

Cold weather offers economic jolt...from page 1A

wanted their movies, that's for sure."

And many theater seats were kept warm, as noticed by Bradley Barrett, cinema manager who has been with Fieldstone for five years.

"Friday was slow, but yesterday and today (Saturday and Sunday) were busy," he said. "I don't see people come out a lot during weather like this, but more came out this weekend and we did a lot better than I thought we would. *Avatar* has done really well. *Alvin and the Chipmunks* and *It's Complicated* also did pretty well."

And while it was indeed complicated to get around town this past weekend, folks did pretty well for themselves, too. Hiwassee locals Dwight and Gloria Wilson bundled up and nestled close as they made their way to their car Sunday night through the somewhat icy parking lot.

"We saw *It's Complicated*. It's very funny," Dwight laughed. "And we live up on



Newly-elected Hiwassee Councilman Stephen Smith went to the movies with friends and family during the recent snow storm. Photo/Matthew Jarrard

the side of the mountain and couldn't get out some of the time because it gets too icy."

"But we did attend church this morning," said Gloria. "We would have been back to church tonight but they called it off because of the weather."

Newly-elected Hiwassee City Councilman Stephen Smith and his wife Mary braved the frigid weather conditions with some friends on Sunday.

"We just saw *Did You*

Hear About The Morgans? It's good. It's just a funny, clean film. We just thought we'd celebrate being able to get out of our house and go to a movie," Stephen Smith said. "I've also seen *Avatar* recently. It was okay. It was long, but it was clever."

Right next door, FunWorld at Fieldstone also drew a crowd during the blast of winter this past weekend.

"They keep the hill coming up here clear because the

Emergency Medical Service is on the other side," said Millie Poole, a manager at Fun World. "I think everybody's stir crazy, just ready to get out of the house. This weekend, with the weather, we didn't know what we were going to get. We were pleasantly surprised."

"We had several parties that took place that were scheduled, while a couple were rescheduled, but people were just desperate for entertainment."

Crime spree...from page 1A

The arrests had a unique twist: the snow that fell Thursday and Friday allowed investigators the opportunity to literally track their suspects from crime-to-crime.

While motorists were faced with the challenge of navigating on snow and ice, deputies were blessed with the

opportunity of what amounted to a map of crimes, which led them to each individual crime scene and eventually, their alleged suspects.

Forensically speaking, investigators say there's no better evidence than a shoe print in a fresh North Georgia snowfall.

Fire Chief...from page 1A

over as well as thermostat adjustment, which idle or employ the heating device once it reaches a certain temperature in electric or gas powered heaters.

Another device used for household heating, especially common in rural areas, is an LP (Liquid Propane) heater.

"LP heaters can be safe," Chief Floyd went on to explain. "But the LP heaters are not to be used in a confined space that is not well ventilated. Like with any heating appliance, check the manufacturer guidelines and recommendations. Like smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors save lives as well and usually run on average around \$20 if a liquid propane heater is present in the home."

Chief Floyd described the best firefighter tools for the home, which are relatively inexpensive.

"Smoke detectors save lives," said Chief Floyd. "They're usually about \$15 to \$20 at any hardware store or Home Depot. They take 9-volt batteries and they should be changed annually, once a year. It will let out a chirping sound if the batteries need to be changed. A self-test button should be clearly visible on the detector as well to ensure that it is in proper, working order."

The fire extinguisher is one of the most famous tools in case of fire emergencies, and Chief Floyd cleared up a common misconception about this apparatus.

"Fire extinguishers are an extremely useful tool, but generally for smaller fires, such as on a lawnmower or a grill, and it's a good first-aid tool. They do not stand up to a

larger, more involved fire in the household," Chief Floyd said. "Oftentimes people have this misconception and theory that they have it in them to take on a fire themselves with those. The best thing to do is evacuate the home and contact the fire department immediately in that situation. We also offer training and proper use of a fire extinguisher right here at the station."

Chief Floyd continued with another life-threatening fire hazard, one not being just the fire itself.

"Smoke is also the worst part," he said. "Hot smoke fills the lungs, burning them, even in one's sleep, and it is not possible to get air in them. And we still go to the elementary schools and the middle schools teaching stop, drop, and roll. That exercise is still very effective."

In hard economic times it can seem daunting trying to keep warm, day after day, in the winter months. Many families simply cannot afford it. Chief Floyd suggests if this is the case, contact your local American Red-Cross affiliate for details on possible heating assisting programs or shelters.

