

Fire...from Page 1A

that. It's that time of year."

Concerning the yearly uptick in call volume handled by Towns County Fire, Chief Copeland added: "In 2014, we ran 1,525 calls, which was a record shattering anything before. Last year, we ran 1,752 calls. And as of today, we're well over 1,000, on a pace to run over 1,900 calls this year."

July has offered no reprieve from the swelling call volume, as a number of incidents just in the last week highlight the ever-growing responsibilities of Chief Copeland and his crew.

A Fourth of July fire at a home in Hickorynut Cove Campgrounds started in a gear utility room that got too hot, where some combustible compounds like paint thinner were being stored near a gas-fired hot water heater.

"The homeowners were up at a neighbors, thankfully," said Chief Copeland, adding that his firefighters were able to save the home. "Other than the area of origin, it was heat and smoke damage."

"A 13-year-old dog did perish, but another dog, 5

years old, survived. The older dog was behind the couch, and he was overcome with heat and smoke. We did try to resuscitate him."

Just two days later, on Wednesday, July 6, an early morning fire broke out in a home off Matheson Road, near Scataway Road.

"It was a mobile home, fully involved upon arrival," said Chief Copeland, adding that two dogs died in that fire, according to the renter. "There was no electricity and no propane to the house - that fire is still under investigation."

In other fire department news, the most recent class of Towns County Firefighters completed Crash Victim Extrication training at the Turpin's Wrecker Service junkyard using hydraulic tools for vehicle extrication.

"We have seven or eight in-house instructors that are state certified," said Chief Copeland on the extrication training. "Our rookies that just graduated in April fought in these last few fires, and they have exceeded my expectations."

"They've all been through Structural Fire Control. They are able to fight and they have done well. They're an

asset to our numbers."

Looking ahead, this most recent class will be undergoing some more training to certify them in a greater field of fire rescue capabilities.

"Their next training is going to be First Responder, where they get their medical training," said Chief Copeland. "After that, they'll have their Emergency Vehicle Operators Course, where they will learn how to operate our apparatus. Some of our vehicles are 30,000 and 40,000 pounds."

Chief Copeland and his department are trained in other areas, too, to aid in the search and rescue of people missing or injured on the Appalachian Trail.

This training came in handy in April, when Towns County Fire was able to assist in a helicopter longline rescue to pluck an injured hiker from the trail and deliver them to safety.

"If we've got a bad injury, and we've hiked in three miles, and we can get to the patient and start getting care to them, instead of us having to haul that patient back out of the woods, with weather permitting, we will call in a longline rescue," said Chief Copeland.

Fair...from Page 1A

"We will have board splittin' and quiltin' and apple cider makin'. We have a live, working saw mill. We also have the old one-room schoolhouse with the Towns County Retired Teachers hosting it."

"Then we also have a schoolhouse that was actually used in Towns County many years ago, but was brought to the fairgrounds."

"Something new this year is, Jerry Taylor, who has the Organ Loft, he's fixed up one of the rooms in the Exhibit Hall, Victorian style. He has a bunch of different (antique reed) organs down there and will be playing them. Some of them are from the 1800s."

"We have the orphanage coming from Haiti. There are 35 children that will be singing at the fairgrounds the first day of the fair. I'm working with a church over in Lavonia, and they'll be performing two shows that day."

B & K Carnival will be featuring amusement rides of all sorts during the fair, starting on Thursday, July 14, at 5 p.m., a day before the fair begins.

The entrance cost for a day at the Georgia Mountain Fair is \$12, with free admission for children 12 years old and younger, though there is a discounted rate of \$33 for a three-day pass and \$90 for a Fun Fair Pass for all nine days.

All music shows are included in the cost of the fair ticket; however, the cost of the

carnival is not included in any of the packages.

On Saturday, July 16, the Georgia Mountain Fair Parade will kick things off at 11 a.m. The parade will start at the Park Sterling Bank and end at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds, followed that evening with music from Exile and The Berrongs and Crew, featuring Jimmy Hooper and Billy Nicholson.

Sunday, July 17, will feature the annual Gospel Music Show, which begins with an Interfaith Worship Service with Jerry Goff, topping off with performances from the McKameys, Primitives and Archie Watkins & Smokey Mtn. Reunion

Connie Smith and Bourbon Borderline will headline the music event on Monday, July 18, and patrons will not want to miss out on the Miss Georgia Mountain Fair Pageant beginning at 8 p.m. that Monday.

Those interested in participating in the pageant can still do so by contacting the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds.

There will be a photography contest and exhibition on Tuesday, July 21. Winners from this contest will have the opportunity to receive cash prizes as well as showcase their work to thousands of people throughout the day.

