

Collins...from Page 1

you – or just your home budget, and everybody's got a home budget. What if I went to you and said, okay, before you ever start, I'm taking 84 cents off the table. So, 84 cents you can't even touch at this point. That leaves you about 16 percent."

But with trillions of dollars in total budget spending, 16 percent is still a lot of money – until taking into account that 8 percent of the remaining 16 percent is defense spending, leaving just 8 percent of every dollar taken in by the government to cover all remaining discretionary spending outside of defense.

"So, you've roughly got about 7 to 8 percent that is everything that you can think of of the federal government," said Rep. Collins. "Only, and I know it sounds crazy, but only 7 to 8 percent. So, VA, the Justice Department, Forestry, Interior, CIA, the Executive Branch, the Legislative Branch, Judicial

Branch – all of those issues fall under that 7 to 8 percent."

The sad part, said Rep. Collins, is that even if the entire federal government were eliminated, the budget would still be out of balance.

"You could eliminate every department known to the federal government, and you would not get back the balance," said Rep. Collins. "That's where we're at right now. We're getting closer, but we're still not there. You take out defense and discretionary spending – our mandatory spending is about equal to our intake."

"Before you say, well, do we need more intake? No. This past year, and even this year into it, the federal government, through normal growth and taxation, has taken in more money than it has in its history. From day one, from the founders' start until now – last year was the largest revenue

in history. We don't have a revenue problem. It's trying to get people to understand we've got a spending issue and a spending problem that gets us to where we've got to go."

During the question and answer session of the meeting, Rep. Collins was pressed on two of his votes, one for the Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act of 2015, which made GMO labeling of food optional, as well as his vote for the Country of Origins Labeling Amendments Act of 2015, repealing requirements for chicken, pork and beef retailers to inform customers of country of origin.

"These two bills had nothing to do with food safety," said Rep. Collins, agreeing to disagree that food safety is at risk. "This is what we disagree on – it has nothing to do with food safety and everything to do with marketing."

Rally...from Page 1

that Riverbend has hosted a vintage trailer rally, but Whitley is expecting a larger turnout than ever before.

"This is the third year we've done it at Riverbend," he said. "It started out small, but this is going to be the largest one, we're sure, by far. It's just a great place, more people are learning about it, it's an ideal place to have a vintage trailer show because the sights are well spaced and it's flat and just a good place to have a rally."

Whitley compared a trailer rally to a vintage car show.

"We're enthusiasts," he said. "A lot of us like to restore campers and trailers to as good as new using all vintage parts, and it's getting to be a big hobby. It's really grown a lot in the last five years, big time, and it's just like a little community of enthusiasts and we all see each other at different rallies, and it's just a good gathering."

Whitley has restored two trailers, but he will be showing only his restored 1964 Shasta Astroflyte.

"To restore a trailer is a big deal," he explained. "It can take up to a couple of years. A lot of them have been sitting out in a field, and they're all rotted away, and you're talking about



tearing something down to the frame and actually rebuilding it from the ground up. Not all of them are like that, but they're all made of wood and aluminum, so they take a beating by Mother Nature."

The hobby is quickly growing in popularity, and Whitley has attended vintage trailer rallies all over the United States and found that trailer enthusiasts enjoy hanging out and showing off to one another.

"It's a lot of nostalgia," he observed. "It brings back memories, and personally, I like old cars, too, and I like old things, mid-century stuff. So you know, I think it's pretty cool to bring something back to new again and saving it, so to speak. And as I said, it creates a lot of attention, and it's a lot of fun to take people inside of it in the campground and explain how I restored it, and it's just a fun hobby."

County...from Page 1

signed a resolution authorizing the FY 2016 transit program application.

This resolution, which approves asking the U.S. Department of Transportation for grants toward public transportation in Towns County, is signed every year.

Deputy Clerk and County Finance Director Andrea Anderson explained that public transportation is open to

anybody in Towns County. It typically helps those who have mobility issues get to hospitals or across county lines.

"People can call up and make appointments. If they have a doctor's appointment, we can get them and take them, but they have to do it ahead of time," she said.

