

Grant helps pay for growth...continued from page 1

tive that is applying for a grant on behalf of numerous county sheriffs to aid their detention centers.

"The grant, like the one we just received, requires no matching funds from the county and, therefore, can only benefit the citizens," Clinton said. "This grant will place solar panels on the detention center in an effort to neutralize growing energy costs. This could potentially save the Sheriff's Office \$80,000 to \$100,000 per year, with no start-up costs.

"These savings could increase services, while providing much needed jobs for local deputies, without in-

creasing the budget," the sheriff said.

Sheriff Clinton said that the need for additional manpower is necessary.

"The Office of Sheriff maintains all its common law duties, while it also carries with it over 640 additional duties added by the State Legislature over the years," Sheriff Clinton said. "This number is continuous, and only seems to grow from year to year.

"Adding to the need is the increased population of Towns County over the last several years," he said. "It's been about 10 years since the Towns County Sheriff's Office first had 10 deputies

assigned to patrol, and there are still 10 assigned to full-time patrol today, despite the population growth.

Currently, the department supplements the small number of road deputies by using part-time employees during peak times, which is cheaper than having full-time employees receive overtime pay, the sheriff said.

"With an ever-increasing call volume and responsibilities, it has become increasingly challenging to meet the needs of the community," Sheriff Clinton said. "Through proper management, we plan to add additional deputies and be able

to better provide a timely response to citizens' calls for assistance."

Sheriff Clinton said that it is his intent to continue to aggressively seek out every opportunity to provide better services for the people of Towns County.

"I plan to do this by continuing to seek out state and federal grant opportunities, community support, hand-me-down support from larger agencies, taking advantage of federal purchasing prices, and all other means at my disposal," he said. "It is my goal to give you the best possible sheriff's office at the lowest cost possible."

\$4,800 raised for Anderson



A benefit for Mitchell Anderson was held on Saturday at the Towns County School Lunchroom.

Anderson, a life-long resident of Hiawassee, is the son of Wayne and Fannie Anderson and grandson of the Late Ilah Taylor Anderson. He was recently diagnosed with esophagus cancer and will incur large medical bills. Funds collected during the event, which featured door prizes, will help defer those costs. The event included a benefit singing, cake walks, a raffle and an auction. A spaghetti supper was served. The family would like to express its gratitude to all the merchants who donated items for Mitchell's benefit. The family would also like to thank everyone who attended and gave of their time and money. May the Lord bless you 10 fold in all that you gave. Your support has meant a great deal in our time of need. If there is anything we can do to help anyone do not hesitate to call upon us. Thanks again and may God pour Blessings upon you from Mitchell, Karen, Mikey, and all the rest of the Anderson family.

Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Tax break in January...continued from page 1

assessment to be reduced, stay the same, but limits any increase to no more than 3 percent," he said. "Again this made Towns County the only county in the state that has this kind of protection against sudden large tax assessments on their homes."

The successful tax breaks give realtors and the Towns County Real Estate market a positive selling point for prospective home buyers looking to relocate in the North Georgia Mountains.

"Being the only county

that grants these two tax protections on their home, along with levying the lowest total tax mills in the state, gives us a positive edge," Kendall said. The tax advantages in Towns County not only protect the homeowner from high taxes on their home, it also improves the value of their home by enhancing the home buyers market in Towns County.

"It also will have a positive impact for those with a home for sale and for the home construction industry and workers," Kendall said.

In other final totals, Mayor Barbara Mathis' final margin of victory was 60.96 percent as she returned to office. Mathis defeated political newcomer Chris Swett 178-114.

In the city council races, Stephen Smith became a first-time elected official with a 184-91 victory over incumbent Annie Johnson.

Incumbent Junior Chastain, who had no opposition, scored a 202-1 win. There was one write-in vote.

Butterworth: lower taxes will offer jobs, stimulus

the fact that businesses are attracted to communities where taxes are low. Towns County, which has one of the lowest tax millage rates in the state at slightly more than 10 combines tax mills is a prime example.

"Georgia has one of the lowest corporate income tax rates, ranking 42nd in the nation according to Georgia State University's Fiscal Research Center," Sen. Butterworth said. "Georgia also ranks 35th in the nation on total per person tax burden, making jobs more attractive. By maintaining these low taxes, Georgia is attracting companies, growing jobs and turning around our economy.

Sen. Butterworth estimates that over the next five years, Georgia should see growth of more than 22,000 jobs and investments more than \$560 million from companies relocating to Georgia.

He cites several recent examples:

- Currahee Waste Products, Toccoa, 10 jobs;

- RITZ Instrument Transformers, Hartwell, 50 jobs and \$3 million;

- Team Metal Finishing, Toccoa, 12 jobs and \$2 million investment;

- Mitsubishi Power Systems, Savannah, 500 jobs and \$325 million;

- Belgian flooring manufacturer IVC Group, 115 jobs and \$70 million, the company's first U.S. plant, will locate in Dalton;

- Cancer Treatment Centers of America, Newnan, cancer treatment hospital, 500 jobs and \$150 million;

- Chicken of the Sea International domestic canning operation, Lyons, 200 jobs and \$20 million;

- Fortune 500 processing firm First Data Corp. plans to relocate its global headquarters to Atlanta, 1,000 employees over the next three years;

- Universal Maintenance, Toccoa, 15 jobs;

The most recent example to come to fruition is the new Kia plant in West Point, where the first car produced in the

U.S. will roll off the assembly line on Nov. 16.

"Kia built its first U.S. manufacturing plant at a cost of \$1 billion and brought 1,200 much-needed jobs to the region and state," Butterworth said. "In addition, auto parts suppliers added approximately 3,000 jobs. Georgia Tech estimates that this plant will bring nearly 20,000 new jobs by 2012."

In Towns County, both city and county governments have signed off on plans for a new Lowe's Home Improvement Center that is expected to bring 75 new jobs to Towns County. The city of Hiawassee lifted its moratorium on sewer hookups to provide the 1,100 gallons per day in sewer needed for the project.

The home improvement retail giant recently told Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall and Hiawassee Mayor Barbara Mathis that it has put construction plans on hold for the time being.

"Lowe's has not said

that they are pulling out of Towns County," Commissioner Kendall said. "All they've told us is that the project is on hold. We still fully believe that Lowe's will build here in the near future."

Mayor Mathis agreed.

"It would not be correct to read anything else into Lowe's decision to put the project on hold," Mayor Mathis said. "Just because the project is on hold doesn't mean it's not going to happen."

Businesses are not the only ones who have noticed that Georgia is a business and job friendly state. In its annual grading of state business climates, financial news network CNBC ranked Georgia's workforce the best in the nation, Sen. Butterworth said.

"In addition to workforce, Georgia earned high scores in the cost of living and business friendly categories," Sen. Butterworth said. "Georgia's overall ranking in the 2009 Cost of Doing Business survey was 10th in the nation.

"Governing Magazine named Georgia one of the best managed states in the U.S. Our state received high scores in managing for performance, the budget process and project monitoring," he said. "Georgia's spending per capita ranks among the lowest in the nation."

Sen. Butterworth reiterates that federal stimulus dollars and bailouts from Washington are not bringing companies and jobs to Georgia. He said it's important for local governments such as Towns County, Hiawassee and the city of Young Harris to keep taxes low and avoid scaring new business to other parts of the country.

"Growing the private sector and getting Georgians back to work is the only formula for economic success," he said. "We must keep taxes, the cost of doing business, and regulatory burdens low. Georgia is on the brink of substantial job growth and company investment."