"It's set up from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., then the judging will begin after that," said Clairia Franklin, Photography Director for Georgia Mountain

Fair. "People can fill out the application online and send it in to apply. They can submit five to 10 pictures."

"They come in and set up their display, however they want to display their work. There are 31 cash prizes for the contest."

"There is first, second and third, which will receive \$100, \$75 and \$50. There are 10 fourth places and 18 fifth places. Fourth place winners will receive \$25 and fifth place winners will receive \$15. The pictures must be matted or framed and no larger than 16 by 20."

"Exhibiting the pictures requires the photos to be on display until the closing of the show at 8 p.m. on Saturday, July 23. We also encourage labels to tell where the photos were taken."

The Georgia Mountain Fair Band is planning to take the stage both Friday, July 22, and Saturday, July 23, a treat no fairgoer will want to miss.

"We hope to have a lot of people attending," said Thomason. "It's a great deal, really. It's a great way to come out and see good entertainment and check out the fair at a very reasonable price. Bring the whole family for a vacation. There really is something for everyone."

And then the weekend following the fair, the fairgrounds will play host to the 8th Annual Georgia Mountain Moonshine Cruz-In, which will be up and running between July 28 and July 30.

Heritage...from Page 1A

illuminated by an aura of red, white and blue. Medals, photographs and keepsakes from World War I veterans until present-day soldiers were put on display, honoring the lives of all those who have proudly given of their time and energy to protect the United States.

Following the opening address by Towns County Historical Society President Sandra Green, Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall spoke of what veterans mean to the county. Commissioner Kendall also provided updates on various veteran-related monuments and activities within the county, specifically renovations to the Veteran's Memorial Park.

"It is truly an honor to have anything to do with honoring our veterans," said Commissioner Kendall. "I thank the Historical Society for all that you do in the name of veterans."

Don Stroud, a well distinguished retired United States military officer from Harrison, Tennessee, presented what is known as the "Missing Man" ceremony for those in attendance.

"It's always an honor for me to stand and represent all branches of the United States military," said Stroud. "I don't know if you're like me, but every time I see that American flag, it just does something to me. I don't know what they do in New York. I don't know what they do in Hollywood. All I know is what we do down here in the South. We still believe that this is a patriotic country, and I believe with all my heart that this nation is still under God. I'll believe that until the day that I die."

As Stroud spoke of his love of country, God and fellow fallen soldiers, a small round table was situated beside where he stood at the podium.

Atop the table sat two plates, a rose in a vase, an upside down cup and a chair propped against the table with a piece of black fabric embossed with a white image of an unknown soldier.

"This table, set for one, is representative of those commonly known as prisoners of war," said Stroud. "The table is round to show our everlasting concern for our



Don Stroud speaks at the 2016 Heritage Day event sponsored by the Towns County Historical Society



Many Towns County residents of all ages attended Heritage Day to show their respects for veterans, both fallen and present.

missing soldiers. The two bibles on the table represent that we are one nation under God.

"The black napkin stands for the emptiness these warriors have left in our hearts. The tablecloth is white, symbolizing the purity of those who answer the call to duty."

"On the small bread plate is a slice of lemon to remind us of the bitter fate of those captured and missing. Also on the table, on the other plate, is a pinch of salt."

"It symbolizes the tears that fall for those missing and for the families who are still seeking answers. The red rose displayed in a case reminds

us of the life of each missing soldier.

"The yellow ribbon tied around the vase represents the ribbon worn by thousands who bear witness to our nation's unyielding determination."

"The candle is the life of those who live in our hearts, to illuminate the way home. The glass is inverted to remind us that our distinguished comrades cannot be with us and enjoy festivities. "The chair is tilted forward against the table because they are not here, and on the cloth over the chair there is no specific face because they are all important to us."

A hush swept over the crowd after Stroud's "Missing Man" ceremony, everyone in the room remembering those who have fallen in the line of duty, those missing in action and all the soldiers currently serving in the military.

Local deceased veterans were honored with a memorial video, providing the veterans' dates of death, where they served and in which branches of the military they served. Afterward, all veterans in attendance rose and told a brief summary of their experience in the U.S. Armed Forces.

"Where would you be without the personal sacrifice made by an American soldier," said Stroud. "It's another reason why I want to personally extend a thank you for taking the time out of your day to come here."

"You do not take your freedom for granted. It's a price that's well known to you. Being here today, you're setting an example for others and at the same time you are remembering so many others who have served and who are still serving today."

"As a nation we made a promise, a promise that must be kept, to honor our fallen. We must keep that promise."

Park...from Page 1A

anything talking, but we don't have any other commitment wise, on restrooms.

