for a city referendum on the issue of liquor sales within the city limits of Hiawassee.

"The way this works in the Senate is that we have an understanding in local legislation," Sen. Wilkinson said. "The representative signs and introduces legislation in the House and if it passes, it come to the senate. I will then sign it and introduce it to the Senate. To be honest



The Hiawassee City Council has asked the local legislative delegation to approve a November vote on the issue of liquor sales in the city. Photo/Libby Shook

with you, I haven't seen it yet. "I am a firm believer in transparency in government and the voters have a right to know what is going on with their elected officials," Sen. Wilkinson said. "I support their right to vote on

and choose whether or not they want liquor sales in their city." State Rep. Allison was unavailable for comment at press time. Hiawassee Mayor Barbara Ma-

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Towns Fire Corps revved about 2013

By Libby Shook
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Towns County Fire Corps President Liz Ordiales is revved up and excited about what's going on with the Fire Corps and wants everyone to know what they are up to and plans for upcoming events.

Ordiales reports that they have several items on their agenda for the upcoming year including some fundraising efforts they have in the works.

They have been active in initiating the Flame Fighters Club.

This is a sponsorship program that the gives the community the opportunity to support the Towns County Fire Department by providing funds to purchase needed equipment, provide additional training for the firefighters, as well as general support for the folks who put their lives on the line daily for their community. The department is made



Chief Mitch Floyd

up primarily of volunteers who are dedicated to protecting and serving the citizens of Towns County.

The first set of flyers have already been sent out seeking donations," said Ordiales.

Ordiales reports that they have been able to purchase 12 air cylinders for the Fire and

See *Fire Corps*, page 10

TCES celebrates reading in the classroom

By Libby Shook
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Thursday, February 28th, Towns County Elementary School joined schools all across the country celebrating Read Across America, a special day set aside to honor the birthday of beloved author Dr. Seuss.

The day is dedicated solely to the purpose of encouraging children to read.

More than 300 folks turned out for this event as Towns County school employees and members of the community dressed as storybook characters to read books to children.

Children and parents went from room to room listening to the characters read.

"Activities such as characters dressed up make reading fun for our students and bring literacy alive," said Elementary School Principal Dr. Sandra Page. "Students enjoy seeing their teachers dress up and act out stories."

School Superintendent Melissa Williams, Towns County Middle School Principal Dr. Darren Berrong, and Towns County High School Principal Roy Perren took part in this celebration, dressed in character for story time and reading to the kids.



The Big Bad Good Wolf, also known as Dr. Darren Berrong, reads to elementary school students during Read Across America Day. Photo/Libby Shook

Dr. Page and TCES Assistant Principal Stephanie Moss were in costume as well dressed as Thing 1 and Thing 2 (from Cat in the Hat).

Several teachers from the Towns County School system and many community members, including members of the Lions Club and Leo Club, joined in the fun to help bring books alive for the children.

Thursday night was TCES's kick-off event and on Friday, March 1st, the actual

celebration day for Read Across America was held at the school as students dressed as book characters and paraded through the building.

Moss said, "Our students in the SOAR (Students Organized to Advance Reading) group visited each classroom to share a favorite book with students."

"I am very pleased with how well this event turned

See *Read*, page 10

Title changes going smoothly at Tax Commissioner's Office

By Libby Shook
Towns County Herald
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Towns County Tax Commissioner Bruce Rogers reports that things are running "pretty smoothly" with no glaring issues regarding Georgia's new Title Ad Valorem Tax (TAVT) that went into effect on Friday, March 1st.

Rogers wants folks to know that he is just the messenger and this is a state-mandated title tax and local governments had no say as to whether they wanted it.

HB 80/266 underwent some revisions since March 1st and the amended version of this bill was approved by the House and the Senate and signed into law by Governor Nathan Deal on Wednesday, March 6th.

Some of those changes include removing the language "purchased in this state" and now allows all vehicles purchased between January 1, 2012 but prior to March



Bruce Rogers

1, 2013 to opt-in to the new TAVT regardless of where the car was purchased.

The opt-in period has been adjusted as well and the extended period for opting in to the new title tax has been extended to Feb. 28, 2014.

Rogers wants to emphasize that folks will still have to renew their tags on or before their birthday each year.

