

Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

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75 Cents

Publication Number 635540 Volume 92 Number 29

Wednesday, May 19, 2021

Former editor leaves lasting legacy in the mountains

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

Charles Duncan, the former editor of the North Georgia News and Towns County Herald, has passed away following an extended illness. He was 60 years old.

Duncan died while being treated for congestive heart failure at Coliseum Medical Center in Macon in the early morning hours of May 14. His fiancée, Betty Jo Allison, was with him when he passed.

The career journalist suffered from several medical conditions that saw him in and out of the hospital since October 2015, though he remained in

good spirits through the end of his days.

Over the past five and a half years, Duncan has enjoyed much support from the community and his readers. A prayerful man, he was always appreciative of the people who kept him in their thoughts and prayers during these challenging times in his life.

He will be remembered for his larger-than-life persona, his sharp wit and even sharper pen, and for his tireless dedication to the communities he covered here in the North Georgia Mountains. Nobody ever accused Duncan of being a man of few words, and for



Charles Duncan

all his vast knowledge of vocabulary, he never could grasp the meaning of the word "quit."

Below are passages from a February 2016 news article featuring an interview with Duncan shortly before he underwent his second open heart surgery since 2009. He gave the interview at the time because he was told he might not survive the surgery.

Fortunately, he made it through that surgery and others in the intervening years, though his time was cut short at the too-young age of 60 last week.

A professional newsman for more than three decades, Duncan caught the writing bug early; after turning in several writing assignments in the sixth grade, his teacher

pulled him aside to tell him he had a gift.

"I'd always realized that I was the sixth out of six kids, and everyone above me seemed to be smarter," Duncan said, recalling his youth. "That was the first time anybody had told me I had a gift, and I took it to heart."

Those early experiences proved especially formative for Duncan, who took special care to sharpen his writing abilities before graduating Union County High School in 1978 and proceeding on to college.

He took a few classes at Truett-McConnell College in Cleveland before switching

over to Tri-County Community College, in Murphy, North Carolina, to study Criminal Justice.

"I didn't focus on writing then, but I did have some creative writing classes at Tri-County and had some classes that definitely gave me the opportunity to hone my skills a little bit," Duncan said.

After graduating from Tri-County in 1981, he was accepted into North Georgia College, but finding himself in need of practical work, he took a job at ball bearing manufacturing plant TRW in Flowery Branch.

See Charles Duncan, Page 8A

Colonial Pipeline hack causes gas shortages in Southeast

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

On May 7, the Atlanta-based Colonial Pipeline Company learned of a cyberattack to its IT systems, resulting in a proactive shutdown of the largest pipeline for refined oil in the United States.

The shutdown caused widespread intermittent gasoline shortages and price-per-gallon increases in multiple Southeastern states as people rushed out to buy fuel before running dry, in many cases filling multiple cars per household and buying gas cans to fill at the pumps.

In Georgia, Gov. Brian Kemp said, "We have had a



It's been hard to find gas in the area after the Colonial Pipeline hack from May 7, which has caused a shortage that lasted well into this week. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Towns County High School prepares for graduation

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Towns County High School is readying for graduation exercises recognizing the Class of 2021, to be held on Saturday, May 22, in Frank McClure Memorial Stadium beginning at 10 a.m.

Principal Roy Perren has planned for rain and warns those concerned about COVID that the event may have to be moved indoors.

"Should it rain, we will go into the High School gym for graduation," Perren said. "This is a full open event like it normally would be. Should we go into the gym, it will still be fully open, but if people are uncomfortable around large crowds, they just need not come because we will be doing it

normally."

The graduating Class of 2021 comes in at more than 70 students, all looking forward to the next steps in their lives.

Perren is thankful that TCHS has been able to have a semi-normal school year full of events such as prom and other extracurricular activities for seniors and other students, even while mitigating the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We want students to have the best experience possible and give them what they deserve," Perren said. "We have done that so far this year, and the graduation will be the icing on the cake."

Towns County High is the state that opened and maintained in-person learning without any closures for COVID-19 either



Roy Perren
TCHS Principal

semester. "It has been a great year," Perren said. "We have had a great year."

