

Bonds...from Page 1A

will not be liable for any debt incurred by the college in the bond issuance. YHC must go this route to receive the funding because of its nonprofit designation.

Commissioner Kendall gave a brief history of the college, including its establishment in 1886 and subsequent financial hardship early on, and voiced his full support of YHC and its role in the community.

"Just think if that said here tonight, Union County, home of Young Harris College – or Hayesville, NC," said Commissioner Kendall. "Young Harris is where it needs to be, in Young Harris Valley."

President Cox delivered a PowerPoint presentation outlining the various achievements of the college in recent years in order to explain the importance of the Joint Development Authority's aid with the bond issuance.

Towns County's Attorney Boyd Pettit, who is also the attorney for the Joint Development Authority of Towns, Union and Fannin counties, spoke to clarify the issue.

"These bonds are to be repaid solely from the revenues of the college," said Pettit. "The college is going through a rating process now with Moody's in order to get the rating that's necessary to assist them with their interest rate. We are working with the college in connection

with that now, and I appreciate the commissioner tonight taking into consideration the approval of the resolution that's been read to you."

President Cox fielded a question about whether or not the college could repay the money once it had been issued the bonds.

"We already have this debt, and we already are making payments under a syndication of our existing debt," said President Cox. "This just actually helps us move it into a different structure at a better interest rate, really, so it really helps us kind of lower our interest rates on our payment."

Commissioner Kendall approved the resolution.

"Let me just say this – as of right now, Towns County property owners do not owe one penny on bonds or any other debt," said Commissioner Kendall. "And after I sign this, Towns County property owners still will not owe or be obligated for one penny, and it's an honor to get to do this tonight."

In order to make the point abundantly clear that there would be no taxpayer obligation for the YHC bond issuance, the commissioner also passed out copies of the Taxpayers Empowerment Act of 2011, which states that Towns County property owners cannot incur debt unless it is voted on and approved by residents of the county.

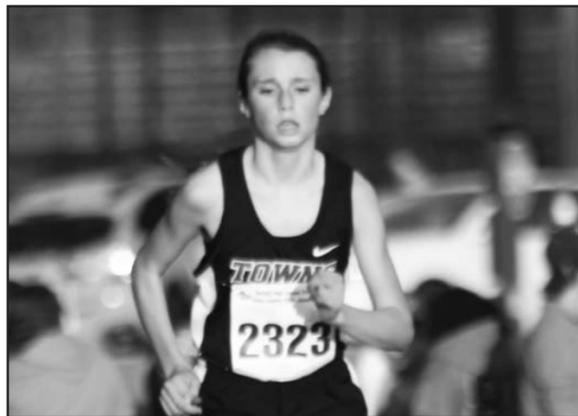
2014...from Page 1A

"I really appreciate the community and their support of Aaron and his family, and just ask that people would continue to keep him in their thoughts and prayers," said Sheriff Clinton. "We look forward to having him back when he's 100 percent – I know he does."

In other top news from around the county in 2014, the Towns County High School Lady Indians won the State Championship in Class A Cross Country for the third year in a row, and the boys' team came in runner-up for the first time ever.

And Towns County Schools have had a remarkable 2014-2015 school year so far. The schools have seen the departure of Melissa Williams as superintendent of schools, as well as the return of former Superintendent Dr. Richard Behrens to fill Williams' vacancy as interim superintendent.

Towns County Middle School Principal Dr. Darren Berrong was selected as the official superintendent of schools to start Jan. 1, 2015, and former Towns County High School teacher David Turner returns to fill Dr. Berrong's position as principal of the middle school.



Towns County's Hannah Whitehead cruises to a state title.

A hitherto untold tale from the schools is a recounting of the high school chorus program's performance of *Back To The 80's ... The Totally Awesome Musical!*

The play, written by Neil Goodling, was directed by Towns County Chorus Teacher Chris Adams, and starred a very talented group of high school students.

The show debuted on Thursday, Oct. 16, and featured a second and final performance on Saturday, Oct. 18.

