

Hiawassee cleans up nicely with help of volunteers

By Mason Mitcam
Towns County Herald
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On Saturday, Nov. 14, Hiawassee residents gave the city a facelift. On that day, the city held its annual Hiawassee Clean-Up Event to pick up trash and litter from the city streets. "A few years back, we decided it would be a great thing to have an annual or even semiannual city cleanup," said Hiawassee City Councilman Stephen Smith, who coordinated the cleanup. "We actually did it in conjunction with Earth Day a few years back, and we just invite everyone from the city to come out. We have various routes within the city designated that will take less than an hour to clean." Various people collaborated in order to make the event a reality. The Tennessee Valley Authority provided gloves and trash bags, volunteers provided

refreshments, and Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall provided a large garbage truck. "They're having the Chatuge Lake Cleanup at the same time today, so some volunteers will be divided between the places today, so it's all good," added Smith. Volunteers gathered at the gazebo in the middle of the Hiawassee Square early in the morning, in weather cold enough to warrant gloves and winter coats. "It's about pride in our city," said Smith. "It's a beautiful place, it's a beautiful city, and we just want to keep it beautiful. To me, I find it disgusting to see litter. I think it's horrible that people intentionally throw trash out. So if we can't stop you from doing it, somebody has to help clean it up. And these people all have pride in the city." One volunteer, Towns County High School senior Adam Penland, said that he

would like to see more people his age coming to volunteer their time and effort for the benefit of their community. "I think every young person should come out and support the town of Hiawassee. This is where they live. A lot of students are involved in sports or other activities that keep them away on Saturdays, but it would be a really good opportunity if every student could come out or if the school could do a field trip one day and coordinate with the Hiawassee Ambassadors where they could get a class to come out or a club," he said. According to Connie Fisher of the Hiawassee Ambassadors Program, 24 volunteers picked up about 50 bags of trash from seven of the nine planned trash routes until around noon. "We're all trying to work together on this. We just thought there'd be some synergy there," said Fisher. Fisher is hoping to



implement further programs to clean the city. "We want to soon come up with a plan to do the Hiawassee Adopt-a-Street program, so that's something we'll work on in 2016. That's

where you're responsible for keeping the trash picked up, and you agree to pick up, for example, once a month just to stay on top of it. I did have one woman call and volunteer already even before they put

any PR out. I think there's a lot of interest in beautifying the city," she said. Further, she would like to get more volunteers in 2016 to repeat the effort.

Cagle...from Page 1

Kate Ledford introduced Cagle with a concise recounting of the lieutenant governor's life and career. "He championed the Charter Systems Act, which improves education and provides technical career pathways for high school students," said Ledford. "He launched the Georgia College and Career Academy Network, which provides a more 21st century perspective on academics today. He is an active triathlete and leads Healthy Kids Georgia. With the slogan 'Be Healthy, Be Fit, Be You,' he promotes an active and healthy lifestyle in children today. "Not only well-known in Georgia but all over America, he is one of the 100 Most Influential Georgians, and he is one of four public servants in the U.S. to be honored by the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools by the Champion for Charters Award." Cagle warmly thanked the students for their involvement in the meeting that day, before launching into a meaningful discussion on the future of education in Georgia that centered on proper foundations. "Back in the mid '70s, Birmingham and Atlanta were virtually the same size in population," said Cagle. "There was really very little difference between the two, and there was a lot of competition going on. But during that day, the leaders of Atlanta took on the largest investment of its day - it was

an investment in a thing called Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson Airport." That investment, which amounted to some \$500 million, had its detractors, but according to Cagle, it was the forward-thinking leaders of the day that pushed the investment through, allowing for one of the major components of Atlanta's continued growth with an airport that would become the busiest in all the world. The lieutenant governor used the airport as an example of what he calls vertical thinking, which is a leadership style that concentrates on potential by making calculated investments today. "I believe that the greatest investment that we can make as a state really is in our kids," said Cagle. "There is nothing that is more important, there is nothing more pressing, and there is nothing more significant as we grow this state than investing in our kids and in public education and the workforce of tomorrow." Cagle spoke on his vision for public education in Georgia, which includes room for students who are not necessarily looking to achieve a four-year college degree, as a part of his investment in potential with a forward-looking eye to the future. "My vision for public education is that we have a house that is built on the school system, and within that school system there is a floor," said Cagle. "But with that floor there are no cracks -