See Graduation, Page 3A

Hiawassee to hold hearings regarding townhouses, budget

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

The City of Hiawassee will hold a public hearing before the regular City Council meeting on Tuesday, June 1, to solicit feedback on a proposed amendment to the city's Planning and Development Ordinance regarding the expanded development of multi-unit residential buildings.

Following the public hearing, the city will schedule a special called meeting to finalize the changes being made to the ordinance.

Currently, the ordinance restricts residential building development to two living units per land lot less than 1 acre. This will be staying the same.

The current density limit of four units per acre on parcels equal to or greater than 1 acre, however, is being increased to "10 living units per acre constructed in no more than four structures per acre," with a hard cap of 40 units per parcel.

Another change would be the removal of the restriction limiting these structures to two stories above ground, though the height restriction would remain at 35 feet.

The ordinance amendment is the result of a request by development company Celtic Realty Group LLC for permission to proceed with a townhouse project, originally presented in the Monday, March 29, council work session. Called Mountain View



The Hiawassee City Council has been social distancing while conducting city business, pictured here in the May 4 regular meeting. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

Townhouses, if greenlighted, the proposed project would be erected in a lot next to Georgia Vision Center across from Taco Bell on Main Street.

The site consists of about 5 acres, though the topography of the lot would require the 16 proposed townhouses to be built on approximately 2 acres.

All units would be three-level structures to include 10 two-bedroom units starting at \$230,000 apiece and six three-bedroom units starting at \$280,000 apiece.

There are plans to sell off two 1-acre Main Street-facing parcels on the property that the developers feel are not fit for their purposes.

Essentially, construction of the townhouses would require eight units per acre,

hence the need to change the ordinance from four units per acre. The proposed changes to the ordinance would affect all future developments of a similar kind in the city.

Much discussion has taken place among council members since the March 29 work session, including in the April 26 work session and the May 4 regular meeting, with varied opinions expressed on the matter.

Both recent meetings were the first since the onset of COVID-19 to welcome the public back to watch in person as the city conducted its business. The April 26 meeting took place at the Towns County City Center, and the May 4 meeting at City Hall, with both livestreamed via Facebook.

See Hiawassee, Page 3A

EggFest attracts thousands to Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

On Saturday, May 15, the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds hosted its 10th Annual Big Green Egg Festival.

This festival welcomes chefs and passionate cooks to use Big Green Egg ceramic grills to prepare various meals and unique items for guests to try – everything from pizza to steak to everything.

And the festival has quite a following, with Saturday's event bringing in around 2,500 guests from all over the Southeast, even with a gas shortage due to the Colonial Pipeline hack, to enjoy the different recipes vendors had on offer.

Samantha Young of Tennessee has been enjoying the festival for three years and

See Egg Festival, Page 8A



The sky is the limit when it comes to preparing food on a Big Green Egg, with the general rule of thumb seeming to be that, if you can think it up, you can make it in a Big Green Egg. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Historical Society convenes first meeting since COVID onset

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Towns County Historical Society met for the first time in over a year on May 10, ready to get back into the swing of regular monthly meetings.

President Sandra Green was excited to have the group back for its first meeting since the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020, and the society offered masks to those wanting them and allowed for social distancing as well that Monday.

"It has been so long since we have seen each other," Green said. "Then again, it is almost like yesterday. We are really glad to be back."

Green honored the memories of members and contributors to the Historical Society who had passed since last they met in 2020.

"The sad part about being gone for so long is that we have a lot of people that are no longer

with us," Green said.

Since the last meeting, the Historical Society received a painting from local artist Marty Hayden titled "Vanishing Heritage with Fear of the Future," a 60-by-48-inch acrylic on board painting highlighting the complicated history surrounding the manmade Lake Chatuge.

Hayden painted an older woman looking out her front window at the construction of the dam, knowing that her home would soon be taken down to make room for the lake. It was a story he found compelling, and he strived to portray the past, present and future in the piece.

"The inspiration came from everything that happened in the whole area," Hayden said. "When I first moved in here and heard the stories about how people were relocated and everything, it was really touching. Something that I always wanted to do was get into a small community and get to know everybody."

