

Aaron...from Page 1A

also assisted with raising the funds.

In 2014, Aaron received YHC's Nancy Louise Haynes (Stephens Sanderson) Robertson Outstanding Friend Award for his generous contributions and friendship to the College.

Approximately 187 students, the College's largest graduating class to date, are scheduled to participate in the graduation ceremony, receiving bachelor's degrees in art, biology, business and public policy, chemistry, communi-

cation studies, creative writing, education, English, history, mathematics, music, music education, musical theatre, outdoor leadership, psychology, religious studies, Spanish and theatre.

Moonshine...from Page 1A



Blairsville has always been home. No matter where I am, Blairsville is home."

The Townsends have all of the necessary licenses for the moonshine venture, federal, state and local. The 'Back in Time' museum should be open in the summer, but it could be a bit sooner.

Granddaddy Mimm's original corn whiskey will be distilled at the location at Pappy's Plaza. The plan is part of the county's Agritourism venue.

"The way the laws in Georgia work, we can sell a four of the museum and give a 750 ml bottle away," Christy Townsend said, referring to the 'Back in Time' Moonshine Museum. "We'll also have free tastings and patrons will be able to tour the facility.

"We're looking at charging \$30 to \$35, that's what everyone else is charging, and we're excited," she said. "We've lived here in Georgia for so long, this community has given to us, so we want to give back to this community.

"We don't want it to be just a place to tour, we want it to be an experience," she said.

"Agritourism is one of the fastest growing businesses in the South," Tommy Townsend said. "This is an opportunity to come back home, maybe create a few jobs, and give back to the place I grew up in.

"I've lived away from Blairsville, Georgia for a number of years, mainly because the Country Music business is in Nashville, Tenn.," he said. "This is an opportunity to make something happen here, and give back to my hometown.

"After all, this is where it all started for me years ago," he said.

Tommy Townsend is the grandson of Jack Mc-



Above, Tommy Townsend poses with the new Granddaddy Mimm's welcoming sign; below, quart jars ready to be filled with Apple Brown Betty Moonshine. Photos/Shawn Jarrard

Clure, an Appalachian moonshiner and local philanthropist from Young Harris.

The North Georgia Mountains are plush with stories of McClure's quality bootleg spirits, his charitable giving, and his self-delivered justice to those who crossed him.

Bluegrass icons Lester Flat and Earl Scruggs even enjoyed the famous brew a time or two when they were in the area according to Tommy Townsend.

McClure's career in bootlegging began during the Great Depression and continued until his death in 1969 when he died of pancreatic cancer.

Tommy Townsend was only 2 years old when his 'infamous' grandfather died, but the stories of his 'shining days' lived on and the family stories of his grandfather sparked an interest in Granddaddy Mimm that could not be squelched.

"I began to question my mother, aunts, and uncles about the recipe," said Townsend. "With their blessing, I began the process of producing Granddaddy Mimm using the same recipe and the same simple ingredients with all the taste and tradition en-

joyed by folks back in the day of Mimm."

Tommy Townsend said patrons could look forward to music and fellowship at the museum.

"We'll have music, square dances, have some free concerts, get some of the Nashville songwriters down here," he said. "We're looking forward to having some writers' nights, as well as some other music related events. We want to have those events free to the public.

"When we have our grand opening, we're looking to have Waymore's Outlaws and Shooter Jennings here," he said. "We'll have a whole day of music.

"Now that moonshine is legal, it's going to be a blast for me to carry on the tradition," he said. "I've thought about it for several years of how cool it would be to run 'shine' because of all the stories I've heard about Granddaddy Mimm since I was a child.

"I've always liked outlaws and the folks that colored outside the lines a bit, so that's what motivated me to do this," he said.

"Now I can run it legally. I just have to pay the taxes on it," he said.

Golf...from Page 1A

Augusta on May 16.

"Commerce got us during a match in the regular season, but we played when it counted, so we were proud to get that," said Indians Head Coach Brett Keller of the 13-point win over Commerce.

"There are eight guys on the team, but six competed in this area championship for us, and three ninth-graders really rose to the occasion - Will Travis, Conner Kelley and Caleb Ledford," added Coach Keller. "Those three grew up pretty quick this year. They really matured into tough competitors at such a young age.

"Chase Williams and Nick McConnell have been solid all year, and Sterling Hedden, our lone senior, really had a great round to help pull out the victory."

Coach Keller was equally impressed with and proud of his lone Lady Indian, as her hard work and dedication

have never wavered, which explains why she's won Girls Area Low Medalist every year she's competed at the high school level.

"We don't have a full (Lady Indians) team this year, but our one girl is going to be in the running for an individual title, because she's one of the top Public 1-A girls in the state," said Coach Keller. "As a team we didn't qualify because in 1-A and 2-A you need at least two to make a team. Four can compete, but two score, and we don't have but one girl up here in Towns County."