This has been an area of confusion for some

See *Title*, page 10

Girl Scouts learn about Arbor Day

By Libby Shook
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Towns County Elementary School held their annual tree planting ceremony in celebration of Arbor Day in Georgia on Tuesday, February 26th.

Girl Scout Troop 11501 were present for the tree planting ceremony on this cold, blustery day, but first they got a lesson from Chief Ranger Tony Harkins of the Georgia Forestry Commission on the 3-R's of trees-reduce, reuse, recycle.

Even though the girls were very eager to see the beautiful 'October Glory' maple tree that had been donated by the Hiawassee Garden Club, they were very patient and interested in learning what Harkins had to share with them about the importance of trees.

They gained much valuable insight regarding the use of trees and how to ensure



Hiawassee and Towns County celebrated Tree City USA Day with local Girl Scouts and the Georgia Forestry Commission. Photo/Libby Shook

that they remain abundant for future use.

Harkins presented the concept of reforestation to the young participants in a most interesting way.

"When you cut down one tree, you have to plant two; one for me and one for you," he said. "Trees are nature's most energy-

See *Moore*, page 10

TCHS gets ExxonMobil Grant

By Libby Shook
Towns County Herald
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Towns County High School Principal Roy Perren is very excited about a recent grant of \$1,000 from the ExxonMobil Educational Alliance Program.

"This grant will be used to purchase needed science equipment and supplies for Towns County High School," said Perren.

"On behalf of the high school, I would like to extend our appreciation to our local Circle M Food Shop/Clipper Petroleum for their support of our students and Towns County High School," said Perren.

According to Perren, this is the third consecutive year that TCHS has received a grant



Roy Perren

from ExxonMobil.

Store manager Nancy Huffman said, "We are glad we can support the school system this way. We are glad to help. We do this for the kids."

VPS Convenience Store Group and the ExxonMobil Educational Alliance program have partnered together to award \$30,500 in grant funding to 61 schools throughout the Southeast service area to support math and science education.

This year's grant total ranks VPS as the 13th largest grantor of these educational funds in the nation for 2012-2013.

"It is an honor for us to be able to provide our local schools with this type of financial support, particularly during times of budget cuts and limited outside funding for the educational system," said Jeff Turpin, CEO of VPS Convenience Store Group.

See *Grant*, page 10

Three Dog Night amps The Hall



Three Dog Night took fans back to a time when they were younger and loved Rock N' Roll. Photo/Libby Shook.

By Libby Shook
Towns County Herald
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Who would have thought that legendary music icons Three Dog Night would come all the way to Hiawassee to close for local band Modern Vinyl.

The Blairsville band made up of guitarist and lead vocalist Patrick Smith, guitarist and vocalist Connor Smith, bassist Todd Forrest (sports editor for the North Georgia News), and drummer Micah Tanner, brought the down the house with their ground-breaking performance at Anderson Music Hall.

They raised the bar for Three Dog Night, leaving the legendary rockers a tough row to hoe.

However, Three Dog Night is still bigger than life and they've still got what it takes to wow a crowd.

They opened with *Family of Man* and the fans were applauding wildly, snapping pictures, and feeling the love Towns County style.

They continued with *One Man Band*, but it wasn't until they sang *Never Been to Spain* and *Shambala* that you just knew that this was the same band and the same sound that

fans of all ages had adored over the years and, for most of the crowd, had grown up listening to.

The excitement in the air was evident as fans sang along with the familiar tunes, waved their arms in the air, and stood to their feet out of love and appreciation for this band that had been an important part of their youth.

Now they had the opportunity to be a part of enjoying their classic sound as well as their new style as they put a new sound to songs like *Liar* and *Leave Your Hat On*.

The group gave the crowd a preview of coming attractions with their new releases *Heart of Blues* and *Prayer of the Children*, discovered and arranged by lead singer Danny Hutton.

Prayer of the Children marks the first time in the band's 40-year history that vocals of all six members of the band are featured.

The fans loved the new sounds, but none compared

See *Concert*, page 10

TOWNS COUNTY HERALD



4th Annual Towns County Touchdown Club Lake Chatuge Bass Tournament

March 16, 2013
Georgia Mtn. Fairgrounds
Hiawassee, GA
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Towns Co. Baseball
Wed., March 13 • 5 p.m.
vs. Rabun

Towns Co. Middle School Baseball
Fri., March 715 • 4:30 p.m.
vs. Lumpkin