The guest speaker



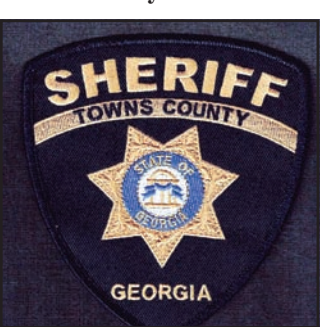
Jerry Taylor was back in fine historical form giving one of his customary presentations in the recently returned regular meetings of the Towns County Historical Society. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

for the evening was Towns County Historian Jerry Taylor, who talked about the dialects and language of Southern Appalachia in a presentation

See Historical Society, Page 8A

Towns Co. Sheriff's Office provides update on domestic-related shooting

News Special
Towns County Herald



The Towns County Sheriff's Office and Georgia Bureau of Investigation continue to investigate a domestic-related shooting in the Hall Creek Road Community of Hiawassee.

Joshua Nelson has been identified as the person shot, according to the Sheriff's Office.

At 5:45 p.m. on Sunday, May 9, Sheriff's Deputies were called to a residence, where they found Nelson shot and arranged for his transport to a hospital for treatment.

Nelson had busted in an outer door and entered the basement in a threatening and aggressive manner, at which point he was shot by a family member, according to the Sheriff's Office.

He is facing criminal and domestic violence charges.

The shooter will not face any criminal charges.

Sheriff Ken Henderson once again would like to state that no other persons were injured and there is no threat to the community

3 Sections	24 Pages
Lake Levels	
Blue Ridge	1,686.18
Chatuge	1,925.53
Nottely	1,776.50

Inside	
Arrests	2A
Chamber	5A
Church	4B
Classifieds	6B
Opinion	4A
Legals	6B
Obits	5B
Sports	2B

Quilt of
Valor
Recipients

See page 7A



May 22

See Page 1B

RODEO
Hiawassee
Pro Rodeo
May 28-29

See page 1B

Special
Graduation
Section

See Inside this Issue

Hiawassee...from Page 1A

Councilwoman Anne Mitchell started the April 26 discussion by saying that, generally, she would like the council to concentrate on solidifying “an overall plan for what we want to see happening in our city.”

She went on to say she was “not in favor of this (townhouse) project,” adding that she wanted the council to come up with a better solution moving forward so the city did not find itself in the same situation of not having a ready answer the next time a developer proposes a project.

“What are our other options besides an ordinance that covers the entire city and that you have to change parts of or give variances to every time something comes up?” Mitchell said. “I’m not sure I know the definition of zoning, but from what I understand, it gives us the ability to do things in small packages, and it protects us rather than harms us.

“If we want to declare a certain amount of area as a high-density area, with a zoning law ... we could do that, I think.”

City Attorney Thomas Mitchell said Councilwoman Mitchell was correct in her understanding of what zoning would entail, though he added it was his understanding “that in this county and in this city, there is a strenuous opposition to zoning.”

“And I am not in any way recommending that the city move in that direction,” he said. “However, if you did have a zoning ordinance, it would give you a whole lot more flexibility to determine what you could and couldn’t do.

“If you wanted, you could have a zoning ordinance that basically left the rest of the city alone and only applied to ... the Main Street.”

Councilwoman Amy Barrett said she “kind of agreed with Anne on the zoning issue, but that’s me personally – the

people who I represent and the county are greatly opposed to it.”

“What I think made Hiawassee great, and we still have this small-town feel, is that you could buy property, and you could do what you want with it,” Barrett said.

As to what direction she believes Hiawassee should take toward planning, Barrett said she envisions “more families,” which includes the creation of affordable housing so young people from the area can make their lives here.

“So, I like the townhome idea, I like the green area, I like the fact that he has community areas,” Barrett said of the proposed Mountain View Townhouses, noting that she understood the project wouldn’t prove affordable for everyone, “but to me, it hits a niche that we don’t have.”

Councilwoman Mitchell said the project would preclude “government-sponsored housing for low-income families,” which is something she said the city should consider pursuing “to make housing available to (our low-income families).”

“They can’t afford the same prices here, but nobody would ever know who they were,” Mitchell said. “And I have not observed it pulling neighborhoods down; I’ve observed it making families feel good about themselves and pulling them up. We’ve got to have some low-income housing.”

Councilwoman Nancy Noblet supported the idea of the townhomes and other such developments that evening, saying her decision rested largely with thoughts about the housing needs of future generations.

