

BMP ...from Page 1A



Mayor Barbara Mathis

previous similar projects have been done and the visual improvements halt the problems with littering. Moore concluded her presentation by informing the Council that the reason "we are seeking your approval for the storm water aspects of the plan right now is because our grant expires May 31, 2014." As an added bonus, Moore informed the Council that this project, in conjunction with TVA, would be a swift, but thorough improvement project for the city, and the completion of this project would have to be completed prior to that grant deadline. At the conclusion of Moore's presentation, Hia-

wassee Mayor Barbara Mathis immediately indicated her approval when she said, "I think it sounds wonderful."

The Council unanimously agreed to back the watershed project, and City Manager Rick Stancil offered to ensure that the Coalition is provided with the necessary written confirmation that will be provided to any involved, but especially to the grantors, to ensure their continued funding.

After a few additional questions, Moore indicated that the "actual construction design and the beginning of the bid process for a contractor will begin in January."

The remainder of the council meeting consisted of motions, seconds, and approvals of regular business items including: approval of previous meeting minutes, and September financial statements, the City Manager's written report was approved, along with the approval of continued water system improvements.

In addition, retail beer and wine sales were approved for Bella Cantina, Inc & Circle K Stores, the 2014 City Calendar of meetings and holidays was approved, and the 2014 Comprehensive Water & Sewer Rate Ordinance was introduced.

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past 41 years, and it always takes, as Mayor Gibby said, "a concerted effort" of city workers, volunteers and community members to ensure that this tradition continues.

This event would not be at all possible if it wasn't for the members of the Enotah Garden Club.

President of the garden club, Elaine Delcuze, was on hand to assist with the festivities and graciously took time out speak to any and every one.

According to Delcuze, the members of the garden club provided all of the home baked goodies.

In addition, the Enotah Garden Club provides decorations and does the decorating inside City Hall; whereas the outside was decorated by the city workers of Young Harris.

Mayor Gibby began the festivities by thanking all those who helped to make this event possible: the Enotah Garden Club, the staff at City Hall, and the city workers who all came together to make this event a huge success, and according to

Mayor Gibby, "the turnout for tonight's festivities is fantastic," especially since the weather did not cooperate causing the bulk of the festivities to be moved inside City Hall. That is all except for the actual tree lighting event, for which the rain held off.

Dr. John Kay provided the invocation for the event, and introduced Catherine Seis, the music teacher for Towns County Elementary School.

Along with Seis, were elementary school students who are in her music class, and they provided a wonderful array of Christmas carols that the crowd thoroughly enjoyed. In addition to the children singing, Seis invited and led the crowd in singing *Silent Night*.

Following the children singing, Mayor Gibby led the crowd in the countdown to light the Christmas Tree in Mayor's Park. Although, the first and the second countdowns did not do the trick, it's as they saying goes, "the third times the charm," and it certainly was.

Mayor's Park was lit up by the generous amount of red and green Christmas lights



Santa is checking the Naughty and Nice list. Photo/Azure Welch

adorning the tree.

Excited children ran straight to the tree as the lights came on, but it's not only the children who were thrilled by the night's festivities. Marsha Elliott, a volunteer and member of Enotah Garden Club, exclaimed that she "just loves this event because it allows us to give back to the community,"

but it is the "joy on the faces of the children that truly brings me the most pleasure."

As Mayor Gibby pronounced, it is this time of year, and this traditional event that "I love because it brings the whole community together during this joyous time of year for a joyous reason."

North Mt. Zion feeds the masses

**By Azure Welch
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer**

North Mt. Zion church's House of Manna Ministry hosted their 4th Annual Holiday Luncheon last week.

This year the ministry provided lunch to more than 150 people. Those lucky enough to attend this event were treated to a sit down Thanksgiving meal; church volunteers served the diners.

In addition, to a full meal including an array of sumptuous deserts to choose from, those in attendance were given door prizes if their number was called.

Although, there were only 29 chances to win a door prize, not one person attending the event left empty-handed.

The House of Manna Ministry provided each person with a frozen turkey or a frozen ham before they left the event.

If that did not seem like enough, even more of a treat than the meal and prizes was the entertainment.

Ryan Wilson, the Music Pastor, entertained the crowd with his amazing talents both voice and instrument.

Wilson sang traditional Christmas Carols in addition to beautiful hymns.

Joining Wilson on the stage was Connie Clark who sang beautifully, bringing some in the audience to tears.

After the entertainment, Senior Pastor Raburne Wilson took a moment to thank all of those who volunteered their time and service to help make this luncheon "a fantastic and blessed event."

Pastor Wilson also made sure to remind everyone that "it's important this time of year to make sure that we don't forget the reason we celebrate this season, and that reason is

Jesus Christ. This is when we all need to find the joy and the peace within ourselves."

Through his enigmatic presence and sense of humor, Pastor Wilson not only entertained the crowd, but for many he brought the true meaning of brotherly love to the surface, and he made sure to greet almost every single guest in attendance before leading everyone in the blessing.

Sally Varao, director of the House of Manna Ministry, was a gracious host throughout the event, and from her electric presence you can tell that she truly loves to give back to the community.

According to Varao, this whole event could not have been possible without the abundant contributions made by local businesses, and she quickly added that "almost every single restaurant in the area donated gift certificates which were given away as door prizes."

The House of Manna Ministry is completely sponsored through volunteers; all of the food that the ministry receives helps out many who would otherwise be without, not only during the holiday season, but throughout the year.

The House of Manna Ministry not only provides food for families in need, but they also assist by providing clothing and various necessary items for those who do not have the financial resources to purchase these items.

With their ever growing church membership, North Mt. Zion is certainly fulfilling their goal "to be the cutting edge of ministry socially, spiritually and economically."