"If you have to, bundle up a little more. Throw on an extra blanket," he said. "Sometimes you have to use your resources. If you have family or friends who will let you stay at their house for a period, that might be an option."

For more details regarding fire safety and prevention, contact the Towns County Fire Department at (706) 896-2090 but always remember to contact 911 in case of any type of emergency, fire or otherwise.

Wright honored for bravery...from page 1A

"Fortunately, and unfortunately, the incident that took place back in December was the county's first fatal house fire in more than five years," he said. "Jimmy Wright had background in the proper training to do what he did. It was a judgment call he felt he had to make."

The events that took place that horrific morning are all too familiar with Towns County residents. As Wright began to enter his neighbor's burning house, his adrenaline had kicked into overdrive, having allowed

him to bust down a back door as he made his way through the burning home on his hands and knees.

"I kicked the back door in," he said. "I started crawling through the bedrooms and checking the beds. No one was in there, so I crawled on through to the next room. Smoke, fire and heat was so intense I couldn't get any further."

As he made his way toward the living room the heat from the blaze became increasingly intense.

"I couldn't get any further, the flames basically



Hiwassee Police Chief Jimmy Wright was honored last week.

were just right there in my face," he said. "It was just too far gone. It was a terrible, terrible situation. I've known these folks all my life."

As he backed out of

the home, he checked the bedrooms one last time but, to no avail, no one was there.

"It's a bad situation for the whole family," he said. "It was just a terrible, tragic situation."

Grocers meet needs during storm

By Matthew Jarrard
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As the first week of 2010 came to pass, Mother Nature seemed to have her own resolution - snow and ice, and plenty of it.

After last week's snowfall, Towns County lay underneath nearly three inches of snow. The county was quick to action as the snow plow was busy at work immediately, keeping local roads as safe and clear of as possible from the potentially dangerous wintry mix. And while the street conditions were overall ice-free, parking lots weren't in the clear just yet.

Russell Hedden and Bud Denton, both lumber yard workers with Hiwassee Hardware, began their Friday morning with a shovel and front-end loader.

Hedden, who's been with Hiwassee Hardware for more than 20 years, scattered concrete all along the sidewalk and parking lot in front of the store.

"We just don't want anybody to fall down," Hedden said. "The roads get cleared but parking lots often stay pretty icy. The biggest thing is when people get out of their cars we don't want them to slip."

Dills Food City just down the street also had their icy parking lot filled with cars.

"No matter what, we'll be open," said Steven Treadway, manager at Dills.

Assistant Manager Regina Whitt only lives a few miles from Dills.

"We'll be open. I'll be here. I don't live far so I can probably come in. We don't get this often and you never know what could happen and for how long. People will still need their



Regina Whitt and Cassie Victoria lower the prices on milk at Dills Food Store during the height of last week's snow storm. Photo/Matthew Jarrard

groceries," she said.

Dills' IGA brand Milk dropped from \$4.19 a gallon to \$3.28 a gallon, as soon as the snow began to stick, and continued at that price throughout the weekend.

"Times like this keep us pretty busy and we don't mind. We love our customers and we have a good time," Whitt said as she worked fast to put out milk for the forecast to come, having noticed their IGA brand bread and eggs selling just as quickly as she and fellow employee Cassie Victoria were putting lower price tags on the milk.

"The snow's been coming down harder since I first came in here," said Dills customer Tiffany Clifford, still in her scrubs after being sent home from work at a local dentist's office.

"We only had one patient at work and we had the okay to go and I thought I'd better run to the grocery store to get bread and milk. I've got an 8-year-old and if he ran out of milk he'd probably die," she said jokingly. "He's a milk-aholic. If I don't get

more, we only have a half gallon left and that will be gone by mid-day tomorrow."

At Ingles, manager Doug Green stayed busy inside and outside the supermarket, gathering buggies himself just as the snow clouds began working up a frenzy just above Towns County.

"It's been busy since they called for flurries on Tuesday. The Blizzard of '93 comes back to them. Milk, bread, and eggs are the main three items. They get some canned stuff and gallons of water have come a long way with that, too."

"I'm working out here today some because it keeps my guys in there, getting my customers bagged and keeping things a-rollin'."

Countless thanks go to the Towns County workers who performed around the clock service having plowed and salted the roads, clearing them for safer mobility. Because of them, Towns County residents could go to work, if not given the day off, or purchase necessary items for food and warmth for the coming uncertain days.

Floodplain hearing set

There will be a second hearing on Floodplain maps on Thursday Jan. 21, at 5:30 p.m. in the Towns County Courthouse.

