

# Towns County Herald

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Wednesday, June 16, 2010

## Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thur: Clouds	85 60
Fri: Clouds	88 63
Sat: Clouds	86 65
Sun: Storms	87 65
Mon: Clouds	86 65
Tue: Sunny	86 66
Wed: Sunny	88 66



Upstream Elevation Predicted 6/16/10	
Lake Chatuge	1925.50
Lake Nottely	1776.30
Blue Ridge	1686.60

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## Chamber Chronicles Page 9A

### Public Hearing

A second public hearing on the Towns County 10-year Comprehensive Plan is scheduled for June 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. in the Towns County Courthouse. The public is invited and encouraged to attend.

### Nursing Home needs help

Chatuge Regional Nursing Home would like to create a memory garden in front of the building for the residents and their families. This is a great opportunity to honor your loved one who is or may have been a resident of the nursing home. The nursing home needs perennial flowers for the project. Anyone who would like to donate a flower, please bring it to the nursing home.

### Food Pantry

The Towns County Food Pantry will hold its free food distribution on Tuesday, June 22. The distribution will be held at the Towns County Food Pantry on Jack Dayton Circle from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. All that are in need of food assistance are encouraged to attend. If you are unable to pick up your food, please contact the Pantry at (706) 896-4783 prior to distribution day so that arrangements can be made to deliver your food. Clients' personal inquiries are kept confidential.

### Driver Safety Course

On Saturday, June 26<sup>th</sup>, AARP will conduct a driver's safety course in the Family Life Center of McConnell Baptist Church, Room 216, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. It's a six-hour course and anyone may attend. The cost is \$12 for AARP members and \$14 for nonmembers. The fees cover the cost of material and may give a discount on your car insurance. Call your automobile insurance company to be sure. To register, call (706) 896-4806.

## Closing for park land set for July 2

By Charles Duncan  
TOWNS COUNTY HERALD  
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Friday, July 2 is an historic occasion in Towns County.

That's when Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall will sign the documents that bring approximately 45 to 55 acres of prime real estate into the county's fold.

It's all about a park for future generations on Mining Gap Trail to preserve as green space and create a county legacy, similar to Meeks Park in neighboring Union County.

The property's closing ceremony is scheduled for 11:30 a.m. July 2, at the County Courthouse.

The property will be developed into athletic fields, walking trails and pavilions, Commissioner Kendall said. Kendall also vows to

use the land for the preservation of county green space.

The park's footprint is about the size of the Towns County Comprehensive School campus, Kendall said.

"We'll have a county meeting to discuss all this and I want to encourage everyone that is interested to attend," he said. "The deed will read that this property will be a park in perpetuity so future leaders cannot change this."

Kendall said that overall development of the property will be delayed because the county doesn't have a 1 cent Special Local Option Sales Tax. However, work would be begun in increments using county equipment and employees similar to work on temporary fields at the Industrial Park.

"We must and will begin now by preserving this prop-



Commissioner Bill Kendall

erty for a much needed park and athletic fields," he said.

Kendall reiterated that any SPLOST referendum benefiting the county is on hold until the Towns County Board of Education's ELOST expires in June 2011. The BOE voted Monday night to let that happen.

The need for park land arose after years of rejection by the Tennessee

Valley Authority and U.S. Forest Service.

The TVA rejected a request by the late Towns County Sole Commissioner Jack Dayton to use TVA property for athletic fields. To date, TVA and the U.S. Forest Service have both denied a similar request by Kendall to utilize some of their property for athletic fields for local youth.

Some 70 percent of Towns County is owned by TVA and the U.S. Forest Service.

Geographical obstacles that include an incredible mountainous landscape leave few options for development of suitable recreation facilities, Kendall said.

"We need it," he said, referencing the property's purchase. "The young people here just don't have adequate facilities for athletics and the older generation doesn't have the walking

trails that other communities around us have.

"We've got to have a park to build and grow our local athletic programs and have a place for the families in our community to enjoy," he said. "The children of this county deserve that much. The residents of Towns County deserve that much."

The bulk of the proceeds from the property's sale to the county by the Johnny Foster Trust go to Young Harris College for scholarships, Kendall said.

"The county money that we spend for that property will go toward future scholarships for our children and our grandchildren," Kendall said.

Kendall vowed not to let the property purchase

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## 'Shooting for a dream'



District 50 State Sen. Jim Butterworth is no slouch with a shotgun. The "Senator" broke the 40-bird mark on Friday during the Second Annual Sheriff's Trap Shoot for the Georgia Sheriff's Association Youth Homes at Owl Creek. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

By Charles Duncan  
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Towns County Sheriff Chris Clinton, Enotah Circuit Assistant District Attorney Jeff Langley and District 50 State Sen. Jim Butterworth broke out the long guns on

Friday. If you're in a jam, take your pick, however, the choice might surprise you if you're using shotguns and shooting at Clay Birds.

Believe it or not, it might be best to take the "Senator."