According to Pastor Wilson, "you may not be called to pastor, but by supporting the church and her ministries, you will be ministering to families" in need.



Young Harris Mayor Andrea Gibby takes part in Friday's Christmas activities. Photo/Azure Welch

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unentered their home, but the chamber does approach some home owners to request their home as an addition to the tour.

Not to mention the fact that the Chamber of Commerce has "already received two requests from ticket buyers for their homes to be on the tour next year."

The tickets to the tour were \$10 in advance and \$15 the day of the tour and a portion of the proceeds from the ticket sales will be donated to Towns County Family Connection.

Holland emphatically praised Amy Gibby-Rosser, the director for the Towns County Family Connection, and the work that she does providing clothes, foods, and other household items for local families in need and said, "she does a fantastic job."

The seven featured homes on this year's tour made up a round trip of approximately 40 miles throughout Young Harris and Hiwassee.

In addition to stopping at homes, the tour package also provided refreshments and rest room stops along the way at area businesses.

The tour is self-guided throughout the locations of the home, and once you arrive at a home on the tour, you are free to go throughout the house, minus a few "personal areas," but the owners of these homes deserve a sincere thank you for graciously opening their homes up to all those who purchased tickets.



Homeowner, Linda Rentz of Rentz Redesign Interiors, designed and decorated the home herself. Photo/Azure Welch

All those who purchased tickets, according to Holland, equaled almost 300 people, and the majority of the patrons purchased their tickets in advance for this event.

The homes on the tour featured an array of decadence and country charm and the Christmas decors in each of the homes accented the beauty of these homes.

Each of the participating homeowners and/or professional decorators took time out of their busy schedules to provide a feast for the eyes.

Yvonne and Dino Genovese opened their gorgeous Young Harris home to all the "tourists."

The home was decorated



Towns County Elementary School students prepare to sing Christmas Carols at City Hall in Young Harris. Photo/Azure Welch

door of the home, the house invited people into a striking and handsomely decorated home.

The homeowner, Linda Rentz of Rentz Redesign Interiors, designed and decorated the home herself.

Brandy and Bryan Hayse unlocked their doors for the tour. The home was beautifully decorated by Pam Bates and Letha Smith, and it was such a good job that the home may not remain on the market for long.

Cindi and Shane McIntosh made their ranch-styled home to become a home for the tourists, at least for a brief time.

Lori McCabe's home which was built by Brent Conway and David Hyde of Timberbuilt Homes, cordially invited visitors to walk throughout the home which boasted rich, dark woods with unique and beautifully interesting accents throughout the residence.

The Clark Home: Cupid Falls Farm is a working fiber farm situated on 7 acres of alpacas, llamas, and sheeps to name a few of the animal residents.

The home was lavishly decorated by P.J. Blair of Sunflowers on Main Street in Hiwassee. The home and the holiday décor exuded a rustic country charm and invitingly smelled of cinnamon, nutmeg, and fresh cut pine boughs.

The Mountain Country Christmas Tour of Homes, not only provides a look at beautiful holiday homes, but tourists also witnessed some beautifully architecturally built homes.

Council considers water/sewer rate ordinance

**By Azure Welch
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer**

Young Harris - The Young Harris City Council is exploring a proposed 2014 Comprehensive Water & Sewer Rate ordinance.

City Engineer Chris Poje explained to the Council that the rates in the proposed ordinance were devised through a comprehensive assessment of past rates and rates comparable to surrounding areas.

According to Poje, the city of Young Harris has continuously had one of the lowest residential and business water rates, and unfortunately this is causing the city to lose revenue.

Poje explained that in accordance with federal and state agencies, the rates are based on EDUs, or the "Equivalent Dwelling Unit," which is a way to standardize the rates, and it is the fairest way to get an approximate rate among

residential and commercial customers.

Poje explained, "a residential home counts as one EDU because they have one meter." Whereas, an establishment such as Young Harris College would be counted and charged a rate based on approximately 32 EDUs "because of the number of meters on the campus."

According to Poje's estimates, based on EDUs with 2-inch meters, a residential home would pay about \$6.16 per 1,000 gallons, a commercial unit is estimated at \$6.11 per 1,000 gallons, and the college would pay approximately \$5.41 per 1,000 gallons.

However, Jay Stroman, Vice President for Advancement at YHC, local attorney Lawrence Sorgen, and Mark Taylor, Chairman of the Young Harris Board of Ethics, were present at the meeting to ensure that the ordinance is passed in "a legal and ethical manner."

According to Stroman, the main issue the college has with the council attempting to adopt the rate ordinance is that they "did not receive a copy of the proposed rates until two weeks ago," and they feel that they haven't had not sufficient time to review and discuss the proposed 2014 rates.

In addition, and support of this issue, Taylor informed the council that "the center piece of ethics is that you follow your charter; the charter is the constitution for the city," and based on what Taylor describe as City Charter section 2.15b, "an ordinance may be introduced by a member of the council; but I have not seen a single council member suggest that this is their ordinance they are suggesting."

Taylor and Sorgen feel that on a legal basis, the ordinance could not be passed during the December meeting.

In a meeting prior to the city council meeting, Young

Harris Mayor Andrea Gibby and the city attorney met with Stroman, and according to Mayor Gibby, she informed Stroman regarding his concerns about the rates for YHC that she "would facilitate any requests or concerns the college has in regards to the proposed rate ordinance."

Councilman Dr. John Kelly spoke up during the meeting regarding the need for attorneys to be present, suggesting legal action, if the proposal was voted on during this meeting, and he said, "I remember when things were worked out neighborly instead of legally. We (the City and the Council) love this institution and this institution felt the need to make this a legal stance, I am somewhat ashamed."

As of the close of the meeting, no decisions regarding the rate ordinance were made, except that discussions would continue at a future meeting.