

Towns County Herald

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Publication Number 635540 Volume 86 Number 41

Wednesday, August 12, 2015

Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thurs: Clouds	81 63
Fri: Rain	80 62
Sat: Rain	82 62
Sun: Clouds	83 63
Mon: Clouds	85 64
Tue: Rain	85 64
Wed: Rain	84 64



Upstream Elevation Predicted 08/12/2015	
Lake Chatuge	1,923.63
Lake Nottely	1,772.18
Blue Ridge	1,682.88

INDEX

16 Pages

Arrests.....	2
Church.....	6
Classifieds.....	14
Editorial.....	4
Legals.....	15
Obituaries.....	7

Chamber Chronicles

Page 8



Towns County Fire & Rescue seeking Volunteer Firefighters

See Page 2

FREE FOOD



N. Mt. Zion Food Distribution August 20th 10 AM - Noon

See Page 6



AARP Driver Safety Course McConnell Bapt. August 25th

See Page 2



SPORTS

Softball Tues. Aug 11 TCHS vs. Commerce 4:45 PM
Tues. Aug 18 TCHS vs. Prince Ave. 4:45 PM

Nelson, McConnell place first in Nationals

By Alana Calhoun
Towns County Herald
News Special

Chicago, Ill. - Over 12,000 of America's best and brightest youth gathered in Chicago to showcase their talents as future business leaders and compete for a chance to make it to the national award stage and the opportunity to win over \$160,000 in cash awards.

Towns County can now boast to have first place national winners for the third year in a row.

Junior Alyson Nelson competed in Spreadsheet Applications and Sophomore Nick McConnell competed in Database Design and Applications, both placed first in their events.

This is Nelson's first year as a competitor.

"FBLA has helped me realize that with hard work and dedication anything is possible. I am very grateful for the many opportunities FBLA has given me," Nelson said.

After competing two years at the national level, Nick McConnell said, "Competing at NLC was an amazing opportunity that helped me better my skills on the computer."

Future Business Lead-



The 2015 Towns County FBLA Team

ers of America, the largest and oldest business student organization, held its National Leadership Conference in Chicago, IL on June 28 - July 3. Participants from around the country were in attendance for this conference to sharpen their core business skills, expand their networks, and participate in more than 60 business and business-related competitive events.

Towns County FBLA proudly represented Georgia

with 11 competitors who advanced as state winners to earn their place there.

This is the greatest number to ever advance from TCHS.

Competitors included: Mia Manto, Ashley Abrahamson, Nick McConnell, Alana Calhoun, Alyson Nelson, MegAnn Bradley, Kyle Davis, Emily Davis, Caden Pyrlk, Chase Williams and Jordan Hyatt.

See FBLA, Page 10

Oak Ridge Boys headed to The Hall

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Oak Ridge Boys have performed at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds before, but come Friday, Aug. 21, the Boys will hit Hiawassee as 2015 Inductees into the Country Music Hall of Fame.

"For The Oak Ridge Boys to become part of that great family is something that's very, very special indeed," said Richard Sterban, the bass singer of the group. "There's no question about it. It's difficult I think, in a lot of ways, to find words to describe how special that is. It's a tremendous honor, it's a very humbling thing, and to put it very bluntly, it's a big deal.

"We've been able to accomplish a lot of things in our career, but that was kind of the missing piece. And now, that's all coming together, and on Oct. 25, we will become the newest members of the Country Music



Richard Sterban

Hall of Fame, and we're so excited about that. It's going to be, certainly, a banner night in our career and in our lives."

The careers of The Oak Ridge Boys, the current incarnation of which is the longest standing in a group with World War II-era roots, have spanned more than four decades and seemingly countless hits.

"It's about to be 43 years, which is hard to believe, for this

See Oak Ridge, Page 10

Fairgrounds busy through New Year - Milsap coming in January

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

If the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds is an institution in the North Georgia Mountains, then Anderson Music Hall serves as the perfect ambassador for bringing the world to this majestic locale.

Throughout history, music has been a universal language, allowing folks to share with each other in ways that bridge great distances, and the year-round fare at the Fairgrounds offers area residents the chances to do just that.