Sen. Butterworth knocked a little rust off and then knocked down 40 Clay Birds during the Second Annual Sheriff's Trap Shoot for the Georgia Sheriff's Association Youth Homes

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## BOE to let ELOST expire June 2011

By Charles Duncan  
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The Towns County Board of Education voted 3-2 to let the soon-to-expire Educational Local Option Sales Tax die when it ends in mid-2011.

Actually, there's about a year left on the ELOST. However, the BOE decision on Monday night leaves the door wide open for Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall to step in and begin the process of organizing a SPLOST referendum for the county and city taxpayers.

"We'll just have to wait and see what unfolds in the days ahead," Commissioner Kendall said Monday night from his home.

Earlier in the spring, Commissioner Kendall said



Michael Anderson

that the county's pursuit of a SPLOST was on hold until it became clear what the BOE intended to do. Kendall was adamant that he would not call for a SPLOST if it meant an 8 percent tax on local goods.

The Monday night vote changed things however. It began with Chairman Michael Anderson telling those attending that

See ELOST, page 7A

## Cox unveils YHC's vision

By Ethan Burch  
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Young Harris College President Cathy Cox shared her campus vision with the Towns County Historical Society at the Senior Center in Hiawassee on Monday evening.

She spoke about the ongoing expansion of Young Harris College.

Cox, the 21<sup>st</sup> president of Young Harris College, came aboard in 2007. She took on the task of making the idea of expanding the two-year liberal arts school into a four-year college a reality.

"Our ultimate goal is not to expand past 1,200 students with a possibility of 1,500 on the outside," said



Young Harris College President Cathy Cox unveils the campus plan during her meeting with the Towns County Historical Society on Monday at the Senior Center. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

President Cox when speaking on the rapidly growing number of students enrolling at Young Harris College.

With a student to faculty ratio of 12 to 1, the college intends to continue de-

veloping personal relationships between professors and students. Another goal during the college's expansion is to have the campus

See YHC, page 3A

## Early voting continues

By Charles Duncan  
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Early voting began last week and potential voters still have an opportunity to register to vote in the July 20 Primary.

Mid-term elections are underway and voters must choose the next governor, lieutenant governor, their U.S. House representative as well as their state senator in Senate District 50.

Opportunities to cast ballots are plentiful - Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

On Tuesdays, ballots can be cast from 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Towns County voters also can cast ballots on Saturday, from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The last opportunity to vote on Saturday prior to the Primary is July 17, from 9 a.m. to noon.

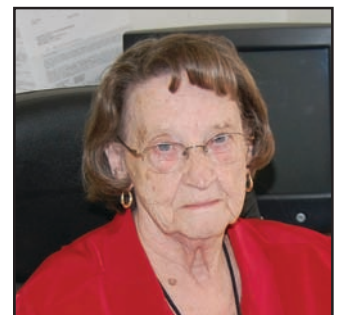
The voting office will close at noon on Friday, July 2, and remain closed on Saturday, July 3 and Monday, July 5, in celebration of the Fourth of July holiday.

By Monday, 92 ballots had been cast early, Towns County Voter Registrar Irma Nichols said.

These high-profile races should bring a lot of first-time voters and voters who haven't cast ballots in a while to the polls.

Early ballots can be cast at the Board of Elections and Registration at 91 Berrong St. in Hiawassee, better known as the Old Rock Jail.

In the only two local



Irma Nichols

Enotah Judicial Circuit Assistant District Attorney Jeff Langley, Republican faces Raymond George in the GOP Primary. In the District 50 State Senate race, Incumbent State Sen. Jim Butterworth faces challenger Terry Rogers of Habersham County.

U.S. Sen. Johnny Isakson is unopposed on the GOP Primary ballot, as is Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle. GOP voters must choose between Jeff Chapman, Nathan Deal, Karen Handel, Eric Johnson, Ray McBerry, John Oxendine and Otis Putnam for in the gubernatorial race.

The Secretary of State race on the GOP ballot consists of Incumbent Brian Kemp and challenger Doug MacGinnitie.

In the Attorney General's race on the GOP

See Early Vote, page 5A

TOWNS COUNTY HERALD



## Vardo to succeed Coach Moss

By Charles Duncan  
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The Towns County Board of Education has hired a new baseball coach for the Towns County Indians.

Without fanfare, pomp or circumstance, the board listened as Schools Superintendent Dr. Richard Behrens recommended the replacement for Shannon Moss, who stepped down at season's end to spend more time with his family.

"I recommend Chris Vardo to become the next head baseball coach of the Towns County Indians," Dr.



Chris Vardo

Behrens told the board.

Vardo, the long-time assistant to former Head Coach Moss, was the consensus choice among board members. The board filled the position left vacant at year's end.

"Coach Vardo has

done a magnificent job as an assistant coach and he has a lot of support from everyone," said Dr. Behrens. "We're excited about next year. It'll be a great transition. I think everybody was rooting for him."

BOE Chair Michael Anderson concurred with Dr. Behrens' evaluation.

"Everyone who spoke with me, wanted (Chris Vardo) as baseball coach," Anderson said.

Towns County High School Principal Roy Perren said Vardo was the

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