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EMC board could name new GM later this month

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Roy Perren, secretary of the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC Board of Directors and head of the General Manager Search Committee, announced that the board expects to name a new general manager by either late June or early July, to be hired by August, the month before the annual meeting in September.

Dan Brewer has served as interim general manager since September of last year, following the August 2015 resignation of Matthew Akins from the GM position.

This announcement came in the Hiwassee Town Hall Meeting that took place in the Towns County Civic Center on Monday, June 6. The meeting was held in order to update the public on what's been going on at the EMC, and



BRMEMC Board Vice President Mickey Cummings and Board President Steven Phillips take questions at the June 6 Hiwassee Town Hall Meeting.

to answer questions put to the board by the public.

This was the third Town Hall Meeting of its kind, one of the many efforts by the board aimed at transparency over the past two election cycles.

"We did a request for

proposals to find a search firm back in December of 2015," said Perren in the meeting.

"We reviewed those proposals in January, and we selected the search firm in February of

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Kay talks survival with Mountain Movers & Shakers

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

YOUNG HARRIS – Survival expert and teacher Alan Kay spoke with the Mountain Movers and Shakers, a conservative group concerned with education, on Friday, June 10.

Kay – renowned for his training classes in wilderness survival, preparedness and self-defense – became a local legend and national celebrity last year after spending 56 days completely isolated in remote Canadian wilderness, his survival depending solely on his wits, a few carefully chosen tools, and whatever he could find near his makeshift camp.

Countless numbers of Americans consumed the experiences of Kay and his fellow survivalists on the "Alone" TV show, which



Alan Kay of Blairsville

aired on the History channel. And it all boiled down to Kay, who outlasted nine other men to become the show's winning contestant.

Since then, Kay has been able to quit his job at the Colwell Probation Detention

Center and focus strictly on his passion for teaching others and sharing his personal philosophies with those who would learn from him.

"A lot of what I see out

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City of Young Harris Sewer expansion nearing completion

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

YOUNG HARRIS – Renovations to the Young Harris Wastewater Treatment Plant are 82 percent completed, and Mayor Andrea Gibby said the expansion is on track to be finished by November.

Young Harris City Council approved three change orders for the plant in their regular monthly meeting with Mayor Gibby on Tuesday, June 7.

Prior to the council meeting, council members and Mayor Gibby held a called meeting to discuss the change orders in the ongoing expansion of the sewer system.

The total amount of the change orders – reflecting necessary revisions and additions that have been brought to light in the course of construction – comes to \$140,817, which leaves



Young Harris City Council members Matt Miller, left, and Jared Champion in the June 7 meeting of Young Harris Mayor Andrea Gibby and city council

\$40,000 in contingency funding to last the remainder of the project.

Taking up the bulk of the costs are revisions to the main entrance of the sewer plant to allow for convenience and

safety when big trucks turn in from S.R. 66, and revisions to the service entrance to allow for better access to sludge and trash pickup, with about \$10,000 in replacement of broken piping

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Hiwassee residents to decide alcohol, Sunday sales in November election

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Hiwassee voters will be in two elections this Nov. 8 – the Special Municipal Election at Hiwassee City Hall, as well as the General Election.

Early voting will be available for both elections.

Along with deciding who will fill the remaining balance of the term of former Hiwassee City Councilman Stephen Smith, who stepped down earlier this year, decided city voters will referendums in November.

The qualifying period for the vacant council seat will be Monday, Aug. 15, through Wednesday, Aug. 17.

In the Tuesday, June 7, regular meeting of Hiwassee Mayor Barbara Mathis and city council, the council passed unanimously



Hiwassee City Councilman Kris Berrong takes a motion to sign with Mayor Barbara Mathis at the June 7 council meeting at Hiwassee City Hall.

several resolutions to place referendums on the Nov. 8 market the community to an Applebee's or a Chili's on whatever," said Attorney David Syfan in the meeting.

A pair of the resolutions concerned the selling of liquor by the drink, both during the week and on Sundays.

"The allure of sales by

the drink is, a lot of your big chain restaurants want to be able to sell beer and wine with the meals, so it would help you market the community to an Applebee's or a Chili's on whatever," said Attorney David Syfan in the meeting.