Packed audiences reveled in the comedic timing of the cast, and the production value was topnotch, including a stage built in full Technicolor, with

spot-on lighting and sound production.

"Set in the USA, *Back To The 80's* tells the story of the senior class of William Ocean High School that graduated in the 1980's, as remembered and seen through the eyes of Corey Palmer, who is now 30-something," according to the playbill.

The all-star cast included: sophomore Andrew Rogers as Corey Palmer; sophomore Cadence Nichols as Tiffany Houston; senior Gabe Gilliland as Michael Feldman; freshman Jacob Owenby as Alf Bueller; senior Zyndel Payne and freshman Steven Blevins as Kirk Keaton; senior Jessie Poole as

Cyndi Gibson; senior Anna Sutton as Mel Easton; sophomore Makenzie Carroll as Kim Easton; sophomore Tyler Persall as Billy Arnold; junior Austin Watson as Mr. Steve Cocker; junior Dakota Anderson as Huey Jackson; junior Meagan Corbin as Eileen Reagan; senior Alexis Roach as Laura Wilde; junior Bailey Crawford as Debbie Fox; freshman Hannah Whitehead as Ms. Sheena Brannigan; senior Alejandro Lemus-Gomez as notoriously nerdy Feargal McFerrin III; and featured sophomore soloists Kaylea Parker and Rosa Jane Clinton.

Pulling production duties were: senior Kayla Davis, student director and choreographer; Roach, student director and choreographer; senior Hannah Anderson, sound director; junior Miranda Queen, sound; and freshman Kelaiah Clayton, sound.

In the Design Department, senior Josie Brown and freshman Jessi Bracken rocked the house, and on Lighting, seniors Arianna Lentini and Sara Scott made the show shine.

Freshman Steven Blevins got a special shout-out from Adams, who was "extremely grateful for Steven's unselfish and gracious attitude throughout this production."



Young Harris College President Cathy Cox discusses bond issuance at the county meeting on Dec. 18. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Firewise...from Page 1A

And now, the Citizens Coalition is far enough along in its Firewise endeavors that it can support itself going forward.

This is important for Riley and other fire and rescue professionals because it means they can go to work in other counties while the Towns County Firewise Citizens Coalition completes the extensive action plans necessary to enlist more Firewise Communities to be approved by the NFPA.

The Firewise Communities in Towns County serve as a model for the rest of the nation, as Towns County houses one of the eight pilot programs that exists nationwide for the larger concept of Fire Adapted Communities started by Riley.

"This year has been a series of firsts," according to Snipes. "First of our kind, first to assist state, national and local fire professionals, first to sponsor a Super Firewise Meeting and sign up 16 subdivisions, first to follow a



subdivision from HOA (homeowners association) meeting to submission of application."

Firewise Communities must renew annually to keep the designation of Firewise Community, which only makes sense to ensure that the communities

stay within NFPA guidelines of fire safety.

Officials in attendance were Riley, GFC Ranger III Roy Fortenberry, FAC Secretary Ann Atchison, Marsha Elliott with FAC, Davis with the U.S. Forest Service and

Dequincy Gordon, also with the U.S. Forest Service.

Residents of Scarletts Way who were present at the sign unveiling were Billy and Jane Snipes, Allen and Pat Robertson, and Ed and Mary Davidson.

Hydrilla...from Page 1A

head," according to Brewster.

A big reason Hydrilla is so invasive is because it produces tubers, which can withstand dramatic climate changes, such as drying and ice. A tuber can remain dormant for years without any water, only to grow once rehydrated.

Of the two types of Hydrilla, monoecious and dioecious, monoecious is the worst. It contains both male and female flowers in one plant, "so it can self-reproduce within one plant, so it spreads very quickly," said Brewster.

Managing Hydrilla comes down to the use of herbicides specific to the plant, but it can be hard to control because of its

reproductive patterns.

Hydrilla is a non-native species that is distributed in various ways. Birds can transport it from one reservoir to the next in nest building, and boat owners can carry it from one place to the next when transporting their boats.

Moore and Brewster encourage concerned residents to submit pictures and samples to the Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition and TVA to help identify Hydrilla should it come to the area.