Fairgrounds General Manager Hilda Thomason announced at the Ray Stevens concert on Aug. 1 that American Classic Rock favorite Three Dog Night will be rocking The Hall on Saturday, Dec. 12, with tickets going on sale Oct. 2 for \$46 and \$36 respectively.

Also at the Ray Stevens show, Thomason informed the more than 2,000 in attendance that Country Music Legend Ronnie Milsap will be stopping by the Fairgrounds on his Farewell Tour, playing The Hall for the last time on Saturday, Jan.



Ronnie Milsap

16. Tickets for that show go on sale Nov. 20, for \$43 and \$33.

More closely on the calendar, The Hall will soon be entertaining the masses with first-time Fairgrounds performer David Allan Coe, a legend in his own right, as he performs on Friday, Sept. 4, at 7 p.m.

Coe is known for his ever avant-garde approach to Country Music, and helped to popularize Outlaw Country in the '70s and '80s. His many hits include *The Ride*, *You*

See Fairgrounds, Page 10

Schools are back in session

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

For many Towns County students, Thursday, Aug. 6, marked the official end of the summer. It was the first day back to school.

Earlier in the week was full of preparation. On Tuesday, the school system hosted an open house for parents and students to meet teachers and go over their class schedules.

"This is where parents and students can come in and open up the first lines of communication for the year," explained TCHS/TCMS Assistant Principal Jim Melton at the open house.

Freshmen just moving up from middle school are often uncertain about moving into the high school.

"Sometimes it's a little shock, especially with a student from a bigger school system coming to a smaller one," said Melton. "But this is normal as far as just meeting teachers and getting expectations set up for the year."



TCHS/TCMS Assistant Principal Jim Melton helps students with their schedules. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Melton is looking forward to the new challenges and opportunities that the new school year will bring.

"Every day is a new day, and that's what makes teaching a great profession. There's something different every day when you turn around. And

just to watch kids throughout the year grow and mature," he said.

A 22-year veteran of the Towns County school system, Melton has recently made the shift to administrator.

See Back to School, Page 10

Floyd takes speech contest victory

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

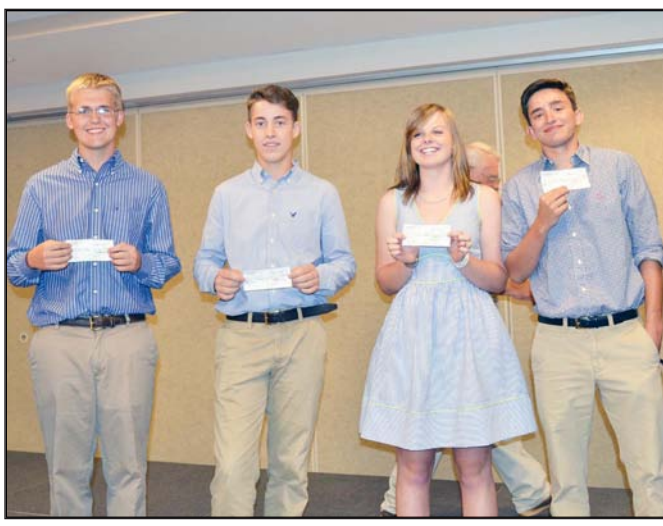
Monday, Aug. 3, was a big day for Towns County High School freshman Kendall Floyd.

Floyd is the most recent winner of the Mountain Movers and Shakers' annual speech contest. But he wasn't without competition.

Seventeen other high school students from Towns County Schools and Eastgate Life Academy also contested for the first-place prize. In addition, nine middle school students competed.

An estimated 200 guests attended. Among them were Towns County Commissioner Bill Kendall and House District 8 State Rep. Stephen Allison, R-Blairsville.

Before the contest, Rep. Allison spoke to the assembled guests about the importance of



Kendall Floyd, left, takes first prize in the Mountain Movers & Shakers' annual Speech Contest. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

public speaking, especially in regards to the youngest generation. His opinion is that the younger generation is addicted to technology and is therefore losing critical speaking skills.

