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Bald, as well as the unspoiled mountain views and the beauty of Lake Chatuge.

"They have been wonderful to work with," said Katie Polstra, Manager of the Ramada.

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mean to Towns County and also asked them to get those people out to the polls to vote against it.

"This added tax that will be a burden on all Towns County residents with no visible benefits," said Kendall. "It's really going to hurt a lot of people. All Towns County will get out of it will be a 5-lane road 1.1 miles from the light on Highway 75 to the North Carolina line."

"It will displace a historic church and cemetery, that's what we will get out of it," said Kendall.

Kendall recapped the exemptions of the bill as well as the tax increases on every day consumer items.

"This is bad legislation. I think Towns County is going to vote against it in a big way. It's still an uphill battle, but we do have a chance to defeat this now. Tell your neighbors and get them out to the polls," said Kendall.

Commissioner Kendall provided an update on Foster Park's Comprehensive Recreation Complex on Mining Gap Lane. "It's scheduled for the contractor to have the building pad completed by August 4th, the concrete poured by September 1st, and the steel delivered by October 15th. We are hoping to have the building

"Everyone has commented on how great everything is here, from the weather, views of the mountain and lake, and the friendliness of everyone they meet," said Polstra.

dried in by December."

"It will be a 26,000 square foot multipurpose building with dividing/removable partitions. It will have a gymnasium with a walking track over the bleachers. It will have an elevator for easier access to the less mobile, and will be designed to seat one-thousand with banquet style tables. We are hoping to be able to book conferences here from out of county and bring in some additional revenue," said Kendall. "This facility will be free to Towns County citizens."

Kendall also provided an update on the new Senior Center. "We've got quite a bit of work to do yet on the inside. We hope to be in it in about 3 months."

Kendall spoke proudly saying, "Towns County is debt free. The debt on the jail, Industrial Park, and 911 equipment was all paid off early. Towns County has one of the lowest tax millage rates in the state. We have had 2 pieces of legislation introduced, one to reduce high property tax assessment by limiting it to no more than 3 percent increase per year, and the second provided a \$10,000 homestead exemption to Towns County citizens. We are the only county in the state that has this."

Child Safety...continued from page 1

sion of Fire Chief Mitch Floyd, partnered with Northeast Georgia's Rural Road Coordinator Randall Townley, Lead Instructor, to provide training in the proper installation of child safety seats. The four day training was held at Fire Station 6 on Highway 288 in Hiawassee.

"I am very happy to say Towns County has 5 additional Certified Child Safety Technicians trained in proper child safety seat installation to assist parents and caregivers on how to correctly get the children in the county riding properly in their child safety seat. This is a very important time with the holidays approaching," said Townley.

They are very committed to ensuring the well-being of the children in the county, so much so that they recently set up a Child Safety Inspection Station in Ingles' parking lot. Parents were encouraged to bring their vehicles by and have the child safety seat inspected. They checked not only for non-compliance of safety seats, but for proper buckling techniques and proper fit of safety straps and harnesses as well.

"We checked 10 seats and replaced 6, at no cost to the parent/caregiver. One hundred percent of the seats checked were improperly installed or the seat was buckled in the seat incorrectly," said Townley.

Many people may not know that they are putting their child at risk if the safety seats are more than 6 years old, have been involved in an accident, has been recalled, are missing manufacture's date and installation instructions, or if they do not know the history of the

safety seat.

Commissioner Bill Kendall worked cooperatively with the Fire Chief Mitch Floyd and Class Instructor Randall Townley on providing the training.

The instructors were Townley, Georgia State Trooper David Snyder, Safety Education Coordinator, Lisa Thompson, Rabun County Sheriff's Office, and Suzanne Ruggiers, Walton County School System.

"I support it, I'm in favor of it, and I think it will save lives. Prior to this group being certified, we only had 1 person trained to properly install safety seat restraints," said Kendall.

