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Henry Aaron to deliver YHC commencement

Towns County Herald
News Special

Young Harris – Major League Baseball legend Henry “Hank” Aaron will deliver the address at Young Harris College’s Commencement ceremony on Saturday, May 7, at 11 a.m. in the Recreation and Fitness Center on the YHC campus.

Henry Aaron, nicknamed *Hammerin’ Hank*, is widely regarded as one of the greatest hitters in the history of baseball.

He spent 21 years as an outfielder for the Milwaukee and Atlanta Braves and two final years as a designated hitter for the Milwaukee Brewers, setting several records and winning a number of honors along the way.

“We are thrilled to welcome Hank Aaron back to campus to deliver this year’s Commencement address,” said YHC President Cathy Cox. “His life and accomplishments serve as a testa-



Hammerin' Hank Aaron returns to YHC on May 7 at 11 a.m.

ment to what hard work and dedication can lead to, and I’m confident his address will inspire the Class of 2016 as they make their way into the world.”

Aaron continues to hold many of baseball’s most distinguished records today, in-

cluding runs batted, extra-base hits, total bases and most years with 30 or more home runs.

He also ranks among the Top 5 in career hits and runs.

For more than three decades, Aaron held the record for most career home runs with 755.

He was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1982 and was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2002.

Aaron has been a generous friend and advocate of YHC for many years, and served on the College’s Board of Trustees from 2000 to 2008.

He voted on the appointment of YHC President Cathy Cox and supported the College’s historic decision to become a four-year institution.

Aaron has a longstanding friendship with YHC alumnus former U.S. Senator and Georgia Governor Zell Miller, ’51.

When the College decided to construct a baseball stadium to be named in honor of Miller, who both played and coached baseball at YHC before entering public service, Aaron not only gave generously to the project, but

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Sparks fly at Hiawassee City Council meeting

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

On Thursday, April 14, a special called meeting of the Hiawassee City Council quickly grew heated.

The meeting was called in order for council members to reconsider the TISHCO Resolution passed at the monthly city council meeting the week before, on Tuesday, April 5.

The TISHCO Resolution was a resolution in which the council gave the go-ahead for TISHCO developers to apply for federal and state funding toward the installation of a 52-bedroom, \$4.3 million rent-controlled apartment complex in the city, on property located at Main Street and Ross Lloyd Road in Hiawassee, property currently owned by Dr. Lee Church with Dr. Jason Ledford.

Hiawassee resident Angel Callahan Ledford was on the agenda and made a presentation in favor of building the housing complex.

“When I heard about it, my first reaction was, ‘Wow, this is going to be very helpful to the people that live and work here,’” she said.

Ledford said she was disturbed at some of the sentiment she found in the email chain sent around by her homeowner’s association, specifically statements that the TISHCO development would lower current home values, and that a “show of force” was needed to oppose the development.

“I think there is such a misguided notion that poor equals trash or poor equals criminal. And that’s not the case,” Ledford said.

She added that someone asked an hour for 40 hours a week, which is what she estimated a large portion of workers in Hiawassee make, that such a worker could not



Rick Stancil

afford \$800 to \$1,000 in rent payments.

“We need rent control, not low income housing,” said Ledford. “People living on fixed incomes need rent control. People out here trying to make an honest living need rent control. I think if we have the proper things in place, if we have credit checks for these apartments, if we have criminal background checks for these apartments, they’re not going to be trashy.”

Ledford, an employee of a financial defense attorney for 12 years, presented statistics suggesting that low-income housing would not suddenly increase local crime. That in fact, according to Ledford, the crime rate index for Hiawassee was higher than the average for cities nationwide given the latest data from 2012.

Hiawassee City Manager Rick Stancil then went over the criteria that anyone hoping to live in the TISHCO apartments would have to meet.

The criminal criteria include having to pass a background check – the applicant must have no felony convictions in 10 years, no violent crimes against people in the

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Moonshine and museum just around the corner

By Charles Duncan
Towns County Herald
Editor

Blairsville – In early 2012, Tommy Townsend learned that making moonshine in Georgia was now legal.

He passed along that information to his wife Christy Townsend. He also told her of his passion to bring his Granddaddy Mimm’s family recipe back to life.

“Tommy is a musician and I thought he was just kidding,” Christy Townsend said. “After spending 32 years with him (we started dating when I was a sophomore and he was a junior in high school), I began to realize he was very serious.”

Tommy Townsend, the front man for Waymore’s Outlaws, the band that backed Country Music Hall of Famer Waylon Jennings, and who



Tommy Townsend's dream coming to fruition. Photo/Charles Duncan

tours the continent with Jennings’ son, Shooter Jennings, was very serious.

And four years later, the Townsends, who work in tandem to make the moonshine business work, are anticipating an early summer opening of tours at their “Back in Time” moonshine museum, at 161 Pappy’s Plaza, Blairsville.

“We opened the gift shop last year, and we’ve been busy converting that into the museum during that time frame,” Tommy Townsend said. “It’s all about the heritage, my Granddaddy Mimm from Young Harris, the tourism it should bring in, along with the tax revenues.”

“It will mean a lot to this community,” he said. “It’s a special place in our heart. I’ve lived in Nashville, Tenn., for 27 years, but

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TCHS sends boys golf team, Kenzie Jenkins to state golf championships

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Congratulations to the Towns County Indians for their Area 4 Championship victory on Monday, April 11.