"They're looking at putting in restrooms for us. On the remaining property, we're looking at doing a pavilion. We've already ordered a building; Mayor Mathis has picked out the colors. This building will be delivered sometime late October."

The city recently received a \$100,000 grant from an application processed through the State and National Parks Fund. However, this money will not be available to the city for use until later in the fiscal year, due to the various entities association with the construction of the park.

While this does put a slow down on the process, it will not effect the end date for when the city hopes to open the park to the public.

Two weeks ago, the

Georgia Department of Transportation approved the city's application to build an entranceway into the park. The bidding process for the construction of the entranceway is scheduled to occur sometime within the month, with the desire to have it completed before the arrival of the pavilion in October.

As of right now, the city hopes DNR will come in by late November or early December to install the boat ramp, boat dock and the parking spaces.

The budget for the project, as it stands, is \$300,000, not including the base donation of the land provided by TVA and the inputs by DNR.

"The plan is that by the end of the year, when everything else is going in, we want to put in trails at our own expense," said Stancil. "We will also be allowing people to donate the cost of the bench, which we'll put a memorial

plaque up, to put places along the way."

"We'll also have an open area of green space. Whatever money is left over after the bidding and initial costs, we'll put into playground equipment. That's the concept right now."

Mayor Mathis and City Manager Stancil have also been playing around with another possible idea for a dog run, sectioned to one corner of the park for both dog owner and pet safety.

There is also an opportunity to install handicap fishing near the pier, something that is especially important for the senior citizen community of Hiwassee and Towns County.

All in all, the park is meant to be a sanctuary for residents of all ages and backgrounds, with a little something for everyone.

Hiwassee Mayor's Park is scheduled to open tentatively by February 2017.

a.m. until 4:30 p.m. each day. There will be no early voting on Saturday, July 16, as previously reported.

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 Hiwassee.

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 Election Day.

The Towns County Board of Elections encourages all registered voters to vote early, as that is the most convenient way to vote given the centralized location and the three weeks to do it.

Voters who did not vote in the May 24 Primary can still vote in this runoff, though they must have been registered to vote in time to have voted in the May 24 Primary in order to vote in the July 26 Runoff.

Independents...from Page 1A

office.

Curtis turned in all of her paperwork on Friday, July 1, including her nomination petitions, which were verified by the end of last week.

As for Barrett, he turned in all but his nomination petitions on July 1, and has yet to do so as of press time Monday, though he had until Tuesday, July 12, to have at least 340 signatures turned in to be verified.

Barrett has expressed full confidence that he will have those signatures in on time, and pending verification, he expects to be appearing on the General Election Ballot.

Potential candidates have one shot at getting the appropriate number of signatures on their nomination petitions, said Towns County Registrar Tonya Nichols, stating that, "once a petition is turned in, it cannot be supplemented or amended."

So the current tally as of press time Monday is as

follows: Chambers and Curtis, fully qualified as Independent candidates; Barrett, qualified as an Independent candidate pending verification.

All three paid their qualifying fees.

In other election news, early voting for the July 26 Republican Primary and Nonpartisan Runoff Election continues this week and into next, through Friday, July 22.

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 Republican candidates Matt Gurtler and Kent Woerner.

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

Those interested in voting early can do so on weekdays between now and Friday, July 22, from 8:30

Gently used outdoor gear sale, donations being accepted by the Hiwassee River Watershed

The Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition would like to help you with your collection of outdoor recreation equipment and gear. If you have too much and would like to see some of it go to a new home where it will be used and appreciated, you are invited to donate these items. If you need something new, gently used outdoor gear will be available for sale July 21-24 during a new fundraiser to support clean water.

The outdoor gear thrift store fundraiser will be held at Appalachian Outfitters on Tennessee Street in downtown Murphy; however, all the revenues from the sale will go support the Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition and its mission of sustaining good water quality in rivers, lakes and streams throughout the entire upper Hiwassee River watershed.

The hours of the sale are 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., Thursday-Saturday and 1-4 p.m. on Sunday, while supplies last! Donations so far include backpacking gear, sleeping bags, tents, fishing rods, cooking equipment and daypacks. There are also



These are just a few of the items that will be for sale during the Outdoor Gear Sale to benefit clean water set for July 21-24. Donations are still being accepted through July 19.

some vintage items that collectors might appreciate.

You are invited to go see what might be in your closets, basements, garages or storage units that you just don't use anymore and consider donating them for the sale. Items can be dropped off by July 19 at the HRWC office in downtown Murphy; please call to insure a staff member will be there: 828-837-5414. Pick-up

will be considered if there is a large amount of high quality gear to be donated. Any outdoor recreation items are fair game and all donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

HRWC is a private 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to sustaining good water quality in our rivers, lakes and streams. For more information, visit www.hrwc.net.