

Young...continued from Page 1A

Fans were holding up signs that read, 'We love you Chris,' and it was evident that Young was a performer that was rapidly becoming a Country music legend in his own right.

The crowd applauded wildly, screamed, and snapped pictures of this superstar and you could feel the love as they sang along with him, swaying and dancing to the beat of each and every song.

Kerry and Beth Riley traveled from Chattanooga, Tenn., on the recommendation of their friends.

"They told us there was no better venue to watch a show, regardless of the seat," said Kerry Riley. "While we were fortunate that they had front row seats for the four of us, I mingled around the venue

and found that all angles were outstanding.

"Chris and his band put on an outstanding performance, one of the best I've seen in some time. I hope you guys keep this caliber of talent and if so, we'll return," said Kerry Riley.

Margie Sisson was visiting family in Rabun County when she learned that Young would be performing at The Hall.

"I had heard some of his music before, but this is the first time I have ever seen him in concert. He is so darn good. We had a great time and, wow, what a show," Sisson said.

Opening for Young and his band, was The Steve Bryson Band out of Cornelia performing a mixture of Country and Southern Rock music.

Ambulance...continued from Page 1A

chassis, but we won't have to buy this box again. The box is the expensive part. This will save taxpayers money in the long run."

Mathis described some of the features on Med 1. The stair chair has tracks on it and is designed to bring people down stairs.

It's used as a stabilization device," said Mathis. "There's no movement. It's a great extrication device."

Mathis explained that the new truck sits on air bags and is referred to as an "air dump truck," which means that as soon as the doors open, the truck automatically lowers which makes it easier to load patients into the ambulance and is less stressful on the backs of the EMTs/Paramedics.

Another safety device that Mathis considers a great asset are the reflective safety

doors.

"When the doors are opened, the reflective doors are visible to oncoming traffic. This is especially beneficial at night and is a great added safety feature," said Mathis.

According to Mathis, the EMS currently has 24 employees, including seven full-time paramedics, three part-time paramedics, and 14 intermediate EMTs.

"We run around 2,000 calls per year. I have a very experienced and dedicated staff that is second to none, not only in Georgia, but in the nation," said Mathis. "During my 35-year-tenure, we have been named top EMS of the State two times," said a proud Mathis. "I have figured it up, with the 24 employees, we have over 400 years combined experience."

Eller...continued from Page 1A

to lay it down and walk away. If your heart's not in it, there is no way to serve the community effectively."

Eller said that during a physical examination, she is looking for postmortem changes of the body which help give an estimated time of death.

She explained that there are many factors that may cause a variance in postmortem changes, including environmental temperature, positioning of the body, location of the body when found (whether the body was found near a vent, heater, air conditioner, or if it was found outside in the elements).

She said that the estimated time of death and the pronounced time of death can be two different times.

Interviewing all individuals present during the events leading up to the death is a valuable tool in the determination of the time of death, according to Eller.

"Every detail is important and should be shared to give me the full picture of what took place," said Eller.

Eller feels a sense of obligation to give back to the community that has entrusted her with the task of serving as Towns County's first female Coroner.

In keeping with this sense of obligatory commitment, she has recently joined

the North Enotah Domestic Violence Task Force, promotes the S.A.F.E. Program as she assists in building community awareness of their needs and the services they provide, and works with various organizations in the school system including Family Connections and the F.F.A.

"I see the future of the Coroner's Office continuing to be a platform of serving the community and bringing attention to many outreach programs that are available to serve the people," she said. "I will continue to have a watchful eye on how the office can provide the best services to all agencies involved in a death. I believe cooperation and communication are key to the success of this office."

Eller encourages community members to contact her if they have questions. She can be reached at (706) 489-9519.

"Even though the primary focus of the Coroner's Office is death investigations, I want to bring a new outlook to this office, one of prevention, hope and helping others," said Eller.

Eller was recently honored by the Northeast Georgia Republican Women as they presented her with the Rose Terry Award in recognition of her achievements in helping to bring Republican principles and values to the community.

Burn...continued from Page 1A

Martin assured that the U.S. Forestry Service works to ensure that health and safety are not jeopardized by smoke impact.

He also said that "while all precautions are taken, smoke management is based on weather conditions that can change quickly and without prediction."

Martin explained that while they were sorry for the inconvenience of the smoke making its way to the local area, that the prescribed burns are a necessary part of wildfire prevention and environmental stabilization.

"Areas within close proximity to a burn may sometimes have short term impacts from the smoke. Patrol personnel are in place throughout the operations to monitor for impacts," said Martin.

According to Martin, prescribed burns act as a cleaning agent, thinning out leaves

and woody debris, and making neighborhoods safer and forests healthier.