The 5 newly trained and certified staff include: Corporal Lewis Baxter, Hiawassee Police Department,

Assistant Chief Robbie Rich, Young Harris College Police Department, Captain Terry Parker, Towns County Fire Department/EMS, Lieutenant James Rosser, Towns County Fire Department, and Safety Educator/Firefighter Jonathan Wilson.

These dedicated service providers are to be commended for their dedication and diligence in putting the safety of the children of Towns County first.

"If a parent feels that their child's safety seat is not properly installed and would like to have it checked, they can take it to Fire Station 1 on Sims Circle in Hiawassee, or Fire Station 2 in Young Harris. Both places have Certified Safety Technicians and can tell them if the seat is properly installed and in compliance with Child Safety Restraint Laws. This applies to booster seats for older children as well," said Floyd.

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from my step-dad saying that there were firetrucks at my house," said a very emotional Curtis.

The first call came in at 14:40 on the afternoon of June 27th and dispatch was made at 14:41. Fire trucks arrived on the scene at 14:51 at which time the home was fully engulfed. Towns County Fire Chief Mitch Floyd arrived on the scene and took command at 14:51 with the scene already fully engulfed.

"The home was three-quarters involved when first responders arrived on the scene. We exercised defensive mode, tore down walls that were barely standing. The structure was just about totally destroyed when we arrived," said Chief Floyd.

"Two inch and three-quarter inch lines were deployed for the initial attack. A 1-inch booster line was used to extinguish the fire which had spread to the surrounding woods on the property. The structure was too unstable for any kind of attack," said Assistant Fire Chief Harold Copeland, who was also on the scene.

"Neighbors reported hearing small explosions prior to the call coming in. It was not until someone actually saw the

fire that the call was made," Floyd said.

There were a total of fifteen firefighters on the scene, as well as the Red Cross to assess hydration of the firefighters and provide assistance to the homeowner as needed.

Two tankers out of Fire Stations 1 and 5, as well as Fire Engine 1 responded to the scene.

A second structure fire occurred June 28th in the Mountain Village community on 76 East toward Rabun County. The Woods family on Mountain Village Road were home at the time and immediately reported the fire which originated in the bathroom as a result of a faulty hot water heater.

"This was a 1200 square foot home that received only minimal damage due to quick 911 activation and quick response from the Towns County Fire Department. The home was less than a mile from Fire Station 4 on Mountain Village Road. Fire Fighters ventilated the roof and extinguished the fire with no loss of possessions, only smoke damage," said Copeland.

Fourteen fire fighters responded to the scene. Fire Engines 1 and 4 and Tanker 4 were utilized at the scene.

Business After Hours a rousing hit

By Libby Shook
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The June meeting of the Towns County Chamber of Commerce's Business After Hours was held at Curves of Hiawassee.

Curves is the largest fitness franchise in the world and the first to offer a 30-minute exercise program designed exclusively for women.

"Thanks everybody for coming out. This is a great turnout. We even have men coming in to a women's workout facility."

Curves has been a great partner with our community and the chamber," said Towns County Chamber President Candace Lee.

Owner's Jennifer and Judy Moe (mother and daughter) offered a delicious, yet healthy buffet, while Crane Creek Vineyards and Hightower Creek Vineyards provided a fine sampling of wine.

Everyone ate, socialized, and caught up on current happenings in the community.

Lee welcomed everyone and asked them to continue eating and enjoying their meal while she recognized the newest chamber members Liz Green of Hightower Creek

Vineyards and Mark Lucas of DJ Cool Poppa.

Lee announced that Lake Chatuge was featured on the front of Northeast Georgia Living with four pages devoted to Young Harris and Hiawassee.

She also announced that the Georgia Mountain Travel Association, a full fold-out brochure including map showing the whole northeast region, will be ready by the end of July.

Commissioner Bill Kendall gave an update on the new senior center and County Park.

Richard and Jimmy Smith of MyTownUSA, were present to discuss the possibility of offering this service to the Towns County area.

"The idea is to try to put locally owned businesses on the Website."

Locally owned franchises can be listed as well as local events, coupons, and more," said Jimmy Smith.

