

# Towns County Herald

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## Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thur: Rain	82 62
Fri: Rain	82 62
Sat: Rain	83 62
Sun: Clouds	85 63
Mon: Clouds	86 62
Tue: Sunny	88 64
Wed: Rain	88 65



Upstream Elevation Predicted 07/06/11	
Lake Chatuge	1925.01
Lake Nottely	1778.20
Blue Ridge	1678.74

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## July 4th Photos Page 11A

## Mayor Gibby on GMA Board

Young Harris Mayor Andrea Gibby has been elected to serve on the Board of Directors for the Georgia Municipal Association during the GMA annual meeting in Savannah last month.

Mayor Gibby will serve as president of GMA's Second District. The district includes Towns, Union, Lumpkin, White, Habersham, Stephens, Franklin, Banks, Hart, Dawson, Hall and Forsyth counties.

"We are pleased to have Mayor Gibby taking on this leadership position," said GMA Executive Director Jim Higdon. "She's well respected by her colleagues, and I'm sure she'll provide great leadership to the cities in her district."



## Lady Indians

Towns County's 12 and Under Lady Indians softball team is headed to the state playoffs in Chickamauga on Friday, July 8. The Lady Indians need financial support to help pay for essentials like hotel rooms, travel and food. Those interested in pitching in and helping the Lady Indians in their quest for a state softball title in the Dizzy Dean State Tournament may contact Wes Hooper, (706) 896-2600, at Towns County Parks and Recreation for more details on how to help. If we all chip in a little, these girls have a shot to get there and back to get a trophy. Let's help these young ladies get to their destination and show them just exactly what community support really means in Towns County.

## Sixth Taste of Southern Highlands a hit

By Shawn Henrikson  
Towns County Herald  
shawn.tcherald@windstream.net

From crawfish tortellini to filet mignon, patrons of the Sixth Annual Taste of the Southern Highlands tantalized their taste buds last week at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds.

Nineteen local restaurants from North Georgia and Western North Carolina offered a diverse bill of fare for patrons as the fund-raiser for Towns County Family Connection was once again a huge success.

Hiawassee's Café Portofino took Best International Entrée (filet mignon), Best International Dessert (Peaches Foster) and People's Choice as Chef Dylan prepared a few of his specialties for the occasion and was assisted by Kevin Gerace and Reed Shubitowki, also of Café Portofino.

Café Portofino's fare also included crab cakes with a corn cream sauce, Filet Mignon Milanese with black pepper demi-glace and mushroom risotto and peaches foster. Café Portofino's cuisine was such a hit at the event, it was a slam-dunk for the People's Choice Award.

Event-goers cherished an evening of beautiful weather. The gift from Mother Nature was evident as the event was very well attended.

Amy Gibby Rosser, of Towns County Family Connection, mingled with guests, making sure they had everything they needed, as they enjoyed the diverse and delicious offerings from the 19 participating restaurants.

The Winners' List included:

See Taste, page 5A



Hiawassee's Cafe Portofino took home Best International Entree and Best International Dessert at the Sixth Annual Taste of the Southern Highlands at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds. Photo/James Reese

## Fairgrounds' fireworks a blast!

By Charles Duncan  
Towns County Herald  
cduncan.tch@windstream.net

Mother Nature almost provided the only fireworks for the Fourth of July.

Fortunately, lightning, hail and heavy rains gave way to a peaceful skyline and the annual Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds' fireworks display to celebrate America's 235<sup>th</sup> birthday and the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of the Statue of Liberty at Ellis Island.

The fireworks event, more akin to a family reunion than a free public venue, went on without a hitch as hundreds covered the campgrounds to witness first-hand an affair that they've waited a year to see again.

However, at 6:30 p.m. the event was in jeopardy as inclement weather took control of the skies and left Fairgrounds' General Manager Hilda Thomason watching the weather radar.

"We talked with the fireworks folks and they told us that unless there was a serious downpour, that the show could go on," Thomason said. "We kept a close eye on the weather radar and everything worked out for the best."