"The only place they go now is outside the county to Union County," added Ander-

son. "And that's \$6 there and \$6 back. The price for rides inside the county is \$2 for the first mile and 40 cents per mile after. That's one way. And then to come back home, it's \$2 the first mile and 40 cents the mile after."

Those interested in using the transit system can call (706) 896-0925 for more information.

Senior Center offering new fitness classes

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Towns County Senior Center is offering a new and improved fitness class schedule for its members.

"In the past, we haven't offered fitness classes in the morning or the midafternoon," explained Senior Center Wellness Coordinator Brenda Brannock. "So now we're offering fitness classes as early as 8:30 a.m. Our new director, Bobbie Parker, is all on board with wellness and health, and we want to offer everything at the fitness center that we can possibly squeeze in, considering our time limit and our space limit and our personnel limit."

The senior center is offering additional exercise classes that it did not offer before, including yoga stretch classes and tai chi classes.

Also in the mix is the Silver Sneakers class.

"It is a class that's done with balls and weights that's adaptable with any fitness level, because we have different resistance bands and different weights. We do that on Monday and Thursday afternoons at 2 p.m.," Brannock said.

Silver Sneakers is a program designed exclusively for older adults. More than 65 Medicare health plans offer the program as a benefit to members nationwide.

The program sponsors exercises for people that have supplemental insurance.

"You get a card and then they swipe it when they come into the Senior Center for us to get a slight reimbursement and get credit for our center's use. So, it's a win-win for them and for us also," Brannock explained.

Senior Center Director Bobbie Parker added that the Silver Sneakers program benefits anyone with a Silver



Senior Center Wellness Coordinator Brenda Brannock Sneakers card nationwide.

"We've got people that come here for the summer from Florida. They've been at a Silver Sneakers facility in Florida," Parker said. "They are finding that they can come and enjoy the fitness center and the supplemental insurance company helps with that. So then they're going to use their insurance less – it really is a very good program."

At the senior center, every fitness class is tailored to age-appropriate levels.

"A lot of people think they can't exercise because of their fitness level, but at the senior center, we always offer modifications and adapt it to any fitness level," Brannock said. "We don't do three things as of right now: we don't lift both feet up off the floor at one time, we don't get onto the floor and we don't bend over 45 degrees. That's for dizziness and blood pressure issues and stuff like that."

Spending a little bit of

time every week doing even non-intensive movements is time and money that seniors might save in hospital visits and medical bills.

"It's a win-win for everybody," Brannock said. "The more fit you are, the less you're in the doctor's office. The less you're in the doctor's office, the less prescriptions you have and the less your insurance is billed for. So now insurance companies are promoting and paying sometimes bonus benefits for fitness."

"One of the biggest reasons it's important because most people want to stay independent," she continued. "The best way to stay independent is to keep moving. Generally in the geriatric area of people, if you decrease your movement, that means you become sedentary and isolated at home. The fitness part of the exercise is one aspect of it, but just having something to do, to get up, get dressed and be mobile, that just improves everything."

Recruiting...from Page 1

small communities like ours, it's not like we have firefighters dropping out of the trees. It's not like Hall or Fulton or Gwinnett or larger counties, where you have many more people to pull from."

Towns County Fire and Rescue hosts the Explorer program, which aims to teach teenage candidates the skills needed to go on to be effective firefighters.

"I'd probably say that half of our roster right now came from the Explorer program," said Chief Copeland, clearly proud of his young volunteers. "They come in and train one

day a month. They learn what firemen do, and when they turn 18 or 19, they're some of the best recruits we've got. That's another tool we use to build up the fire department."

Candidates must complete intense training before taking written and practical examinations.

"Firefighting is physically demanding," said Chief Copeland. "The candidates will have to go through Disoriented Firefighter, where they're blacked out and have to crawl around through the floors. They can't see and have to follow hoses to try to get back to the

truck. We simulate being in a burning building. We smoke up some of our buildings just so they start getting used to it."

The candidates will learn proficiency using various firefighting tools, like the fire axe, and will also learn skills such as breaching doors and extricating people from vehicles.

"You'll hear throughout everywhere that they're wanting to give back to the community," said Copeland of volunteer firefighters, of which he hopes to have a large recruiting class this year. "To help your community – it's a calling, it's a desire."

