

Towns County Herald

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Tuesday, December 24, 2013

Local Weather and Lake Levels

Christmas:	Clouds	44 22
Thu:	Clouds	49 25
Fri:	Clouds	50 26
Sat:	Clouds	50 27
Sun:	Sunny	53 30
Mon:	Clouds	48 23
Tues:	Clouds	49 29



Upstream Elevation Predicted 12/24/13	
Lake Chatuge	1,917.86
Lake Nottely	1,762.12
Blue Ridge	1,669.38

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Battle of the States basketball tourney set for Thursday

By Jerry Kendall
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The 20th Annual Battle of the States Prep Basketball Tournament is scheduled for Thursday through Saturday, Dec. 26-28, of this week in the Bill P. Kendall Gymnasium.

Eight games will be played each day, beginning at 10 a.m. and continuing until around 10 p.m.

The Tournament has become a most respected sporting event, drawing interest from fans and teams over much of the Southeast, as evidenced by the fact that teams from six different states have made appearances during the first 19 years the event has been held.

All girls and boys teams from the 2012 Battle of the States will be returning for this year's tournament.

The schools represented will be the Dawson County (Georgia), Gordon Lee (Georgia), Hayesville (North Carolina), Murphy (North Carolina), Polk County (Tennessee), and Union County (Georgia) Boys



Will the Lady Indians and Lady Panthers fight it out this week for a chance to go to the Battle Of The States finals at Bill P. Kendall Gymnasium? Photo/Lowell Nicholson and Girls Teams; the Hokes Bluff (Alabama) Girls; and the Piedmont (Alabama) Boys; along with our host Towns County Teams. Polk County and Towns County are the only two schools to have appeared in all 19 previous tournaments. The girls' field for this year proves to be most interesting as three of the four Georgia teams made it to the state final four in their classification last year with the Gordon Lee girls claiming the Class A Public State Championship, the Battle of the States Champion Dawson County girls finishing second in the state in Class AAA, and the Towns County girls falling to Gordon Lee in

the state semi-finals.

The Gordon Lee girls had earlier taken a 70-69 victory in overtime on the last shot over Towns County in the third place game in last year's Battle of the States and then extended a 36-34 lead after three quarters for a 57-49 win in the state tournament.

The Gordon Lee girls then dominated the then top ranked Randolph-Clay girls for most of the championship game, leading by some twenty-five points in the third quarter and 50-30 after three quarters before Randolph-Clay rallied near the end in a 61-56 win by Gordon Lee.

This year's tournament features a Georgia bracket and an out-of-state bracket for the first two rounds with the Gordon Lee and Towns County girls squaring off in the first round as will last year's Battle of the State finalists Dawson County and Union County with winners playing winners and losers playing losers in the second round. The Union County

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TCMS Robotics team advances to Super Regionals in Athens



Disaster Masters' Robotics team is headed to the Super Regionals in Athens on Jan. 11th to compete for a chance to go to state. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Towns County Herald
News Special

The Towns County Middle School Robotics team Disaster Masters has advanced to Super Regionals to be held in Athens, Jan. 11, 2014.

They got there by taking part in a First Lego League qualifier on Dec. 7, qualifier at Gwinnett Environmental Heri-

tage Center.

The team had to compete in three categories which are Robot Design, Project, and Core Values. These categories are judged by qualifier representatives and scored. The team scored well in all three categories and was nominated for an Inspiration Award by the Core Values judges.

The theme for this year's competition is Nature's Fury and the team chose to study warning systems for tornados.

The result of their project research efforts is a novel idea that will improve on existing alert systems called the "Tor-Text." Tor-Text is the team's

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City proposes increased utility rates for 2014

By Charles Duncan
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Hiawassee City Manager, Rick Stancil has announced that the City of Hiawassee will propose new Utility Rates beginning in 2014.

The City Council had a First Reading on a Proposed Rate Schedule in December and will consider the Manager's final recommendation during its January Council meeting.

Additionally, a Public Hearing on the 2014 Utility Rate Ordinance has been scheduled for January 6, 2014, at 2 p.m. as a part of the City's Regular Committee meeting.

"New rates are necessary to ensure the financial integrity of the Water and Sewer Departments," Stancil said. "Along with our engineers and our auditors, we review income and expenses annually to ensure the City's ability to meet Bond and Financing commitments."