"Our goal is to restore ecosystems and reduce the risk of wildfire, but the safety of our fire crew, our neighbors and their property is always our number one priority," Martin said. "All prescribed burns are completed by trained wildland fire professionals in accordance with detailed plans, which include desired weather conditions and other strict safety parameters, as well as modeling to reduce the effects of smoke."

Martin invites local residents to visit their fire information Web site to view maps showing planned, active, and previous prescribed burns across the National Forest at www.fs.usda.gov/detail/full/conf/landmanagement/resourcemanagement.

Knockdown...continued from Page 1A

warmed the four men and helped secure the boat to shore, according to Capt. Sellers.

All were in good condition except for the four sailor's reminder of a harrowing adventure in icy waters, according to Capt. Sellers.

On this frigid Monday evening, the Towns County Water Rescue Team, showed quick response to this difficult lake rescue, according to Capt. Sellers.

Thanks to the tireless work of our volunteers, our county is safer, whether on land or water.

Hamilton Gardens...continued from Page 1A

they will bring to this event.

Saturday, April 20th, featured speaker Elaine Delcuze, well-known in the horticultural circuit as the foremost leader on Southern Appalachian Native Wildflowers, will be giving an informative photo presentation on North Georgia's local native plants in the Paris' Pavilion at noon.

Special 'Do it Yourself' demonstrations will be available at the Hamilton Garden Shop on Saturday at 3 p.m.

There will also be hourly planting demonstrations. If you are one of those folks that thinks you just cannot get a plant to grow, this is your chance to develop that proverbial green thumb as you watch the way the pros do it.

Garden Tours will be

available throughout the weekend.

If you have not experienced the splendor of the Hamilton Gardens as you walk (or shuttle) along the trail, you owe it to yourself to come on out and make that beautiful walk.

You are in for a magical and tranquil experience as you make the trek through the winding trails of The Gardens.

You might want to bring a camera to memorialize this 'Kodak moment' as you check out the beautiful foliage and scenery.

While you are visiting, please be sure to visit The Gardens' greenhouses and make those spring planting purchases.

Whether you are shopping for that perfect plant to

offset your porch or patio, or you are an avid gardener looking

to add to your existing flower gardens (or maybe even start a new one), you are sure to be happy with their wonderful selection of annuals and perennials.

The plants are beautiful, healthy, and very reasonably priced.

As you shop, keep in mind that Mother's Day is just around the corner, and while the festival will be open on mom's special day, you do not want to wait too late to make that purchase as they will sell out quickly.

According to Catherine Hansen, this is the Hamilton Gardens' big fundraiser and all proceeds from the sale of any plant(s) will go right back into

The Gardens for support and maintenance.

Come out and support the Georgia Mountain Fairground's Hamilton Gardens and take home a plant that will make a wonderful addition to your home or garden.

While you are shopping, pick up an extra plant or two and put a smile on the face of a family member or friend.

Admission to the Crafters Village is free and there is no charge for parking.

Festival hours will be Fridays and Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sundays, noon to 4 p.m.

Mark your calendar for all three weekends of the Rhododendron Festival and come out and enjoy all the spring-time activities.

City Hall Open House on River Street

By Libby Shook
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Tuesday, April 2nd, was a busy day for the Hiawassee City Council as they held a Dedication Ceremony and Open House for the new Hiawassee City Hall located on the Downtown Square.

The Dedication Ceremony began promptly at noon with Mayor Barbara Mathis welcoming close to 40 guests to the new facility.

"We want to thank each and every one of you for helping make this possible. I appreciate all of you. We are certainly proud of this new facility," said Mayor Mathis.

The mayor introduced special guests Bill Kokaly, field representative for 9th District Congressman Doug Collins (R-Gainesville), and Bobby McMillan, regional representative for U.S. Sen. Saxby Chambliss (R-Moultrie).

Kokaly said, "On behalf of Congressman Collins, I want to say thank you for inviting us and allowing us to use this facility as our mobile office."

Council Member Joan Crothers thanked everyone for coming out and said, "We are glad to see all of you here. We've enjoyed meeting here. We would love to have you come to our council meetings."

Mayor Mathis echoed that sentiment as she invited the public to join them for their council meetings held on the first Tuesday of each



The Hiawassee City Council was excited to show off its new digs on the Downtown Square at 50 River Street. Photo/Libby Shook

month at 4 p.m.

City Manager Rick Stancil said, "This building (formerly the original Bank of Hiawassee) is the heart of Hiawassee and is the source of many good memories for the people of this town." Stancil, reading the dedication plaque to those present, said. "Dedicated to the people of Hiawassee as our legacy to future generations."