Oak Ridge Boys...from Page 1

to paper.

"I don't know what to write next," he admitted. "When I wrote G.I. Joe & Lillie, I wanted to honor my parents, so I wrote a song about them called G.I. Joe & Lillie. One day I wondered to myself how they were doing in heaven, so I wrote a song called The Journey, which was a big gospel song for The Oak Ridge Boys a few years back. Not being a writer that writes every day or considers himself even a songwriter, I just don't write that much. I have to have some inspiration to make it happen."

The history of The Oak Ridge Boys, formerly The Oak Ridge Quartet, dates back to World War II. Of course, no-

body in the current band has been around for that long.

"Every guy came to the group at a different time," explained Bonsall. "William Lee Golden joined the group in 1965. He's been here 60 years. Duane Allen joined in '66, Richard Sterban in '72, and I joined in '73, so there was an Oak Ridge Boys before we got here."

The story of how Bonsall came to join the group is told in detail in his new book, On the Road with The Oak Ridge Boys. The short version is that he used to play with a group called the Pea Stones that once upon a time promoted The Oak Ridge Boys, and when it came time for The Oak Ridge Boys to get a new member, they immediately

thought of Bonsall.

"They liked my energy, they liked my style, they liked what I was all about, so they gave me a chance to join," he recalled.

The band has a uniquely upbeat energy that Bonsall hopes will affect his audience in constructive ways.

"I think a group like us can affect people in one of three ways: positively, negatively or not at all," he said. "I do choose to go the positive route. We sing positive music, our gospel background provides a positive outlook to what we do, and we love America, we love our country, we love our God, and we try to live that kind of life offstage and on."

Lt. Gov. Cagle offers glimpse of future

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Georgia Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle stopped by the Union County Community Center on Tuesday, Aug. 18, to speak on the economy and the importance of education in a world that must constantly embrace newer and better technologies.



Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle

The event, a Power Lunch organized by the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce and sponsored by Park Sterling Bank, featured many local leaders familiar with the lieutenant governor.

State Sen. Steve Gooch, Tate O'Rourke of U.S. Sen. Johnny Isakson's office, Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris, Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley, Union County Sheriff Mack Mason and Associate Superintendent of Union County Schools Dr. Jeremy Williams, all joined Lt. Gov. Cagle for the luncheon, along with a room full of business professionals from around the county.

According to Lt. Gov. Cagle, Georgia is stronger than ever before, even after the economic downturn and subsequent recession that set back many in the state and country.

"We bit the bullet, we did the hard things, we cut the state's spending by \$4 billion," said Lt. Gov. Cagle. "We strategically aligned the state to make sure that our portfolio as an industry was far more diverse. As a result, we have come out of this recession stronger than we ever could have imagined, and I believe our greatest days are still ahead of us."

"You have no bigger friend at the state capitol than our lieutenant governor," said Sen. Gooch in his introduction. "I've known him for many, many years. He was my state senator in Dahlonega a few years ago, and then he became the first Republican elected to the lieutenant governor's office in Georgia. He is a small business man, he grew up in Hall County with his wife Nita, and had a great family with all boys."

"He's a great leader, and I've had the pleasure of working with him for the last five years, and I can tell you he's a strong conservative, he's a strong Christian, he's a businessman, and he's looking after our citizens and our 10 million Georgians. And I'm going to predict here today that he'll be the next Georgia governor, so y'all welcome Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle," Gooch said.

The economy today is vastly different than when Lt. Gov. Cagle started his first business, a bricks-and-mortar retail store. This is thanks in large part to technology, which Lt. Gov. Cagle used as an example to explain how local Georgia businesses have been able to step outside of physical, regional boundaries to compete with big-box stores.

"All of us run around with our little smartphones, and you can walk into that Home Depot, and you can download an app, hit a button, and it will tell you not only who has got the lowest price within a five-mile radius, but who has the lowest price in the world," said Lt. Gov. Cagle. "And what it's done is it's transformed our economy."

Lt. Gov. Cagle began his message with what he called a 30,000 foot perspective of where Georgia is today as a state "filled with great promise," citing past areas of growth in Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport and the Port of Savannah.

