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Homeowners Association hopes to consolidate water

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Towns County Homeowners Association met for its annual meeting at the Towns County Civic Center on Friday, June 24.

Water was the primary topic of this year's meeting. The association wishes to merge the three separate water authorities within Towns County to form one single water authority to cover the entire county.

Towns County Homeowners Association President Noel Turner invited both District 50 State Sen. John Wilkinson and Rabun County Water and Sewer Authority General Manager Brendan Thompson to speak on their experiences with a similar merger in neighboring Rabun County.

"Currently, as you may or may not know, we have three authorities serving 10,000 people in the coun-



Debbie Wilkinson and her husband, District 50 State Sen. John Wilkinson, (R-Toccoa), listen as the Towns County Homeowners Association agenda is shared last week at the Towns County Civic Center. Photo/Lily Avery

ty," Turner said. "The city of Young Harris has their own well, there's the Towns County Water Authority as well as the city of Hiawassee.

"Our opinion is, and it's merely an opinion at this point, but we feel that we need

a consultant to come in to look at what's going on here and look at the deficit and look to see if there are any redundancies (duplication of services).

"We want to see if it makes sense for the people of Towns County, not for the

individual cities within the county, but for the people to have one authority."

A primary concern that sparked this desire for a joint authority are the multi-colored fire hydrants throughout the county that

have questioning working capacities as well as the overall water usage of the various authorities throughout the county, based on statistics taken by the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority.

General Manager Thompson informed the crowd on the ins and outs of the Rabun County Water Authority merger. Thompson went into great detail about how this merger affected not only the people of Rabun County but also the internal cities and entities within the county.

The legislation to set up the new Rabun County Water and Sewer Authority was signed in 2013 and the authority assumed all the assets from existing authorities in 2014.

"The goal, plain and simple, is to consolidate all water and sewer assets for Rabun County, all under one house," said Thompson. "When you have redundancies with more authorities, you get

higher rates, and we wanted to better serve the county."

"But there are a lot of legalities, technicalities and, I hate to say it, egos that are involved in doing something like this," he said. "It's not going to happen fast, it's going to take a while to get everything where it needs to be for the betterment of the county."

Thompson formally extended his assistance to Turner and the association with moving forward on seeking water authority consolidation.

Sen. Wilkinson and House District 8 State Rep. Stephen Allison both worked with the legislation for Rabun County to achieve one water authority throughout the county.

When speaking to members, Sen. Wilkinson offered a word of caution on proceeding with such an endeavor, urging members to evaluate how this will effect everyone involved and make certain this is what

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Carl Vinson study introduced



Council members Anne Mitchell, Kris Berrong and Liz Ordiales listen as the Carl Vinson Institute salary study is revealed last week in Hiawassee. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Hiawassee Mayor Barbara Mathis and the Hiawassee City Council held a special called work session on Mon-

day, June 20, to hear a report of the recently completed City of Hiawassee Classification and Compensation Study.

The study - undertaken by the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government - was commissioned

by the city last year to the tune of \$6,500, and it offers the city a definitive compensation plan for city employees moving forward.

Alex Daman drove up

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Runoffs are front and center

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Early voting for the July 26 Republican Primary and Nonpartisan Runoff Election will begin on Tuesday, July 5.

The runoff races in question are as follows:

- The office of 8th District State Representative in the Georgia General Assembly, where voters will be deciding between Matt Gurtler and Kent Woerner.

- The office of Towns County Board of Education Post 5, between Nathan Nobilet and Kilee Smith.

Those interested in voting early can do so on weekdays between Tuesday, July 5, and Friday, July 22, from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. each day. Voters will also have a chance to vote on Saturday, July 16, from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m., which will come in handy for voters who work during the week.



Towns County Board of Elections Chair Janet Oliva certifies the election results following the May 24 Primaries in Towns County. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

The three weeks of early voting will take place in the office of the Towns County Board of Elections and Registration at the Old Rock Jail, between the Towns County Courthouse and the Towns County Public Library in Hiawassee.

Tuesday, July 26, will be the actual Election Day for the runoff. Voting will run from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. that day, and voters will be voting at one of the four predetermined polling precincts on

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Bake sale a huge asset



Left to right, Suzanne Carter, and Elaine Vickers woo a potential customer at their Friends of the Libraries of Towns County Bake Sale last week. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The libraries of Towns County have many friends within the community, including the Friends of the Libraries of Towns County, and they

held a Bake Sale at the Towns County Public Library in Hiawassee on Thursday, June 23.

"They give us money every year for Summer Reading," said TCPL Branch Manager Debbie Phillips, who is in the middle of the Summer Reading Program calendar.

"They usually pay for my entertainers. And of course, the money they raise, we wouldn't have near the books that we do without them, because we've not had our state money in so long."

Proceeds from all
See Bake Sale, Page 6A

Lucy Aparo celebrates No. 103

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

While age may only be a number, one Towns County resident has reached such an age that most people only dream about.

One of Towns County's oldest residents, Lucy Aparo, celebrated her 103rd birthday with family and friends at Brasstown Manor on Friday, June 24.

Looking at Lucy, no one would think she is a day over 70 and talking to her, she seems even younger, with the sparkling awe of a woman far younger. At over a century old, Lucy has regained a child-like wonder about life and continues to take part in the small, everyday miracles that make life magical.

"She's always very positive, a wonderful mother and just an amazing person to be around," said Sal Aparo, Lucy's only son.

Lucy was born in 1912 in Haven, CT to an Italian immigrant family starting their new life in America. She married the love of her



Lucy Aparo makes a birthday wish as she blows out the candles on her birthday cake last week at Brasstown Manor. Photo/Lily Avery

life, James Aparo, and together they had one child, Sal, and a joyful 66 years of marriage before he passed away in 2008.

Lucy has four grandchildren, eleven great-grandchildren and one great great grandchild.

"She lived her life completely as herself," said Kathleen Aparo, Lucy's daughter-in-law. "She became a school teacher in the early 1900s when it was unheard of for girls to even go to college. She's had such a full life."

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Towns County ready for Fourth of July festivities

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

This year marks the 240th anniversary of America's independence. As a nation founded on brotherhood and the celebration of freedom, what better way to spend such a monumental day than out in the fresh mountain air, enjoying good food and beautiful fireworks with family and friends.

Towns County is gearing



up for the Fourth of July weekend with plenty of opportunities to get out and have fun for the whole family.

On July 4, the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds is hosting their annual fireworks display at 9:45 p.m. across the ball field, shooting the fireworks over Lake Chatuge. It is a free

Little River Band, will be at Anderson Music Hall on July 2 to play their long list of legendary musical hits.

show with parking available for all those who attend.

Before the fireworks show, there will be activities for children and adults alike as well as live music in the parking lot for everyone to enjoy. A variety of concessions, everything from popcorn to hotdogs, will also be available throughout the evening.

North Mt. Zion Church of God will also be setting up shop

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