“I feel like if you can get something from (\$350,000) down and have a home, then you’re doing good,” Noblet said.

Attorney Mitchell pointed out that the proposed townhomes do not meet the legal definition of “affordable housing,” saying that, usually, affordable housing is going to be “rental units, and not owner-occupied units.”

“And whether it’s owner-occupied or rental units, (affordable housing) is going to be a situation where you’re not spending any more than 30%-40% of your income on rent,” Attorney Mitchell said. “You all, in your head, can do what a mortgage is on a \$250,000 housing unit – that does not meet the legal definition of what (the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development) calls ‘affordable housing.’”

Added Mitchell, “What you all are really looking at is multifamily housing. But, to have affordable housing, you’ve got to be able to allow multifamily housing, because that’s the only way the numbers work.”

Continuing, the city attorney said that, in order to make affordable housing projects worthwhile to outside developers, the city would need to consider allowing upwards of 20 units per acre, though the current draft of the amended ordinance reflects 10 units per acre.

Councilwoman Mitchell clarified that her idea was to require a certain percentage of units per residential development to be anonymous “government-supported housing” that would in effect be a “life-affirming kind of thing.”

Attorney Mitchell said that this sort of requirement is usually accomplished through “the mechanism of zoning” by municipalities granting developers rezoning for a higher density with the condition of setting aside so many units of each development for affordable housing.

Mayor Liz Ordiales said the city would be updating its “Comprehensive Plan” in 2021, the meetings for which would

be a good place to discuss the particulars of pursuing more affordable housing within city limits.

In the May 4 meeting, the council hammered out some of the particulars of the proposed ordinance amendment regarding townhomes and other multiunit dwellings, and council members voted to hold a first reading with all but Councilwoman Mitchell’s support.

People may attend the June 1 public hearing at 6 p.m. in the upstairs training room at City Hall to provide public feedback on the proposed amendment, which is tentatively set for a second reading and adoption in a later meeting.

Other Business

Also in the May 4 meeting, the council voted to renew the city’s property insurance with the Georgia Interlocal Risk Management Agency at a cost of \$45,468.50.

This is up from last year’s GIRMA contract of \$39,996, though coverage has also increased, according to Timothy Barrett of Barrett & Associates Insurance.

The city originally switched to GIRMA in 2018, when the insurance cost \$36,133 compared to a \$42,796 quote by the city’s previous provider.

Timothy Barrett provided the quotes, as he has done for years, and since Councilwoman Barrett is his wife, she recused herself from voting on the contract.

GIRMA is operated by the Georgia Municipal Association. It provides liability insurance coverage for all city owned properties and includes coverage for litigation.

The council also held a first reading of the 2021-2022 Tentative Budget and scheduled a public hearing to coincide with other council business in the upcoming May 24 work session.

Additionally, council members approved the Intergovernmental Agreement with Towns County and the Elections Board to continue conducting city elections, and they approved the resolution for the Joint Economic Development Plan with Young Harris and Towns County. City Clerk Bonnie “The Boss” Kendrick received a very special recognition in the May 4 meeting in honor of the 52nd Annual Professional Municipal Clerks Week, for her hard work and dedication to the city.

Graduation...from Page 1A

some hiccups along the way as we have learned to understand COVID and how to react to it. It has made the year easier as we have gone, but I can brag about kids.

“They came back and had to wear masks and have one-way halls and social distance with half of them in the lunchroom at a time. We did everything we could to try to keep the school open. I also

attribute us having a successful year to our teachers and staff doing what had to be done.”

With the following of precautions and dedication of students and staff members, the school stayed open five days a week the entire year, only closing for snow days and other normal closures.

In addition to graduation, Perren invites families to join in the Honors Day festivities for

seniors, which will be the day before graduation.

“We are just glad to have everyone come out,” Perren said. “We have Honors Day on Friday, May 21, starting at 8:30 a.m. in the High School Gym as opposed to the auditorium.

“We will have more ventilation out there, so we are still trying to be careful on the COVID stuff.

“We will have a golf cart in the parking lot should anyone need help into the facility.”

Gold Wing Road Riders welcome all motorcycle riders



The Gold Wing Road Riders enjoy fellowship.