The echoes of thunder and lightning soon changed to the sound of children playing and laughing; Blue Grass music echoing through the countryside, accompanied by the tantalizing smells of Boston butt roasts simmering on a gas grill.

It was Fourth of July tailgating at its finest at the Fairgrounds as a record crowd turned out to wish America a very Happy Birthday.

The masses came

See Fireworks, page 5A



Even with threatening skies overhead, Towns County celebrated the Fourth of July with passion. Photos/James Reese and Lowell Nicholson

## Meet Melissa Williams on July 18

By Charles Duncan  
Towns County Herald  
cduncan.tch@windstream.net

The Towns County community can get to know Melissa Williams one-on-one on Monday, July 18 at the Towns County Middle/High School Cafeteria.

The Board of Education is hosting a meet and greet affair with Williams, the incoming successor to Dr. Richard Behrens as the chief operating officer of the school system.

The event will take place from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Williams is the first female superintendent in Towns County Schools' history.

Williams, formerly of



Melissa Williams

Jenkins County Schools, was named as the new Towns County Schools superintendent on June 13th, becoming the successor to Dr. Behrens, the retiring Schools Chief.

Williams was one of 34 candidates for the job, and one of eight candidates to make it through to final interviews in front of the BOE.

"I am truly humbled and honored to be given this opportunity to be of service to this school system and community," Williams said.

"I am excited to become a part of this community and I look forward to working with the school board to see good things happen in our schools," she said.

"I look forward to building on the strong legacy established by this system—a legacy that has been enhanced and strengthened by the work of Dr. Behrens."

## White Co. fatal crash not suspect's first

Russum had prior vehicular homicide conviction

By Charles Duncan  
Towns County Herald  
cduncan.tch@windstream.net

The man charged with the first-degree vehicular homicide death of Towns County's William Lester Craig on a White County roadway has been convicted of the same crime before.

Brent Lamar Russum pled guilty to first-degree vehicular homicide in Banks County Superior Court on April 17, 2006 related to the death of 28-year-old Steve Dyer.

Two passengers in the vehicle with Dyer were severely injured in the crash that occurred Nov. 3, 2004 at the Banks-Habersham line, Banks County Superior Court records show.

According to a copy of the Banks County Superior Court October 2005 indictment, Russum was charged in a 10-count indictment presented by former Banks County District Attorney Tim Madison.

Those charges included two counts of first-degree vehicular homicide,



Asbestos Road is marked from a fatal accident probe, a crash that killed Lester Craig. Photo/James Reese

seven counts serious injury by vehicle and one count reckless driving, Banks court records show.

Those court records also show that Russum was driving near the Banks-Habersham line on the wrong side of the road when his vehicle struck the Dyer vehicle.

Court records also indicate that Russum had methamphetamine in his blood stream and that he was not wearing pants at the time

See Fatal Crash, page 11A

## July BBQ a hit again for TC firefighters

Tradition of holiday barbecue continues in Young Harris

By James Reese  
Towns County Herald  
tcherald@windstream.net

There's nothing wrong with a little Firehouse Barbecue.

Members of Towns County Fire and Rescue worked long and hard on Saturday selling Boston Butt roasts slow cooked on a smoker grill. They also had BBQ sandwiches and BBQ plates available for hungry and interested customers.

They sold, sold and sold some more. The annual event was a huge success.

The process was more than a one day event, as firefighters, their family members and local volunteers did more than cook a few Boston Butt roasts.

The prep crew stayed up all night preparing for Saturday's event at Fire Station 2. Though the event lasts only four hours on the Saturday Fourth of July weekend, hours of preparation are in order to pull the annual event off.

Actually, several days of preparation take place before the final product winds up on a Styrofoam plate. Applewood must be cut and dried; smoker grills



Assistant Fire Chief Harold Copeland enjoys a plate of BBQ on Saturday. Photo/James Reese

must be cleaned and burned out. And of course, the homemade barbecue sauce must be prepared and meet the firefighters' taste test.

"A lot of people don't know, but it takes a lot to put one of these deals on," said Towns County Firefighter

See BBQ page 5A

TOWNS COUNTY HERALD