"Oftentimes, if you're not

looking at a computer screen or if you're not touching your iPhone, you don't understand personal interaction anymore," he said. "So we're getting in this environment

See Speech, Page 10

No smoking on city property

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

At the Hiawassee City Council meeting on Tuesday, Aug. 4, Mayor Barbara Mathis was pleased to announce that recent activity at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds has filled the city with tourists. More people means more money coming into the city, giving it an economic boost.

"We're just very proud because we need all of these people in our area, and we're very happy to have all of this going on," she said.

The rest of the meeting passed quickly. The council adopted the second reading of the 2015 Ordinance Prohibiting Smoking and Use of Tobacco Products on City Properties, meaning that the ordinance now has the effect of law.

"To have the effect of law, it takes two readings," said City Manager Rick Stancil. "So anything that basically we're going to attempt to enforce through police action, or if you're trying to regulate property affecting individual property rights, it requires two readings.

"The important thing is that there will be at least another 30 days between the first and second reading for people to comment or make changes. For this ordinance, there were no changes between the first and second readings," said Stancil.

Again, the ordinance will only affect city property.

"It is now an ordinance, so it is now a city law, not necessarily anything else. The difference is that the city can only regulate within the city limits, so it basically effects certain properties, not all properties

within the city limits. It has nothing to do with the county. It has nothing to do with county property," said Stancil.

The city also passed the first reading of the 2015 Hiawassee Personnel Management System Ordinance.

"We have a personnel management ordinance in place now," said Stancil. "The policies have been in place, they were adopted in 2009, they've been in place since 2010, so five years after the fact, it's good to review what already has been adopted. If there's any inconsistencies in application or confusion in application, clarifications or changes in the way the city wants to do business, then we update that."

In addition, the upgrades to the water-sewer treatment plant are underway.

See Hiawassee, Page 10

Young Harris continues to expand services

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

At the Young Harris City Council Meeting on Tuesday, Aug. 4, the city worked towards finishing a project that has been 10 years in the making.

Young Harris has been working on expanding its water and sewer systems for nearly a decade years, and is finally on the verge of finishing.

For the past two years, the council has been openly reviewing the budget. The administration committee and the water and sewer committee have asked city engineer Chris Poje to put together some preliminary numbers for the cost of necessities like meter hookups.

"So let's say you build a new house. And you got to hook onto the system. We asked him to look at whether the fees that we charge for hookups are the right price. We do not have prices for 4 and 6 inch meters," said Mayor Andrea Gibby.

"I looked at the entire schedule and wondered what if somebody needs a three inch meter, a 4 inch meter, or a 6 inch meter," said Poje.

He ended up advising against the city offering these meters because the price of brass used for the hookups fluctuates, but the city will remain locked into a certain price. However, he did add that it wouldn't be entirely impossible.

"It's been my experience that as long as people don't feel like they're paying an arbitrary amount, and it's not a profit center for the city, it won't be an issue. They're commodities, they cost what they cost," he said.

The council is looking at raising water and sewer prices. "It's not something they want to do but it's something they wanted Chris to bring to them," said Gibby. "It was brought to the council for the council to ponder whether they're actually going to think about it and bring

forth a proposal."

Two additional recent projects that the city has completed are the entrance to Main Street and the bridge on Sunset Drive.

"Both of those projects are funded through SPLOST. It takes a long time, mainly because we're a really small city and we don't have tons of money. So those are two that we're all really proud of, because of the fact that we were able to do it," said Gibby.

However, both of those were short-term projects in comparison to the expansion of the wastewater plant, a project that has been almost 10 years in the planning.

"That was not quite 10 years worth of work, but almost," said Gibby. "There's a lot that goes into it and a lot of studies that have to be done." The expansion is a \$4.7 million project funded through USDA for 40 years.

Additionally, people in the direction of Blairsville have been asking to get sewer service, which is something Young Harris is hoping to provide. "So we're expanding our plant, we're doubling our capacity, and then we're also expanding sewer lines," said Gibby.

"We had some pretty forward thinking council people 10 years ago, who were conservative, and who didn't know if they should spend money, but they were smart enough to start the studies early, and then when we got to this point where the college expanded, and then we had a couple of smaller things come into the city, that took our capacity," Gibby went on. "So if the council 10 years ago had not started this, and we had just started last year, we literally would not be able to build anything."

TOWNS COUNTY HERALD



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