The Gold Wing Road Riders Association (GWRRA) was founded in 1977 and is recognized as the largest single-marquee motorcycle association in the world. It is a not-for-profit, non-religious and non-political organization. GWRRA promotes the safe operation of motorcycles as well as education and awareness programs to the general public and to the motorist community of Georgia. GWRRA also promotes fun and fellow-

ship. Visit www.gwrro.org to find out about us. Our motto is “Friends for Fun, Safety and Knowledge”.

The local GWRRA Hiawassee Chapter GA-J was established in 1997 and will be celebrating their 25th anniversary next year. We actively have group rides throughout the North Georgia Mountains and the surrounding states and ride to restaurants, GWRRA rallies, etc. We also have various social activities. In addi-

tion, we promote motorcycle education and awareness. Chapter GA- J welcomes riders and co-riders of all types of motorcycles.

We meet on the 3rd Saturday of each month at Daniel’s Steakhouse, 273 Big Sky Drive, Hiawassee at 11 a.m. for lunch and fellowship and 12 noon for our meeting. Hope to see you there.

Visit our GWRRA GA District website at www.gwrro-ga.com. T(May19,F4)SH

Ira Weaver American Legion Post 121 offers marksmanship training class fundraiser June 19th

A reduced cost “Basic Principles of Pistol Marksmanship and Firearm Safety Class” is planned for June 19 from 9 AM to 4 PM to raise funds supporting Blairsville American Legion Ira Weaver Post 121. The cost is only \$50 per person compared to \$125 for a similar course that provides a certificate. The class is limited to 25 people and will include both classroom instruction at the Blairsville Veterans’ Center and live fire at the instructor’s firing range in Brasstown, NC.

The course is intended for all individuals regardless of previous shooting experience. Some topics included are: Don’t be a victim, Having a gun is not enough, Gun safety rules, Operation of revolvers and semi-automatic pistols, Ammunition and selection, Pistol selection & storage and Maintenance & cleaning.

Those interested should bring their own pistol and 50 rounds of ammunition as

well as eye and ear protection equipment. Limited pistol and ammunition will also be available for an additional fee. No personal weapons or ammunition will be allowed in the classroom.

The class will be taught by Post Commander Dan Wickersham, a certified NRA pistol instructor. Some of the live fire outcomes include: Apply safety procedures with weapon; Demonstrate basic principles of marksmanship such as stance, grip, sight alignment, trigger control and breathing control; and demonstrate the five steps of drawing a pistol.

All monies are being donated to the Post. For more in-

formation and to reserve space contact Dan Wickersham at dan.wickersham@gmail.com or Melanie Reed at mflake1@bellsouth.net.

The American Legion is the largest and one of the oldest and most inclusive of all veterans’ organizations worldwide and devotes itself to mutual helpfulness, mentoring youth, advocating patriotic honor, promoting strong national security, and continued devotion to fellow service members and veterans.

All members, and interested veterans, are encouraged to attend the monthly meeting the third Tuesday at 6:30 PM in the Veteran’s Center, 78 Blue Ridge Street. The Legion Auxiliary also begins its meeting at 6:30 PM in the same building.

For more information on the meeting or any Post activities email the Post at alpost121@gmail.com or visit the website at legionpost121.org. N(May19,Z15)CA



Charles Duncan...from Page 1A

In 1985, then-editor of the North Georgia News Jon Moon contacted Duncan to see if he'd come aboard to cover sports in Union County. Sports were another of Duncan's lifelong passions, and he was excited to be starting a writing career with athletics at his alma mater.

For the next seven years, Duncan provided local coverage for the Union County Panthers in his hometown newspaper, all the while continuing to work for TRW.

"And in 1992, I got a call that the Gainesville Times might be interested in having me on their district staff, so I went for a three-story tryout," Duncan said. "Ironically, nobody ever told me if I ever passed that three-story tryout, but in 1999, I left the Times for an opportunity with Community Newspapers Inc. in Dawsonville."

There, Duncan continued to flourish under the leadership of Terri Blackwell, and it was in Dawsonville that he formed many friendships that have lasted to this day.

"I worked with a young gentleman by the name of Bo Wilson, and together we formed quite a team in Dawsonville," Duncan said, noting that Wilson had traveled to the mountains to fill in for him during his first heart surgery and recovery in 2009.