The meet was held at Towns County’s own Brasstown Valley Resort in Young Harris.

Overall, the Area Championship team shot a score of 379 to clinch the First Place win, beating second place finishers Commerce by 13 strokes.

The Indians team was led by senior Sterling Hedden, junior Nick McConnell, sophomore Chase Williams, and freshmen Will Travis, Conner Kelley and Caleb Ledford. Also on the team but



Conner Kelley, Caleb Ledford, Sterling Hedden, Chase Williams, Will Travis, Coach Brett Keller and Nick McConnell with their Area 4 Championship Trophy on Monday, April 11, at Brasstown Valley Resort.

not pictured in the championship trophy photo are sophomore Benjamin Edwards and freshman Danny Reagan.

And for the third year in a row, junior Kenzie Jenkins won the Girls Area Low Med-

alist, shooting an individual score of 87.

Jenkins – with then seniors Mia Manto and Danielle Diehl – was part of the 2015 Lady Indians team that won first place in the State Tourna-



Girls Area 4 Low Medalist Towns County's Kenzie Jenkins.

ment last year.

Following such stellar accomplishments at area, both the boys team and Jenkins will advance to the State Tournament to be held in August.

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Voter Registration deadline is April 26

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Election season is well underway, and for many residents of Towns County, early voting is the most convenient way to support their candidates of choice.

During registration for the May 24 General Primary/Nonpartisan Election, a resident can change their voting information as well. However, there is a deadline to register to vote.

The chief registrar of the Towns County Board of Elections is Irma Nichols. With almost 30 years of experience in Towns County elections, she has the numbers and dates down almost to an exact science.



Irma Nichols

“April 26 is the deadline for early voting or changing your name or changing your address,” said Nichols. “That’s when the deadline is for any primary. You have that cutoff time. But you can register or

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Liz Ordiales pushes for term limits

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

At the Hiawassee City Council meeting on Tuesday, April 5, Councilmember Liz Ordiales brought up the idea of having term limits.

The occasion marked her third time suggesting term limits at a city council meeting.

Following the meeting, she explained that she felt term limits were necessary to help facilitate new ideas in the city.

“There’s absolutely no reason for the mayor to be a mayor for 22 years,” Ordiales said. “You get sta-

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Council member Liz Ordiales asks the council to reconsider a resolution on a housing project in the city. Photo/Mason Mitcham

AirMedCare works to save city residents

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

On Wednesday, April 6, and Thursday, April 7, Jimmy Morse of Life Force Inc. visited Hiawassee City Hall to talk about Hiawassee’s new AirMedCare coverage.

The AirMedCare Network is the largest alliance of air ambulance providers in the country. Life Force is an air ambulance provider based in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

According to an announcement by Hiawassee Mayor Barbara Mathis, the high cost of health care and specialized medical services prevents many Hiawassee residents from accessing needed medical care, especially emergency air transportation.

The city voted to approve AirMedCare coverage in 2015. Now, if anyone with health insurance in the city needs to be taken to a hospital by helicopter, their insurance will pay for the entire flight.

What AirMedCare offers is what called a Municipal Site Plan.

“The Municipal Site Plan basically says that if you’re flown by any AirMedCare helicopter ... that if you’re flown from within the lateral boundaries of Towns County and you have health insurance at the time of the flight, then whatever your health insurance pays on the flight is considered payment in full by us,” said Morse.

Additionally, anyone who wants to can purchase an upgrade at the cost of \$35 (\$65 if outside county limits).

“That serves two purposes,” said Morse. “It’s for the people that don’t have health insurance at the time of

the flight, but also people that want to be included outside of the county.

“You don’t have to have health insurance and you just have to live in the city. It’s just that if you don’t have health insurance and you are flown, you’re going to get a small bill, it just won’t be as huge. And that \$35 will wipe that out, if you get that \$35 upgrade it will cover you regardless of whether or not you have insurance and regardless of whether or not you’re in the county.”

He said that the City of Hiawassee pays \$5,000 a year to keep this coverage.

“Potential cost of a flight can be around \$25,000, and let’s say potentially that insurance could pay around \$9,000 – there could be a \$16,000 gap there or higher,” said Morse. “It’s beneficial because if just one person is flown this year, that keeps the revenue in your county, it keeps it in your economy.”

Morse has worked for three years bringing coverage to cities and counties in Tennessee and Georgia. The City of Hiawassee was the second city in the state of Georgia to ever accept AirMedCare coverage, just behind Blue Ridge.

Coverage started earlier this year on Jan. 1.

“Everybody in the ZIP code got a letter from the corporation saying, ‘Hey, this is what your council and mayor have done for you. If you want, you don’t have to, but if you want, you can get the upgrade,’” said Morse. “Everywhere that I’ve put this in place, it’s met with positive reception and really good testimonials and feedback.”

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Blue Ridge 1,682.92
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SPORTS

BASEBALL

Tues Apr 19 vs. Athens Academy 5:30 PM
Thur Apr 21 @ Athens Academy 5:30 PM
Fri Apr 19 vs. Commerce (DH) 5:00 PM Senior Night

SOCCER

Tues Apr 19 @ Rabun Co. 5 & 7 PM
Fri Apr 22 @ Union Co. 5 & 7 PM