Of course, any Towns County High School girl looking to expand her extracurricular activities can talk with Coach Keller about joining the Lady Indians for next season.

"We'll put her out there to battle with Kenzie - she'd be a heck of a partner to have on your team," said Coach

Keller.

According to the coach, Jenkins enjoys golf and plays in a professional manner, loving to compete while keeping her head in the game.

As for the boys, they will be eligible to take home an even bigger trophy next month.

"The kids are a joy to be around," said Coach Keller. "They're way smarter than I am, so that helps tremendously around the course. They're just fun to be around, and they support each other, boys and girl alike.

"They're goal oriented, and they set some goals before the season started, individually and team wise. That's what they shoot for, is their individual goals and of course the team, and that's what makes golf kind of special - you can be an individual out there, but you're on a team as well."

tion, but applications can also be obtained over the phone or online.

"You just have to come in or call and ask for an application to register to vote, or you can go online and vote," said Nichols. "But you just need your driver's license to come in and register because I make a copy of them and put them with your registration form."

Registration form requirements are equally as simple. They require some basic information but can easily be filled out in a couple of minutes.

"You need your full name, your correct physical address, and if you have a different mailing address, and

your birthdate and the last four digits of your social security and your ethnicity, and that's it," said Nichols.

Early voting will be 8:30 a.m. till 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. On Saturday, May 14, the office will be open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

After early voting, election season is still in full swing. Nichols said that normally the precincts see a fairly large turnout for a population the size of Towns County.

"We have about 7,800 voters. That was back when the last census was something like 9,000 or 10,000 overall population. I think the last census was in 2010," she said.

Hiawassee...from Page 1A

last 100 years, and no serious misdemeanor records in the last 10 years, and must not be on the National Sex Offender Registry.

Furthermore, the credit criteria is that the applicant must have no bankruptcy in the past 12 months, less than \$2,000 legal debt, no outstanding mortgage in the past 12 months, no outstanding property and rental debt in the last 48 months, and no utility debt in the past 24 months, and a credit score of greater than 500.

Rental criteria is that the applicant must have less than one verified eviction record in the past 48 months, less than two verified evictions with initial filings in the past 12 months, and no collection actions in the past 48 months.

"The national government and the state government, in order to fund these projects, put strenuous criteria both on who comes and who stays," said Stancil. "If you think this is a slum, a \$4.2 million or \$4.3 million slum, or that these people are not worthy to be your neighbors, the facts belie that."

At this point, City Councilmember Liz Ordiales stood up to address why she had called the meeting, which she had done earlier in the week with fellow councilmembers Anne Mitchell and Kris Berrong, but Stancil asked that she wait to be called on to speak, stating that it was a parliamentary issue, that the council had adopted Robert's Rules as a system for keeping order during meetings, and that the council needed to adhere to its own rules.

"With that said, you also need to be aware of another problem, which is also that you all called this meeting by three council members as a motion to reconsider," said Stancil. "Under Robert's Rules, the motion to reconsider is under a time limit. It has to be made the same day the original motion was passed. That was not done."

Ordiales countered that the TISHCO Resolution shouldn't have been on the agenda in the first place.

"Our deadline for putting items on the agenda is Friday, so therefore we violated Robert's Rules there," Ordiales said, after which those in attendance began loudly agreeing with her, causing a disruption in the meeting.

Hiawassee Mayor Barbara Mathis then called Ordiales out of order, and Councilmember Berrong confronted Stancil about Robert's Rules, saying that in his opinion, the city manager obstructed the council whenever it disagreed with him.

After some order was regained, Mayor Mathis granted Ordiales five minutes to give her presentation.

Ordiales told those assembled that the council didn't get satisfactory answers from the TISHCO developers who presented at the regular meeting the week before.

Since that meeting in which they passed the initial resolution, Ordiales had gathered information regarding low-income housing that made her reconsider her vote.

"We have some (low-income housing units) in Hiawassee and we have some in Young Harris," Ordiales said. "I've contacted all of them. They all have openings. They all have vacancies. So they all have apartments open ready to be filled. So there are two in Hiawassee, two in Young Harris - three in Hiawassee, actually."

During the meeting, City Manager Rick Stancil said that he had drafted legislation for viewing by the council.

He added after the meeting that ultimately it would be up to the General Assembly to decide, and that changing the Hiawassee City Charter would be a long process that must go through city representatives.

"You go to your senator, to your representative, and give him an example," said Stancil. "Then he would take it to legislative council. Then you would have to advertise it and hold a public hearing on it. And then they would make a decision to move forward or not."

Before that happens, the city would have to pass a resolution to change the charter and pass a number of prerequisites such as giving notice in the paper.

Stancil said that if all the locally elected officials of Hiawassee support the measure in front of the General Assembly then the change generally passes, assuming the city has put into place the proper prerequisites.