Duncan remained in Dawsonville until 2005, when he received an offer to work for a paper in Pawleys Island, South Carolina. His stint there was short-lived, however, as

the Dawsonville paper made him an offer he couldn't refuse, so he returned to Georgia after just six months.

He again stayed in Dawsonville until October 2008, which is when he received the call of his lifetime presenting him with the opportunity to come back home to Blairsville.

"Kenneth West gave me a call, asked me if I'd be interested in being the editor of the Towns County Herald, and I said, 'Sure,'" Duncan said. "So I came to Blairsville, I interviewed, and the rest is history."

Duncan served as editor of the Herald from 2008 to 2018, and West expanded his duties in 2012 by bringing him on as editor of the North Georgia News as well, where he led the newspaper for the next six years.

Working as the editor of his hometown paper stood out for Duncan as a great moment and highpoint of his life and career; after all, his mother had worked for the North Georgia News years earlier, and it was in Blairsville that his work in journalism began.

"It was an opportunity to bring real journalism to the mountains and keep it going, and to bring two top-notch newspapers," Duncan said. "And I really feel like we do have two top-notch newspapers in the Towns County Herald and the North Georgia News."

"We have two newspapers that bring a lot of news to those two communities each week. We do our best to keep people

informed. I'm sure there are things that we could do to improve, but we're happy to be a part of the big picture in those two communities."

Added Duncan, "I think that we've raised the level, we've raised the bar for our competition and our neighboring counties. I think that there's a lot of newspapers that would like to be like us, and I think there's a lot of ideas from us. That, to me, the way that's unfolding, tells me that we're doing something right."

Mountain View Funeral Home of Blairsville had charge of Duncan's arrangements, with a public viewing scheduled for Monday, May 17, and a private family service on Tuesday, May 18.

To learn more about the life of Charles Duncan, read his full obituary in this week's editions of the North Georgia News and Towns County Herald.

****Editor's Note: Charles Duncan went out on a limb for me in 2014 when he asked Publisher Kenneth West to take me on as a cub reporter. But Charles was more than just my boss; he was also my uncle, mentor and friend.*

I couldn't have asked for a better role model in journalism, and I couldn't have asked for a better uncle in life.

To my Uncle Chuck, who has been there rain or shine, thank you for everything; you will be missed by me and by many.

Gas Shortages...from Page 1A

Colonial Pipeline has safely restarted our entire pipeline system and can report that product delivery has commenced in all markets we serve.

Following this restart, it will take several days for the product delivery supply chain to return to normal. Some markets served by Colonial Pipeline may experience, or continue to experience, intermittent service interruptions during this start-up period. Colonial will move as much gasoline, diesel, and jet fuel as is safely possible and will continue to do so until markets return to normal.



The Colonial Pipeline system is about 5,500 miles long, beginning in Houston, Texas, running northeastward across 13 states, and ending in Linden, New Jersey.

Kemp declared a state of emergency, signing an executive order suspending fuel taxes and announcing an increase in the weight limits for trucks transporting fuel to provide "more supply for stations as they receive deliveries."

Additionally, the order has prohibited price gouging "by bad actors looking to exploit the situation."

Locally, supply issues at gas stations continued into this week, likely exacerbated by the nationwide shortage of tanker truck drivers, though renewed deliveries should begin to alleviate some of the shortages soon, as the pipeline was restarted May 12.

"Colonial Pipeline has safely restarted our entire pipeline system and can report that product delivery has commenced in all markets we serve," the company said May 15. "Following this restart, it will take several days for the product delivery supply chain to return to normal."

"Some markets served by Colonial Pipeline may experience, or continue to

experience, intermittent service interruptions during this startup period. Colonial will move as much gasoline, diesel and jet fuel as is safely possible and will continue to do so until markets return to normal."

Fortunately, local government has plenty of gasoline at the county depot to keep first responders operating even amid a longer outage period.

The cyberattack was determined to be of the ransomware variety, which is a digital extortion scheme used by computer hackers, in this case, an Eastern European group calling itself DarkSide, according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

"Ransomware is an ever-evolving form of malware designed to encrypt files on a device, rendering any files and the systems that rely on them unusable," per the Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency. "Malicious actors then demand ransom in exchange for decryption."