Stancil said, "The Mayor and Council should be commended for their acquisition and renovation of this important landmark and preserving it for our children."

Following the dedication, Macedonia Baptist Church Pastor Harold Ledford led the in-

vocation prior to the guests being treated to sandwiches and beverages served by Jackie Su West and Peggy West.

The Council provided many tours of the facility between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. and then moved right into their regularly scheduled Council Meeting at 4 p.m.

The highlight of the meeting came with Mayor Mathis' announcement that the City of Hiawassee now has their own Web site.

Web site Manager, Jon Thomas of Forsence Inc., provided a demonstration of the site which includes a welcome video by Mayor Mathis on the home page with a picture of beautiful Lake Chatuge in the

background.

"This gives a personal touch to the Web site," said Thomas. "It's utilitarian, but also expresses the beauty of the mountains."

The Web site provides relevant links including a local weather link and a government contact information link for local, state and federal government.

Of interest to many will be the listing for city services including the police department and emergency services as well as providing contact information for Mayor Mathis and the Hiawassee City Council.

Mayor Mathis invites you to visit the City's Web site at www.hiawassega.gov.

Sen. Wilkinson wraps up the session

By Libby Shook
Towns County Herald
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Thursday, March 28th, was a busy day at the Georgia State Capitol as this was the make it or break it day as the state Senate and state House worked in unison with the Governor's Office on behalf of Georgia taxpayers.

Senate District 50 State Sen. John Wilkinson (R-Toccoa), said both chambers worked right up to the midnight hour as they hustled to wrap up this 2013 legislative session.

The state's Fiscal 2014 budget is set at \$19.8 billion. It is a constitutional requirement that the Georgia General Assembly pass a balanced budget each year.

Sen. Wilkinson, a huge proponent of public schools, was pleased to announce some very good news for Georgia's schools, teachers, and students with some much needed and long overdue educational reform.

This budget allows \$2.6 billion for school nurses based on a recommendation by the State Education Finance Commission, adds \$146.6 million to cover student enrollment growth



Sen. John Wilkinson

and professional development for teachers, and fully restores the proposed reduction of \$1.3 million for school nutrition programs.

The Tuition Equalization Grant was completely restored to maintain the current award amount and meet projected enrollment growth for the state's private colleges and universities.

More good news for Georgia's students includes a reinstatement of a 2.0 GPA requirement for the Technical College HOPE Scholarship.

In 2011, approximately 9,000 students lost HOPE when the GPA requirement was increased to 3.0.

"The Senate reinstated the 2.0 GPA requirement because thousands of students could not afford to pay what HOPE no longer covered, resulting in a drastic number of students dropping out of technical colleges," said Sen. Wilkinson.

"Technical professions are the backbone of our economy, and by lowering the GPA requirement we ensured that HOPE will be available to more technical college students and that our economy will thrive because of it," said Sen. Wilkinson.

House Bill 131 gives high school students who participate in dual-enrollment classes the same "weighted benefits currently given to college-level Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate classes," said Sen. Wilkinson.

The budget also adds \$17.1 million to meet projected needs for HOPE-Public Schools Scholarships while increasing the award amount by 3 percent.

More than 80 percent of the primary voters endorsed ethics reform in the July 2012 election. Sen. Wilkinson said that this has been a top priority of the Senate from Day 1 of the legislative session, "when the chamber adopted the strictest ethics standards in

State Capitol history that will change the culture of the Capitol with the strictest restrictions the state has ever seen."

Sen. Wilkinson said that this legislation is the direct result of the voter's desire "for extensive ethics overhaul statewide."

This reform means that expenditures by lobbyists would be limited to \$75 per occurrence with expenditures on leisure activities such as golf, athletic events, and concerts being prohibited.

"There are limited, common sense exemptions for expenditures on the entire General Assembly, either chamber or caucus approved by the Ethics Committee, with Committee dinners being limited to one per calendar year," said Sen. Wilkinson.

Senate Bill 101, dealing with firearm legislation, did not pass this session, but Sen. Wilkinson reports that it is still alive and eligible to pass next session.

"I assure you that this important issue will be closely examined and studied throughout the year to ensure the safety and best interest of all Georgians while strongly preserving Second Amendment rights. I will work to ensure the protection of our right to bear arms," said Sen. Wilkinson.

The items recovered in the trailer included a cedar table and benches; a TV stand; a night stand; and a shelf. The Towns County Sheriff's Office impounded and seized the enclosed trailer, which was used in the reported burglary and theft, sheriff's reports show.

The investigation is continuing and additional arrests are possible, sheriff's reports show.

Arrests...continued from page 11A</h