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Mountain Regional puppets take the stage Thursday

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

YOUNG HARRIS – Puppets are all the rage this summer in the Mountain Regional Library System, with the new Mountain Regional Puppet Company, headed by MRLS Director Vince Stone.

The group, aside from Stone, is comprised of three local library employees: Casey Hunley, Marlene Cannon and Maria Thomas.

This group scripts and choreographs their own shows and will perform professional level puppet shows at all Mountain Regional branches throughout the summer.

"My job here as regional director is more of an administrative job," said Stone. "But I'm a true middle school librarian at heart. I love storytelling, I love puppetry.

"So, in order to give myself a little creative outlet, I decided that it might be fun to start a puppet performance group.



Mountain Regional Library Director Vince Stone shows off the characters of Frog and Toad from an upcoming production by the newly formed Mountain Regional Puppet Company, which will be touring the libraries of the system. Photo/Lily Avery

"Then I thought, well, we could perform at all the local branches too, because they usually hire entertainers to come in. There are no puppetry

arts in North Georgia, so I thought it could be really cool. I wanted to produce a show that could tour to every branch."

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Hamilton Gardens at Lake Chatuge seek community volunteers, donations

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Towns County Chamber of Commerce's Business After Hours meeting was extra special this month, welcoming in Hamilton Gardens at Lake Chatuge as a new member to the chamber on Thursday, June 9, at the Paris Pavilion inside the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds.

"We're new members to the Chamber of Commerce," said HGLC Board President Grace Howard. "We're here at our new spot and it couldn't get much better than it is today. We're trying to involve the community in every way we can.

"We have areas of the garden that we call stewardship areas that various community groups are taking responsibility of, and helping us make these gardens into something truly wonderful.

"It's easier to go to your assigned spot than it is to just come up here and us say, 'Well, you have 33 acres –



Hiwassee City Councilwoman Liz Ordiales, left, speaks with Towns County Chamber of Commerce President Candace Lee, center, and Hamilton Gardens at Lake Chatuge Board President Grace Howard at the chamber's Business After Hours meeting at the gardens. Photo/Lily Avery

have at it.' "The primary mission of our group is to preserve and restore the gardens because it really is a beautiful place, and we want to keep it that way."

HGLC is also offering seminars open to the public on different gardening techniques, and informative sessions concerning specific flowers

and overall ins and outs of gardening.

These classes are not on a set schedule and will be advertised as they become available.

Since taking control of the gardens earlier this year, HGLC has held many volunteer workdays. These days are open

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Organizers hope to grow Appalachian Festival

By Todd Forrest
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The 2016 Appalachian Wine, Music & Art Festival welcomed some of the top vineyards from across the Southeast to the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds on Saturday, June 11, providing an afternoon of fine wine, great food, local art and plenty of music.

"It was a wonderful event and we had some

fantastic guests that came and visited," said Eric Seifarth of Young Harris' Crane Creek Vineyards, who has attended all three festivals. "This provides us an opportunity to really interact with people who didn't know about Georgia wine. This is such a beautiful venue, not only in Northeast Georgia, but in the State, and hopefully in the future we can attract more visitors."

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Festival attendees line up at the booth of local Crane Creek Vineyards to get a taste of fine wine. The festival offered residents from around the region entertainment in the form of music, art, fine wines and delicious foods on Saturday, June 11. Photo/Todd Forrest.

Deadline for Emergency Air Medical Transport Service sign up

Commissioner Bill Kendall is reminding all Towns County citizens that this Friday, June 17, 2016 is the deadline for Citizens to sign up for the free Emergency Air Medical Transport Service that Towns County Government and Chatuge Regional Hospital is jointly providing.

This service will cover all air lift cost that Medicare or insurance does not cover. It will also cover all cost to

residents that have no insurance. Emergency airlift is expensive and cost from \$20,000 to \$40,000. You may sign up at Young Harris Library, Hiwassee Library or Chatuge Regional Hospital. You will need to bring your Social Security Card, insurance or Medicare cards if you have any.

Anyone with questions may contact Lindsey Atha at Chatuge Regional Hospital at 706-896-7196.

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Support our Friends of the Library

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Thursday, June 16th

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Mountain Fling Arts & Crafts Show

June 25th & 26th
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Blairsville Pro Rodeo

Blairsville Pro-Rodeo
June 17 & 18

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