Colonial Pipeline reportedly paid a ransom

totaling about \$5 million and was able to restart the pipeline on May 12, stating that "we have returned the system to normal operations, delivering millions of gallons per hour to the markets we serve."

The pipeline system begins in Houston, Texas, runs northeastward across 13 states, and ends in Linden, New Jersey, spanning more than 5,500 miles and connecting 29 refineries on the Gulf Coast to 270 marketing terminals, according to the National Transportation Safety Board.

All told, the pipeline is responsible for delivering nearly half of all petroleum products to local markets in the Southeast, for upwards of 2.5 million barrels a day, which explains why people in this area and others have been worried about supply.

One positive takeaway from the ordeal is that the hack has sparked renewed national interest in shoring up cybersecurity for critical infrastructure here in the United States.

Egg Festival...from Page 1A

hopes it will continue growing with even more guests and chefs.

"This is one of my favorite festivals that there is," Young said. "I was really bummed that we missed it last year, but I guess COVID had everything shut down. I really like the food and the atmosphere, and it seems like people are happy to get back out and about."

"I hope this year goes a lot better than last year, and the events get back to some sort of normal. With events returning to the area, I just want people to get out and have fun, because I am ready to enjoy these festivals and take advantage of what seems like a good summer."

Chefs prepared various and sundry foods, such as tacos, desserts, sandwiches, and other handheld items that attendees like Amanda Tuck of Alabama would never have considered grilling.

"My favorite thing so far has been the brownies," Tuck said. "I have never thought about cooking brownies in an Egg like that. That is part of what I love about this festival, because you find new ways to cook different things and get to know people who share your passion."

"Between the brownies and all the different types of meat, I am really excited to come to this every year. This is only the second time I have been, but I will come every time they have it from now on. It is that great."

In a typical year, the event would feature more chefs as well as classes to enjoy learning



A whopping 2,500 people attended the ever-popular Big Green EggFest at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds over the weekend.

more about the Big Green Egg and different cooking techniques. And while those options were unavailable this year, guests were thrilled to be getting back to a standard lineup of events.

Bill Artan of Atlanta visits the Fairgrounds regularly and tries to attend as many events as possible with his family.

"We come here almost every summer," Artan said. "We didn't come last year because of all the COVID stuff, and we thought that the area would be kind of shut down without much going on. We are really happy to be back this year, because the Fairgrounds is our favorite place in North Georgia."

"With all the festivals and concerts going on around here, it makes for a wonderful trip. We enjoyed the concert last night, and getting to enjoy this today is something that we

would have never thought of doing just a few months ago. I hope the COVID stuff is done with."

People will want to mark their calendars for the upcoming major Memorial Day Weekend event – the Hiawassee Pro Rodeo May 28-29.

"Enjoy the best bucking horses, bulls, world class contestants from all over the United States and Canada, and the top-of-the-line specialty acts!" according to GeorgiaMountainFairgrounds.com. "This is a family event that will definitely keep you on the edge of your seat with live entertainment!"

The rodeo starts at 8 p.m. on both days, with ticket pricing at \$15 for adult, \$10 for children ages 6-12, and 5 and under getting in free.

Historical Society...from Page 1A

titled "Appalachian Speech."

"To some of you, it sounds normal," Taylor said. "To some of you, it sounds like a foreign language. I'm not looking at this for the stereotypes and all that. I'm looking at it for the language and how interesting it is."

Added Taylor, "Let's imagine Queen Elizabeth going into her backyard and calling her dog, how would she do it? That language is the same thing. That language of grandfather calling the dog is the same language as Queen Elizabeth calling the dog from the back porch of the castle."

Taylor highlighted different words and phrases of the area and how they were said years ago, in a heavier Appalachian dialect.

With crowd participation, Taylor taught various aspects of the different dialects and showed an appreciation for the way locals spoke before the



The first Historical Society meeting of 2021 featured decent attendance, especially considering it's been over a year since the last time society folks gathered as a group.

Photo by Jarrett Whitener

"proper" way was introduced and widespread.

The Towns County Historical Society is looking forward to a full and in-person year moving forward, and they invite new members to get

involved with the group, which meets every second Monday of the month at 6 p.m. inside the Old Rec Gym.

For more information on the Historical Society, visit <http://townscountyhistory.org/>.