However, the exception would be if not all local officials are in favor of the resolution.

"It's been my experience that legislators are very leery about adopting anything unless there's 100 percent support by the local elected officials, and I'm not sure that exists in this case," said Stancil.

An additional complication is added by the fact that the city doesn't know who would represent it at the General Assembly. This close to the general election, the city will have to wait until it knows who its delegates, or representatives, will be.



Angel Ledford speaks in favor of a city housing project in Hiawassee. Photo/Mason Mitcham

At this point, Mayor Mathis suggested that the council call the meeting out of order and have a public hearing where everybody can voice their opinions. This caused most of the audience to voice dissatisfaction with the proceedings.

"I called all of these apartments, all of them have vacancies, all of them, some of them have more than 10 vacancies, so my question is, do we really need another apartment with low-income housing?" Ordiales continued.

Ordiales also came prepared with statistics on low-income housing that she took from the U.S. Department of Justice.

According to Ordiales, the statistics said that double the rate of violence and victimization happens in low-income facilities, along with a higher percentage of crime, almost double, involving firearms.

"If you speak to our first responders and you go back to the apartments that we currently have, they have a substantial number of calls to the same area over and over and over again for criminal activity and for medical activity," Ordiales said. "Ninety calls within a year as of yesterday to an apartment complex. That's a lot. Eighty to another apartment complex, 38 to another one, 66 to another one, 21 to another one. Over and over and over again to the same place."

Councilmember Mitchell cited concerns that additional housing would stress the city's water and sewer capacity.

"I think we do need affordable housing here for younger families to move into where they can grow here," Mitchell said. "We've got places that can be rehabbed. It's got to be less expensive to rehab something."

"If we put money into things like rehabbing the low-cost housing that we have now, it would make a lot more sense, because there's room there. We don't need fifty all wadded up in the middle of town, creating more traffic hazards and the inevitable hazards that come with people who prey on poor people."

Near the close of the meeting, most of the more than 50 people in attendance grew vocally agitated at the enforcement of Robert's Rules, which insisted that each person wait to be recognized by the mayor to speak their turn.

Cries of "Let them speak" could be heard as various city councilmembers and members of the public tried to talk over one another.

The Hiawassee Resolution to Reconsider the TISHCO Resolution passed by a 3-1 vote, and only Councilmember Jay Chastain voted not to pass the resolution. At

the time of the adjournment of the meeting, Mayor Mathis had not signed to approve the resolution.

After the meeting, property owners Dr. Church and Dr. Jason Ledford sought to clear up confusion about their involvement in the project, the aesthetics of the project and why they felt it would be a good fit in the city.

"We've had a number of projects in the community already, and have worked hard to create aesthetically pleasing things, and things that would complement your business or things that would be slightly - if you just go by our offices, we've worked hard to make it look good," said Dr. Church.

They said that the proposed TISHCO development would be aesthetically similar to Big Sky Village in Hiawassee, but with even more stringent rental requirements.

"The thing that kind of tugged at my heartstrings is that there is a lot of sentiment in that meeting about 'not in my backyard,' and honestly I'm really disappointed in people who are saying that," said Dr. Church. "That's not what we should be about as citizens. This is not ghetto. These are working families that they are attracting."

Dr. Church and Dr. Ledford added that many working class families have not come to Hiawassee due to an inability to find housing, and often, industries won't come to a city that has no affordable housing for the workers.

"We haven't just sold to the highest bidder or just taken the first offer," Dr. Ledford said. "We've sat on this for several years. This is the best option that we've been presented with to date."

The first time TISHCO made application for federal and state funds for the development was in 2012, at a time when the council was more receptive to the idea, though that application ultimately was not approved based on the competitive nature of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs funding process.

Both Drs. Church and Ledford said that they had declined to entertain other offers, even to their financial peril.

"We happen to think this is a good fit for the property as compared to a lot of other options, but it's our home, and we want ultimately what's best for here," said Dr. Ledford, speaking of the City of Hiawassee.

The next step for the TISHCO development will be a reintroduction of the initial resolution to proceed with application for funding, which should be presented at the next Hiawassee City Council meeting in May, according to Ordiales.

Term Limits ... continued from Page 1A

nant, you don't get any fresh ideas, and then nobody runs against you because they know that, pretty much, you've got the whole political machine behind you."

She also said that she thought term limits would help ensure that elected officials do not lose touch with their constituents.

"If you haven't been able to do it in two terms, to make some kind of headway, then there's a good (indication) that you're not going to be able to do it," she said.

Ordiales proposed two four-year terms. "I think we've been pretty stagnant for a long time and I'd like to see that change," she said.

Added Ordiales: "I've brought it up three times, and yes, we need to have a discussion, we need to do legislature, but let's go ahead and do it. Let's get this ball rolling."