It has been available in Blairsville since April and was met with great enthusiasm according to the Smiths.

Lee also went over some of the major upcoming events in the community.

The Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds' Fireworks display beginning at 9:45 p.m. on Tuesday.

Towns County's Annual Boat Parade on July Fourth



Candace Lee and Curves' co-owner Judy Moe at the Chamber's After Hours Meeting. Photo/Libby Shook

begins at 11 a.m. beginning at Nantahala Bay and ending at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds for a hot dog cookout.

Brasstown Valley Resort's Annual Star Spangled Fourth of July celebration featuring live music, family fun activities, and a fireworks show after dark.

Glen Campbell's Farewell Tour at the Anderson Music Hall is on July 13th at 7 p.m., and A Doggie Wedding & Reception on July 14th, sponsored by Operation

P.U.P. (prevent unwanted pets) and hosted by Luca's Kitchen and Pawz-atively Styled.

The last item on the agenda was a demonstration of how the Curves' fitness center works.

Owner Judy Moe explained the unique, for women only, workout routine.

They have added Zumba, a dance-based cardio workout, to their routine.

Guests also had ample opportunity to participate. Some did, and thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

Townsend ready to play Music Hall July

By Charles Duncan
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Tommy Townsend has spent more time at home in Union County over the past two weeks than he has in several years.

Townsend, the front man for Waymores' Outlaws, has spent that time picking with his idol during his stay in Blairsville.

He's also worked at the sawmill, and has spent time with the church band from Shady Grove Methodist Church.

Oh, by the way, his idol is Roy Townsend, the man whose musical influence on the lead singer and guitarist for Waymores' Outlaws equals that of Tommy Townsend's other idol, Waylon Jennings.

"It's really been fun playing music with my Dad," Tommy Townsend said. "He's the one who taught me four chords and put me in this musical direction."

Tommy Townsend and Waymores' Outlaws will open the 2012 Georgia Mountain Fair on July 20. Townsend jokes that Lee Greenwood will close for the Outlaws.

"We'll open the Fair and Lee Greenwood follows,"



Tommy Townsend

Tommy Townsend said. "It's opening night. I don't think people realize just how great an experience those music shows are at the Fairgrounds."

"I played there when I was a kid. I was on stage with Waylon Jennings at the Music Hall," he said. "Actually, that was the last time Waylon was at Anderson Music Hall."

"It's special for me to play at The Hall," Tommy Townsend said. "All the people I grew up with come out, it's an exciting atmosphere, the family will be here. It's a special time personally."

One of the most special moments of Tommy Townsend's career was the night he and his father performed together center stage at Ryman Auditorium at the Grand Ole

Opry in Nashville, Tenn.

"That was one of the greatest moments of my career, being up there on the biggest stage of them all and Dad was up there picking with me," Tommy Townsend said. "A little while later someone from Blairsville came up to me and said that they had seen me at Ryman Auditorium and my Dad was up there picking with me."

"And that was special, someone from Blairsville, my hometown, actually got to share in one of my most memorable moments," he said.

Townsend has been busy promoting his Granddaddy Mimm's whiskey, he'll soon head to the Dominican Republic where there appears to be a great demand for the family recipe, concocted long ago by Tommy Townsend's grandfather, Jack McClure.

A native of Young Harris, McClure made the best moonshine and fruit brandies in the in the North Georgia Mountains and made a profitable living for him and his family.

McClure's moonshine money was the difference between going hungry and meat, beans and taters on the table for many families in Towns and Union counties.

"We're almost there, almost ready to launch Granddaddy Mimm's Authentic Corn Whiskey," Tommy Townsend said. "It's been a busy summer, but, it's been a good summer."

"Being able to be here in Blairsville and spend time with family and friends means the world to me," he said.

"I've been blessed in my lifetime," he said.

On Jan. 25, Townsend announced his partnership with Georgia Distilling Company, Inc. in Milledgeville to recreate and market his grandfather's original moonshine recipes legally for the first time. Dubbed Granddaddy Mimms Authentic Corn Whiskey, and Peach and Apple brandies, these mountain spirits will be produced on stills using the Jack McClure design, and built in Georgia using his secret family recipe originated in Towns County.