there's no ability for students to drop through. And within that system, there's no ceiling. There's no ability to hold the student back. We want to keep every student rising to the highest level that they can. "And so, the two initiatives that I've created, one is called the Charter Schools System Act, which allows individual, complete school systems to convert to a contractual agreement with the state, with a strategic plan that gives them total flexibility in terms of how they use their resources." Towns County Schools recently entered into just such a contract, and will be enjoying greater flexibility to hold itself accountable to standards more readily met by a school system of this size. Cagle also spoke on the second great initiative of his career-long goal to bring education to the forefront in Georgia. "The College and Career Academy brings relevance to the classroom," said Cagle. "What it does is it's a standalone facility that really takes the high school and the technical college, and it blends them together and allows kids to be on the technical path of learning." Also in attendance that day were many local and regional leaders, including Georgia Sen. John Wilkinson, Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall, as well as Towns County Superintendent of Schools Dr. Darren Berrong and others.

Correction regarding funds raised by Fly High 5K

In an article entitled "5K in honor of Crisp a successful tribute," that appeared in the Nov. 11, 2015, edition of the *Towns County Herald*, the amount raised by the Fly High Jacqueline Crisp Memorial 5K was mistakenly reported as being "over \$950." The corrected amount should read "over \$9,500." The *Herald* apologizes for the error.

NASCAR 2015

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

Luck and rain favors Earnhardt at Phoenix

PHOENIX, Ariz. -- Dale Earnhardt Jr. was the winner of Sunday's rain-delayed Sprint Cup race. The race was delayed for over six hours, getting the command to start engines at 9 p.m. ET and taking the green flag at 9:27. During a late race caution on lap 195, it started raining again, just after NASCAR red flagged the event at 11:30 on lap 219, the rain came down hard. With more rain in the forecast, NASCAR decided to call it and made it official. "We had an idea that the rain was in the area, but all the circumstances that played out at the end are just kind of luck, I think," Earnhardt said. "I think the reason why we won this race is because of the way we qualified to give ourselves a position to be up front all night. When something like this quirky happens, we were able to capitalize." Kevin Harvick led 143 laps, but had to settle for second. "It's kind of bittersweet for me," Harvick said. "The caution came out at the wrong time and we didn't get to make up ground under green. Sometimes you win some of those things, sometimes you don't. But the big picture is what it's all about." Joey Logano, Kyle Busch, Jimmie Johnson, Jeff Gordon, Kurt Busch, Denny Hamlin, Brad Keselowski and Aric Almirola were the remaining top-10. The four drivers advancing to the Championship Round of The Chase at Homestead-Miami Speedway are: Kevin Harvick, Jeff Gordon, Kyle Busch, and Martin Truex Jr. "We're excited about the opportunity to go down there," Gordon said. "Certainly for me, my final race. I can't think of anything sweeter than just having that opportunity to go down there and battle for the championship and seeing what happens." No matter what happens at Homestead, it has been a fantastic year for Kyle Busch. After missing several races due to a leg injury prior to the Daytona 500, NASCAR made an exception, which allowed him to be Chase eligible. Despite a 14th place finish was able to land the fourth and last spot in the Chase. "What can I say about the whole team and everybody at Furniture Row Racing and everybody back at the shop in Denver?" Truex said, "It's just a dream come true for us. I'm just really proud of what we've accomplished this year. Cole Pearn (crew chief) and everybody there just really proud of them, and really excited to have this." "I'm excited about next week and the opportunity to do something special. This is the kind of thing that you dream about since you were a little kid. Having a shot to win a Sprint Cup Series championship is just awesome and I'm looking forward to the opportunity."