"We not only celebrate the largest airport in the world, but we also celebrate the fastest growing port today – over \$60 billion dollars of revenue," said Lt. Gov. Cagle. "You see, these are the kind of visionary actions that we need today in our state, and we need today even in our country."

"The little guy over in Athens, Georgia, that has a bricks-and-mortar gas grill accessory company, no longer is bound by the commute that someone needs to come to his store. And he did a deal with Amazon – before that, he was doing about \$200,000 in annual revenue. Today, because of his connectivity, because of technology and innovation,

today he does \$5 million in annual revenue."

Because of this marriage of technology and the economy, Georgians have been able to find greater prosperity in the global market, a fact that the lieutenant governor says must be taken into account moving forward.

"I believe that if we're going to continue in prosperity, and we're going to continue to build a state that is going to be poised to attract the companies that we want, to create an environment where industry that exists today can expand, we have to focus on education," said Lt. Gov. Cagle.

"There is no question that today, when a manufacturing facility is hiring, it's not the same skillset that it was 20 years ago. If you walk into the Kia automobile manufacturer in Lagrange, you will find robotics, you will find lasers, you will find an entirely different place than when I was a kid and I toured GM and Ford."

Lt. Gov. Cagle pointed out that 70 percent of all jobs created in the future will require technical training, and that technical pathways in education must be embraced in order to continue prosperous trends in the state.

"When we have, unfortunately, too many of our kids dropping out of high school and not finishing, we know what that path looks like for the future," said Lt. Gov. Cagle. "We've got to stand in the gap and stop it, because if we want prosperity, if we want to really, truly do something about poverty that truly does exist within our state, the best way to do it is improve public education, and make it relevant to today."

Greater numbers of college prepared and career-oriented high school students are a part of Lt. Gov. Cagle's vision for Georgia – in fact, he wants these things for every single student who graduates from a Georgia high school.

"I don't believe dropping out of high school can be tolerated as a society, and that's why I created the charter school system act, which allows entire communities to convert to a charter status, doing away with the one-size-fits-all system, and recognizing that, when we embrace our community and we embrace local governments, that we have more tools in the toolbox to do greater things to meet the needs of a very, very diverse community and society that we represent," Lt. Gov. Cagle said.

Lt. Gov. Cagle began his message with what he called a 30,000 foot perspective of where Georgia is today as a state "filled with great promise," citing past areas of growth in Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport and the Port of Savannah.

"We not only celebrate the largest airport in the world, but we also celebrate the fastest growing port today – over \$60 billion dollars of revenue," said Lt. Gov. Cagle. "You see, these are the kind of visionary actions that we need today in our state, and we need today even in our country."

Lt. Gov. Cagle began his message with what he called a 30,000 foot perspective of where Georgia is today as a state "filled with great promise," citing past areas of growth in Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport and the Port of Savannah.

"We not only celebrate the largest airport in the world, but we also celebrate the fastest growing port today – over \$60 billion dollars of revenue," said Lt. Gov. Cagle. "You see, these are the kind of visionary actions that we need today in our state, and we need today even in our country."

Notice of Correction and County Policy

By Bill Kendall
Towns County Herald
News Special

This is in response to reaction, concerns and to correct errors in last week's article entitled "Awake America May Come to Towns."

The article stated in error that "Commissioner Bill Kendall recommended that the proposed Awake America monthly meetings be held in the County's Recreational and Conference Center."

Awake America Coordi-

nator Lydia Long suggested this, however I informed Mrs. Long that we could not schedule regular monthly meetings at the Conference Center that would conflict with various events and activities scheduled throughout the year and informed her that the Civic Center (located at the newly renovated old Senior Center) was available, which she reserved for the second Thursday of each month.

It is county policy to not discriminate against any person or group to use county facilities

based on race, sex, religion, or religious belief.

I have never had an objection from a Christian concerning any person or group using county facilities, regardless of their beliefs.

To those who continue to object to Christians using county facilities, be assured; we shall fight to protect and will never yield these inalienable rights of exercising freedom of speech, right to peacefully assemble in public places and right to worship God in prayer.