The back label on the whiskey bottle urges those who partake of the spirits to "drink responsibly and don't forget to tithe on Sunday."

McClure's moonshine recipe had been stored away in the family's memory for more than 40 years.

Moonshine is legal today, just as long as the government collects the tax revenue.

Jerry Taylor really knows Towns County

By Libby Shook
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Towns County Historian Jerry Taylor recently appeared as a guest speaker at The Towns County Historical Society.

There was a large turnout to hear Taylor speak on the history of Towns County. Taylor is a former TCHS history teacher, a current school board member, and a many-generational native of Towns County.

Taylor got a late start due to technical difficulties and was unable to utilize the PowerPoint that he had prepared for the evenings presentation; however, he was undaunted by the setback and went on to inform and entertain with enthusiastic diligence.

He stood behind a lectern, note free, and ad-libbed his presentation with quick wit, a personable manner, and



Jerry Taylor

a wealth of knowledge of the history of Towns County.

Taylor opened with a riveting discussion regarding how the county came to be known as Towns County.

This area and many surrounding counties were originally known as Cherokee County, "named after the removal of Indians from the area" according to Taylor.

Cherokee was later divided into smaller counties as population increased "mainly because of the discovery of gold in Dahlonega."

Union County was formed "as one of those from the original Cherokee County. "John Thomas of Morganton, Georgia, which was also a part of the original Cherokee County region, named the newly formed area Union County due to the fact that many settlers were known as Unionists as opposed to States Righters," said Taylor.

They were also referred to as 'Union-ites.'

With the influx of gold seekers, there became a need to create smaller counties. Union was, at that time, divided into Rabun, Towns, and Union Counties, with parts of eastern Fannin County included

Taylor told the intrigued listeners that in 1856, Towns County was named after Governor

George Washington Towns.

He did not have an explanation as to why Governor Towns was chosen as the namesake for the county, as he was born in Talbot, Georgia as well as the fact that "Towns had campaigned vigorously for the removal of the Cherokees from the county," said Taylor.

The areas of the Hiawassee River Valley including Fodder Creek, Hog Creek, Macedonia, Bell Creek, Woods Grove, and Friendship were discussed, giving names of families that still live in these areas and the origin of many street names.

The many funny stories had listeners laughing and folks seemed to have forgotten about the PowerPoint presentation.

Taylor had enough stored memory (not what was on his flash drive) that he was able to engage, educate, and thoroughly entertain his audience without the use of modern technology.

No additional details were available at press time regarding the robbery.

The case is currently under investigation by the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, Towns County Sheriff's Office and the Hiawassee Police Department.

Should anyone have any information regarding the robbery, they are encouraged to call (800) GBI-TIPS, or (706) 348-4866. Also, tips can be made at the Towns County Sheriff's Office at (706) 896-4444.

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seen in the vicinity driving on a side street adjacent to the bank.

While not considered to be connected to the robbery, authorities are hopeful that the driver may have seen a vehicle or person leaving the scene.

The robbery happened shortly after 2 p.m. June 25. The male, between the ages of 25 and 35 years old walked into the bank and demanded money, according a release from Towns County Chief Deputy Jeff Edge.

After receiving an

undisclosed amount of cash, the man left the bank, authorities said..

The suspect is believed to be between 5-foot, 8-inches and 5-foot, 10-inches tall. Authorities believe the man weighs between 165 to 175 pounds.

Citizens South has a sign in its foyer asking customers to please remove all hats and sunglasses before entering the bank.

The suspect did not comply, and according to video surveillance photos, entered the

bank looking at a newspaper, apparently trying to walk in under the guise of a captivated customer.

The bank was swarming with law enforcement presence immediately after the robbery. K-9s were brought in to track the grounds outside the bank.

Authorities declined to release if the man is believed to have left on foot or was seen leaving the scene in a vehicle.

Chief Deputy Edge said that more details will be released as they become available.