

# Towns County Herald

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## Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thurs: Clouds	49 28
Fri: Sunny	55 33
Sat: Sunny	57 32
Sun: Sunny	56 32
Mon: Sunny	56 36
Tue: Clouds	56 38
Wed: Clouds	58 37



Upstream Elevation Predicted 01/14/2015	
Lake Chatuge	1,913.00
Lake Nottely	1,760.66
Blue Ridge	1,667.79

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## SPORTS Page 10

**Sheriff Clinton to speak to Homeowners Association Fri. Jan 23rd**  
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**January is National Mentoring Month!**  
Your help is needed!

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● ● ●  
**Brasstown Valley Resort to host Marketplace Jan 24th**  
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**Food Distribution North Mt. Zion Jan. 15th 10-noon and Food Pantry Jan. 20th**  
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**Basketball**  
Tues, Jan 13 vs. Banks Co 6 PM  
Fri, Jan 16 vs. Hebron Acad. 7 PM  
Sat, Jan 17 vs. Lakeview 7 PM

**WRESTLING**  
Tues, Jan 13 vs. Habersham Central

## DNR will decide statewide deer season

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Resources Division held a Public Input Meeting on the 2015-2017 Regulations Cycle on Tuesday, Jan. 6.

A healthy crowd attended the meeting at the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC headquarters that Tuesday night, which was one of eight meetings in the state.

The biggest point of the presentation centered on the consideration of a single statewide deer season.

Other considerations were the timing of buck-only days, a quota hunt application fee, and changes to the dove season and alligator quotas.

Chief of Game Management John Bowers gave the presentation.

The meeting lasted several hours, with public comments following the presentation, as well as a time designated for questions at the end.

Bowers started his presentation by going over the seven tenets of the North American Wildlife Conservation Model and the importance of adhering to these tenets where hunting regulations are concerned.

One of these tenets is "science is the basis for wildlife policy," and Bowers used this tenet to begin to talk about the research that the DNR conducted to come up with the new policies currently under consideration.

"Science is what we use



to set our hunting regulations," said Bowers, going on to say that the DNR is "mandated by law to manage the wildlife resources of this state using the best science we have available."

Science, Bowers pointed out, is defensible in a court of law, whereas setting regulations and managing wildlife via public opinion could create conditions unfriendly to hunters.

"Anybody know how many millions of people live in this state?" said Bowers. "Over 10 million people. You know how many of you are hunters? Maybe, at best, half a million. Who's going to win in the court of public opinion, you or the folks who don't hunt? So,

science is key to managing that resource."

So, what does the science say?

"We do an annual survey every year, right after deer season," said Bowers. "And there's more information about it online on our website if you want to go read, but it is a scientific sampling. The error rate is less than 2 percent on it, and it is accurate."

In the 2013 survey, the DNR asked of those who hunted any species if they would "support or oppose having one statewide season for deer with no deer zones."

Results from the survey  
See Deer Season, Page 8

## Taco Bell groundbreaking Jan. 20

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Listen carefully, Hiawassee residents, and you can just make out the ringing of a bell – a Taco Bell, to be precise.

On Tuesday, Jan. 20, at 11 a.m., developer Gregg Blosser of Paragon Development, alongside the new restaurant's owners, will be breaking ground on the latest and greatest franchise in Hiawassee.

Hiawassee Mayor Barbara Mathis plans to invite Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall to attend the event, according to City Manager Rick Stancil.

At last telling, Taco Bell Franchisee Bob Cox and Blosser delivered new details on the restaurant at the Hiawassee City Council meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 2, 2014.

The council approved the utility agreement and site plan for the Taco Bell in the same meeting.

"We're down in east Ellijay and Summerville and Dawsonville and places like that, but we've been trying to come to Hiawassee for a while now," said Cox in that meeting. "So, finally, I think we're going to be here, and we're mighty proud to be here. We hope we can do a good job for you, and



serve all of you and make you welcome every time you walk through the front door."