ward to the opportunity." Kurt Busch, who started on the outside front row next to pole-sitter Jimmie Johnson, was penalized for jumping the start. Forced to make a drive-through lap on pit road on Lap 8, he fell to 41st, likely costing him an opportunity to make the final Chase field. Joey Logano needed to win and his third-place finish was not good enough to put him in the Chase. Carl Edwards the last Chase contender finished 12th, but came up shy. All the cards are on the table. Each of the four drivers has equal points. Whoever finishes the highest at Homestead will be the 2015 Sprint Cup Champion. "Rowdy" Kyle Dominates Xfinity Race "Rowdy" Kyle Busch led 190 laps on the way to victory in the 200 lap Xfinity Series race Saturday at Phoenix. Top-10 finishers: 1. Busch, 2. Brad Keselowski, 3. Eric Jones, 4. Daniel Suarez, 5. Ty Dillon, 6. Regan Smith, 7. Chase Elliott, 8. Darrell Wallace Jr., 9. Elliott Sadler, 10. Kasey Kahne. Top-10 points leaders with one race remaining: 1. C. Buescher-1157, 2. Elliott-1139, 3. T. Dillon-1135, 4. Smith-1133, 5. Sadler-1044, 6. Suarez-1044, 7. Wallace Jr.-1037, 8. Scott-992, 9. Gaughan-971, 10. Reed-875. Peters Gets Texas Truck Race Timothy Peters won Friday night's truck race at Texas by .30 seconds ahead of John Nemechek. The win was his second of the season and 10th of his career. John Wesley Townley was third, followed by Daniel Suarez, Tyler Reddick, Spencer Gallagher, J. J. Haley, Matt Tifft, Erik Jones, and Mason Minging. Top-10 leaders with one race remaining: Jones-861, 2. Reddick-842, 3. Crafton-829, 4. Sauter-772, 5. Peters-765, 6. Hayley-731, 7. Hemric-697, 8. Townley-695, 9. Kennedy-650, 10. Gallagher-644. Erik Jones Is On The Move At 19-years of age, young Erik Jones has everything going for him. His latest accomplishments came at Texas and Phoenix after he was pegged to drive the No. 20 Joe Gibbs Toyota, normally driven by Matt Kenseth, who was suspended for two races for taking out Joey Logano at Martinsville.

He also subbed for Denny Hamlin at Bristol in April when Hamlin was bothered by neck spasms, and for Kyle Busch at Kansas when Busch was injured in February. While he didn't win either of the races, he turned in a credible performance that will insure him a permanent Cup ride in the near future. Jones main racing role this season has been in the trucks. He leads the truck championship with three victories and has two wins in the Xfinity Series. "It's a good thing for me that I can get in the seat and get experience in the Cup Series," Jones said. "The hard part of that is I don't get to do it every week... It's still a tough deal whenever you hop into that situation and don't know everybody well and you don't really have a lot of experience in that series and that car either." In March 2013, Kyle Busch Motorsports signed the young Byron, Mich. native to drive in five Camping World Truck Series races in the team's No. 51 Toyota Tundra. He returned in 2014, driving in 12 truck events, and three races with the team's No. 20 in the Xfinity Series. He won three truck races that season. Meanwhile, Joe Gibbs Racing has been busy mapping out a future that will take Jones full time into Xfinity next season and presumably to Cup full time in 2017. It is rumored that Matt Kenseth may call it quits after the 2016 season, and that would put Jones in the No. 20 on a full-time basis. "Two years ago, I would never have imagined this," Jones continued. Weekend Racing: It's the season finale at the 1.5-mile Miami-Homestead track in Homestead, Florida, featuring all three of NASCAR major series. Fri., Nov. 20; Truck Series race 23 of 23; Starting time: 8 p.m. ET; TV: Foxsports 1. Sat., Nov. 21; Xfinity Series race 33 of 33; Starting time: 2:45 p.m. ET; TV: NBC. Sun., Nov. 22; Sprint Cup Series race 36 of 36; Starting time: 3 p.m. ET; TV: NBC. Racing Trivia Question: Who will Chase Elliott be racing for in 2016? Last Week's Question: Who is Joey Logano's teammate at Penske Racing? Answer: It is Brad Keselowski. You may contact the Racing Reporter by e-mail at: hodges@race500.com. NTNov18JAHCA

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tears endured by those missing and the families who seek answers. The Bible represents the strength gained through faith. The glass is inverted to symbolize their inability to share this evening's toast. This chair is empty; this Marine is missing," he finished. After a toast to those men captured or missing in action, Lt. Col. Bill Lyon Jr., USMC (Ret.), read aloud a message from the Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. Robert B. Neller. "When the Continental Congress raised up two battalions of Marines in 1775, it launched the greatest fighting force the world has ever known