Georgia's Floodplain Mapping Program is an agreement between Georgia and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for the development and updating of Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (DFIRM).

During the first hearing at a County Meeting, it was established that the maps have erroneously listed many homes and properties, especially around the lake, as being in the flood zone that clearly are several feet above the flood zone.

The Commissioner's Office is providing services through the Towns County 911 mapping to any resident who wishes to come in and determine if the proposed FEMA map has their home or property listed in the floodplain by error.

Towns County is required to adopt the new digitally formatted flood maps in order for residents to receive the lower insurance rate afforded by the Flood Insurance Rate Maps.

Commissioner Kendall said it is of the utmost importance that the most accurate data possible be used in order to keep property out of the flood map zone because of mapping errors. To have residents' property erroneously listed in the flood zone could lead to higher cost of insurance and diminished property value.

Commissioner Kendall is exploring the feasibility and cost to the County of providing more accurate data to FEMA if they will agree to use it to adopt new and more accurate maps. Citizens are urged to come out to this meeting, familiarize yourself on this matter and have input into resolving these issues.

Anyone having questions on this matter may call (706) 896-2276.

Council...from page 1A

County Schools System. Early in his career, he taught students at Towns County Middle School and Towns County High School in the specialty areas of algebra, geometry, biology, chemistry and computer technology.

He was chosen Star Teacher twice during those years. Smith was also named principal of Towns County Middle School in 1992.

During his tenure, Towns County Middle was the recipient of the Effective Program Award by the Georgia As-

sociation of Middle School Principals in 1996, 1998, 1999, 2000, and 2002 and named one of Time Magazine's 2001 Schools of the Year.

Now he can add Hiwassee City Councilman to his inspiring resume. Smith looks forward to the future without making any assumptions, caring for the issues at hand.

"I don't know what's going to happen next," he said. "As of now I'm going to try to do my best for the city for the next four years."



City Clerk Wylene White does the honors of swearing in Mayor Barbara Mathis, above and councilmen Stephen Smith and Junior Chastain last week during the council's first meeting of 2010. Photo/Matthew Jarrard

Fossil Fools at Campus Gate

Young Harris College's Campus Gate Art Gallery will host "Fossil Fools," a performance and digital media arts installation.

The exhibit opens Thursday, Jan. 21, with an opening-night live performance at 7 p.m. in Young Harris College's Dobbs Theatre, located inside Goolsby Center, followed by a reception at 8 p.m. in the Campus Gate Art Gallery. The exhibit will be on display through Friday, Feb. 26. Campus Gate is located at 5149 College Street on the Young Harris College

campus. Regular gallery hours are Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. The performance, reception and exhibit are free and open to the public. For more information contact the Campus Gate Art Gallery at (706) 379-5256 or campusgate@yhc.edu.

"Fossil Fools" is a combined set of installations and performances about the past and future of fossil fuels and energy resources. The work is a mixture of video, sound and performance.

"Fossil Fools" consists of a group of collaborative art-

ists, featuring Kristen Baumier, a multimedia and performance artist who teaches at the Cleveland Institute of Art; Tom Hansell, a documentary filmmaker who works at Appalshop, a media arts center in Whitesburg, Ky.; and Brian Hametty, a sound artist and composer from Columbus, Ohio.

The exhibit has been featured recently at Berea College in Kentucky, University of Northern Iowa, the Select Media Festival in Chicago and the Athens Film Festival in Athens, Ohio.

YHC Events Calendar

Ice Worlds, Friday, Jan. 15, 8 p.m. Rollins Planetarium, Maxwell Center.

Admission: \$3 adults/\$2 students/Free with YHC ID. Also presented on Friday, Jan. 22 and 29; Feb. 12, 19 and 26; March 19. Call (706) 379-5195 for details.

"Fossil Fools" Digital Media Arts Exhibit Opening

Night Live Performance, 7 p.m., Dobbs Theatre. Opening Reception, 8 p.m., Campus Gate Art Gallery, Thursday, Jan. 21

On display through Friday, Feb. 26. Gallery hours: Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Campus Gate Art Gallery, Free admission. Call (706) 379-5256 or campusgate@yhc.edu for details.

Faculty Artists Recital,

Monday, Jan. 25, 7 p.m. at Glenn Auditorium, Clegg Fine Arts Building. Free admission, call (706) 379-5182 for details.

Wit, presented by Theatre Young Harris and the Division of Humanities. Tuesday, Feb. 2, 8 p.m., Susan B. Harris Chapel. Free admission, call (706) 379-4307 or www.yhc.edu/tickets for details.