Blosser was originally hopeful that construction would begin in November of 2014, and that it would take no more than four months to complete, depending on the weather.

Previously, Blosser was finishing up work on another Taco Bell in Summerville, which features the same building design that Hiawassee will be getting.

"Everybody down there is impressed," said Cox. "It's a new prototype building – it's

the newest design that they've come out with, so you'll have the second one in Georgia."

The new design will demonstrate brilliantly glowing purple lighting that will stand out against the nighttime.

Housed within the 1,961-square-foot building will be enough seating for at least 40 patrons, with 25 parking spaces and ample drive-through capacity to fit eight cars comfortably. The building, which is to be located next to Zaxby's on the main drag, will be accessible

See Taco Bell, Page 8

## Snakes Alive!

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Chris Harper delivered a four-hour class on venomous snakebites and first aid to Towns County emergency responders on Tuesday, Jan. 6, at the Towns County Recreation and Conference Center.

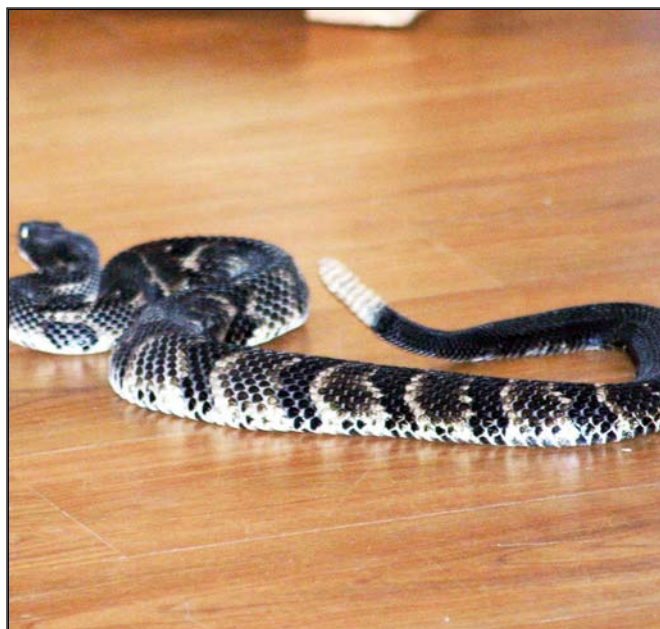
Harper, who is currently a paramedic for Hart County, brought six live rattlesnakes to the class.

One reason he brings live snakes to his classes is to show the non-aggressive nature of the timber rattlesnake – non-aggressive, that is, unless provoked.

Along with the copperhead, the timber rattler is one of only two venomous snakes in the county.

Placed on the ground at the rec center, a timber rattlesnake avoided confrontation with the people gathered a short distance away, while it rattled to fend off potential threats.

But in no way should this snake be taken lightly.



"Not only will this kill you," said Harper of the timber rattler, "it will hurt the whole time you're dying."

And the snakes could be heard rattling throughout the evening.

Harper's extensive experience with venomous snakes even extends into the international arena, as he worked previously with a team to develop an antivenom specific to Sri Lanka.

Having served in the Army

from 1985 to 1991, he decided to go to Iraq to run a medical clinic as a security contractor between 2009 and 2010.

Furthermore, Harper spent time working the BP oil spill of 2010 in the Gulf of Mexico.

He uses his knowledge to run the world's largest website on venomous snakes, www.venomousreptiles.org, and share information about what to do

See Snakes, Page 8

## Cox, Tallent among Georgia's 100 Most Influential people

By Charles Duncan  
Towns County Herald  
cduncan.tch@windstream.net

Cathy Cox and Jimmy Tallent now share a common bond beyond Young Harris College.

Both have been selected among the 100 Most Influential Georgians by *Georgia Trend* magazine.