Rick Stancil

"City Water and Sewer Departments operate as Enterprise Funds under state and federal law, and each utility must generate the revenue necessary to cover all costs of operation," Stancil said. "Water and Sewer Service cannot be supplemented with other city tax dollars."

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Kendall to set county budget on Dec. 31

By Charles Duncan
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Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall will hold a called meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 31, at 10 a.m. in the Towns County Courthouse, for the purpose of hearing and adoption of the 2014 County Budget.

Commissioner Kendall will adopt a budget, which reflects a balanced approach, including a 25-cent per hour increase for county employees, and a \$50,000 reduction in property taxes for all Towns County property owners.

"The budget will use some operating rainy day funds," Kendall said. "I'm cautiously optimistic that the lingering recession will improve during the 2014 calendar year and help take pressure off the county budget."

Big ticket items in 2014 include \$1.15 million for the Towns County Sheriff's Office, \$935,854 for Jail operations, \$990,000 for Towns County Ambulance Service, \$929,579 for the Department of Roads and Bridges, \$450,000 for Public Safety, \$370,000 for the Towns County Fire Department and \$370,000 for the Transfer Station, the tentative 2014 budget shows.

The budget also includes \$96,000 for a new roof for the Towns County Jail, \$95,000 for the 2014 elections, and \$93,680 for the Public Transit program.

The budget also includes \$742,260 for Administration and General, \$448,650 for Health and Human Services, \$241,500 for Recreation and Culture, and \$440,000 for Parks Development.

The public is invited



Commissioner Bill Kendall

to attend the Budget Hearing and adoption, Commissioner Kendall said.

The \$9.68 million budget is approximately \$300,000 more than in 2013.

A breakdown of the 2014 tentative Fiscal Budget is advertised inside today's edition of the *Towns County Herald*.

Kendall dealt with continued pressures handed down from the state level, as spending cuts continue for health and human services, and library funding.

The City of Hiawassee and the City of Young Harris stayed the course with millage rates heading into 2014.

The Towns County Board of Education, and the county government had slight millage rate increases.

Those increases, though still tax cuts, were brought on by the continued decline of the Towns County Tax Digest.

The digest continues to slide as property values continue to decline in the midst of a continued recession.

TOWNS COUNTY HERALD

Shop With A Cop serves 60 youths

By Azure Welch
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

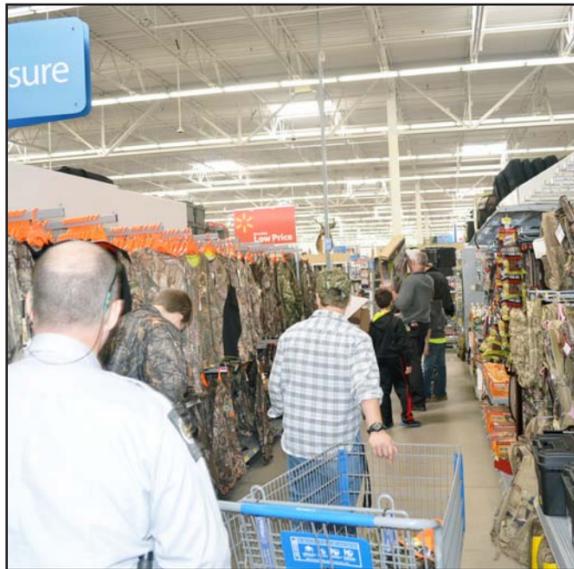
Friday Dec. 20th, the Hiawassee City Police Department sponsored their Fifth Annual Shop With A Cop day.

This program was created as a way for the City Police to give back to the community, and to ensure that the older children, typically ages 12-17, were not left out this Christmas season.

The children who are chosen for this program are picked from a list of those in need received through the Towns County Family Connection.

In previous years, the department raised enough money to benefit around 40 local children, with a goal of spending around \$200 per child. Thank-

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The Fifth Annual Shop With A Cop was another rousing success for Hiawassee PD and its volunteers. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

VFW Essay winners honored

By Azure Welch
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Wednesday, Dec. 18, the VFW Post 7807 awarded Towns County Schools students and teachers at a small ceremony in the Towns County School cafeteria.

This is the 15th year that the VFW Post 7807 has sponsored and supported the Voice of Democracy Essay for High School students, and the Patriots Pen Essay for Middle School students.

VFW Commander Mel Halfon and Quartermaster Glen Greenwood were representing the VFW Post 7807

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Dec. 18 was a big day for Towns County high school and middle school students as the Voice of Democracy winners were announced. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