- a force revered globally for its uncommon valor, unparalleled adaptability, and ferocious tenacity. Over the past 240 years, the battlefields and equipment have changed, but the spirit of the United States Marine Corps has prevailed in every clime and place," the message read. Neller's message not only remembered the veterans of past wars, but also credited those men and women currently fighting all over the world. "Whether you served on the hallowed grounds of Belleau Wood, fought on the iconic island battlefields of World War II, navigated the harsh terrain and climate

of the Chosin Reservoir or Vietnam, conducted assaults during Desert Storm, marched on Baghdad, fought in close combat in Fallujah, or conducted combat operations in Afghanistan, everyone who wears the Eagle, Globe and Anchor is a member of that storied Legacy," read Lyon. At the end of the night, the Marines had a cake cutting ceremony. Once the cake was cut, the oldest Marine present, Tom Reid, 91, passed a slice to the youngest Marine present, Duane Sieck, 57, to symbolize the passing of the honor, experience and heart of the Corps to the next generation of Marines.

Foster Children...from Page 1

experience a high degree of stress regarding finances during the holiday season. The Foster Children's Christmas Fund seeks to alleviate some of the pressure on struggling families by providing gifts for the kids. "We get the names of the children that are currently in foster care in Towns and Union counties, and children that are in preservation, which means the family is having some difficulty and there are some possibilities that the children for their own safety might have to be removed from the home. We try to help them, if they would like, with Christmas for the children," said Elliot. "So we also take children that have been placed with a grandmother or relative permanently and try to help them out financially, because many of them are actually depending on Social Security alone, so things are very tight for them." At the beginning of the process, the Christmas Fund volunteers send out a wish list for each child to request certain Christmas gifts. "What we do is send out a wish list to the children asking for their clothing sizes, any special needs they might

have as far as clothing, like shoes or pajamas, and then a big wish of the child, and then some smaller wishes," Elliot said. That's where the sponsors come in. "Then people who have responded to our ad and who have worked with us through the years will call and say, I'll take one little boy or I'll take three children, or whatever. We send the wish list to that sponsor, and then they, from the wish list, shop for the child and get what they are comfortable buying," said Elliot. The amount of gifts varies from sponsor to sponsor. "Some people get everything on the list plus some, and some people are just financially able to get several things, but we ask them to do whatever they're comfortable with," said Elliot. The sponsors then return the gifts to the Fund to later go to the children. "We go through all of those gifts and make sure that they are appropriate and also try to see that, if there are multiple children in the home, that they have pretty much an equal amount of gifts, so

that one child isn't getting everything under the sun and one child is getting one gift. We then either ask the foster parents or grandparents, or wherever the child is, to come and pick up the gifts. If they can't pick them up, then we deliver them to them," said Elliot. Anyone can be a sponsor, even if they are unable to actually physically shop for gifts. "Sometimes people aren't comfortable actually physically doing the shopping, but they might make a financial contribution, and we use that to make sure that it gets to the child. Or if there is a special wish that they didn't get, they might use that money to buy that gift if we know the child and know it's really important to the child," said Elliot. "So it's been a wonderful program, I think it's helped in many different avenues. It's helped the community become more aware of foster children and the needs of foster children. It's certainly helped the families where the children are placed in getting what the children need and would like at Christmastime. And it's also just thrilled a lot of sponsors who would not dream of not doing this every year," she said.

Skatehealthy and Boards for the Lord Skate Competition

December 12, 2015, 11 a.m., local skaters will take to Meeks Park for the Second Semi-Annual Skatehealthy and Boards for the Lord Skate Competition. The first skate competition was a huge success with skaters from the tri-state area in attendance; this skate competition is expecting to be no different. Skaters of all levels are invited! There will be a beginner, intermediate, and advanced division. This advent is absolutely free to enter! If you want to sign up, have any questions or would like to sponsor the next event, please call Skip Larson (706) 455-2087 or Ben Newell (706) 994-1656. NNov18Z7CA



Ben Newell



On-line registration is now open for Upward Indoor Soccer for boys and girls in grades Kindergarten through 8th Grade at www.hobp.org or at www.fumunioncity.org. The registration price to participate is \$60, through December 10, 2015, and an additional \$10 will be applied thereafter. Payment plans are available, if needed. Convenient weekly practices commence January 11, 2016, while games will be held every Saturday between January 30 and March 5, 2016. For more information regarding registration, contact (706) 745-5925.