The annual list reflects the state's most powerful and influential citizens who affect the lives and livelihoods of all Georgians.

Others from North Georgia making the list, Gov. Nathan Deal, Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle, and Georgia House Speaker David Ralston.

Young Harris College President Cox and Tallent were recently named to *Georgia Trend Magazine's* 2015 list of 100 Most Influential Georgians.

As the 21st president of YHC, Cox has worked to transform the College into a world-class four-year institution with more than 1,200 students across five academic divisions. She was instrumental in raising more than \$70 million for the College's Investing in the Future Capital Campaign and recently opened the \$41 million, 121,000-square-foot Rollins Campus Center, the campaign's focal point.

Cox has converted the once small two-year private college into a major economic engine for the Union and Towns communities.

Tallent has served as



Cathy Cox



Jimmy Tallent

President and Chief Executive Officer of United Community Banks from the time it was formed in 1988.

He has also served as President and Chief Executive Officer of United's wholly-owned subsidiary, United Community Bank, since 1984 and currently serves as its Chairman.

See Georgia Trend, Page 8

## New BOE members sworn in

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

On Tuesday, Dec. 23, 2014, Jerry Taylor, Cliff Bradshaw and Robert Williams were sworn in as members of the Towns County Board of Education by Towns County Judge David Rogers at the Towns County Courthouse.

Bradshaw and Williams are new to the board, while Taylor is serving his second term.

Taylor taught history at Towns County High School for 32 years and seven months.

"Most of the people had never had anything to do with teaching and education, and I thought it was time that somebody from the school side got to have a little input into the wheeling and the dealings of the school system," said Taylor of his original motivation to run. "Somebody who had actually been in the classroom, worked inside the schools, had a different perspective."

And after such an extended period of time teaching in the school system, Taylor decided to retire in 2005.



Jerry Taylor

"I was ready to retire, and I retired," said Taylor. "And then, lo and behold, a vacancy came up in the board of education, and I said, what the heck."

For the last 15 years or so, Taylor has been active in the community not only with the board of education, but also with the Towns County Historical Society.

"I'm staying busy with the Historical Society and my county heritage book, *Hearthstones of Home*," said Taylor.

The book, which will be the second volume, is due out

See BOE, Page 8

## Wilkinson talks 2015 legislature with Mountain Shakers

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

District 50 Georgia State Sen. John Wilkinson spoke at the weekly Mountain Movers and Shakers meeting on Friday, Jan. 9, at Mary's Southern Grill in Young Harris.

Sen. Wilkinson briefed those in attendance on the upcoming legislative session.

"The session does start on Monday," said Sen. Wilkinson. "As you can imagine, it's going to be hectic. We'll kick off at 10 o'clock on Monday morning. The governor will be sworn in at 2 o'clock. He'll give his State of the State Address on Tuesday, so just a lot of things happening that first week of the session."

The senator touched briefly on "hot-button issues" that citizens can expect out of this year's legislative session.

"I think one of them will be transportation," said Sen. Wilkinson. "We had a joint study committee that went around the state for the past year, and the question everyone asked me is, are you going to vote for a gas tax? Now, I can assure you, I'm not a wealthy person, and that impacts me just like it does you."

At this point, Sen. Wilkinson stressed the importance of statewide efficiency.

"We've got to look at the money that we have coming in to the state budget, and we've got to look at our priorities,"



Sen. John Wilkinson

said Sen. Wilkinson. "And we've got to be just as efficient with that as we can. And of course, we have to balance that with the fact that Georgia, as you know, has been selected as the best state in the United States to do business."

Sen. Wilkinson cited Mercedes-Benz USA's recent announcement that it will be moving its corporate headquarters to Atlanta from New Jersey, and mentioned that UPS is headquartered in Atlanta.

"We've got the busiest airport in the world, we've got the fourth busiest port in the United States, and we've just got to be sure that we main-

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TOWNS COUNTY HERALD