Also, boat owners should inspect their boats and trailers for any aquatic plants that may have attached themselves before traveling to another location.

Ebola...from Page 1A

"To facilitate discussion among participants in order to evaluate current response concepts, plans and capabilities in response to a possible outbreak of a viral disease with high mortality," to "enhance a coordinated response effort among all community partners," and to "identify planning gaps and potential resources to address them."

Towns County officials, employees and volunteers involved in emergency response who attended the exercise were separated into groups of different tables, and were to "process the information just as you would in a real-life incident."

A scenario was presented to the various groups of a family consisting of a father, mother and three children having returned to Young Harris from a mission trip to Sierra Leone, which is a country in West Africa.

Each group was to come up with a response to each phase of the scenario, which first saw the dad coming down with Ebola, and then the mother exhibiting symptoms.

Even the family dog was taken into account, as dogs can be carriers of the disease without ever becoming sick.

"What we hope happened was that each table had a discussion about what they would do if they were faced with an infectious disease outbreak, or any emergency, really," said Public Information Officer David Palmer for District 2 Public Health.

Hiwassee Mayor Barbara Mathis and others from City Hall, along with Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall, represented local government.

Hiwassee Chief of Police Jimmy Wright and representatives of the Towns County Sheriff's Office were also in attendance, as well as employees of the Towns County Emergency Medical Services and Emergency Management Agency.

Also present were Towns County Fire Chief Mitch Floyd and Assistant Fire Chief Harold Copeland, as well as people from the Division of Family and Children Services, Chatuge Regional Hospital and Nursing Home, Towns County 911, Young Harris College, Towns County Schools and



others.

Volunteer organizations made it to the meeting, such as Sally Varao with the Red Cross and members of the Mountain Amateur Radio Club.

The exercise came into being several months ago when Towns County Schools Facilities Director Roy Perren approached Towns County EMS and EMA Director Ricky Mathis about the importance of preparing for such a scenario.

Chairman of the Towns County Board of Health Dr. Robert Stahlkuppe opened the exercise with medical facts concerning the deadly virus and the likelihood of Ebola coming to the mountains.

"The scenario that Ricky has presented for you all to work on today potentially would involve every facet of this county government and then some, and it will not be inexpensive," said Dr. Stahlkuppe. "Hopefully, this

scenario never develops up in this area, but I can see that it very likely could."

Dr. Stahlkuppe classified Ebola as a virus belonging to a group of viruses known as hemorrhagic viruses, which begins to replicate once it works its way into a cell.

"And then once it replicates enough, the cell explodes, then more viral products start going through the body and so forth like that, and at some point, the body reacts with what's called an inflammatory response, which consists of generalized aches and a fever, and you just feel awful," said Dr. Stahlkuppe.

Clotting processes fail and internal bleeding occurs, hence the classification of hemorrhagic virus.

"You can develop bleeding from the ears, from the nose, around the eyes and in the GI (gastrointestinal) tract,"

said Dr. Stahlkuppe. "In addition, you end up with nausea, vomiting and diarrhea."

Dr. Stahlkuppe obtained many of his facts from the Centers for Disease Control website at cdc.gov.

According to the CDC website, Ebola is spread "through direct contact (through broken skin or unprotected mucous membranes in, for example, the eyes, nose, or mouth) with: blood or body fluids (including but not limited to feces, saliva, sweat, urine, vomit, breast milk, and semen) of a person who is sick with Ebola; objects (like needles and syringes) that have been contaminated with the virus; infected fruit bats or primates (apes and monkeys)."

Those infected with the virus are not contagious until symptoms appear, and symptoms may appear anywhere from 2 to 21 days "after exposure to Ebola virus, but the average is 10 days."

A blood test must be performed after the onset of symptoms to determine the presence of the virus.

Currently, there are policies and procedures in place at Chatuge Regional Hospital and within the medical community of Towns County for dealing with a possible Ebola infection.

Anyone with questions about a suspected case of Ebola should call 866-PUB-HLTH, or (866) 782-4584, which is a call center number that connects callers to state medical epidemiologists.