

Towns County Herald

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Wednesday, December 15, 2010

Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thur: Showers	46 32
Fri: Showers	46 23
Sat: Showers	42 22
Sun: Clouds	46 23
Mon: Snow	46 26
Tue: Snow	49 31
Wed: Snow	47 29



Upstream Elevation Predicted 12/15/10	
Lake Chatuge	1918.71
Lake Nottely	1763.09
Blue Ridge	1624.44

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BOE meeting

The Towns County Board of Education canceled Monday night's board meeting due to inclement weather. That meeting has been rescheduled to Thursday at 7 p.m. in the school's Auditorium, Superintendent Dr. Richard Behrens said.

Dr. Behrens apologized for the inconvenience, but said that safety was a priority over meeting schedules.

"It's bad weather out there and we don't want anyone to miss the meeting because they can't get there," he said. "We also don't want anyone to try to get there in bad weather. Better safe than sorry."

Food Pantry

The Towns County Food Pantry will hold its free food distribution on Tuesday, Dec. 21. 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 assistance are encouraged to attend. If you are unable to pick up your food, please call (706) 896-4783 for more details prior to distribution day. This allows us to make arrangements to deliver food to you. All clients and inquiries are kept confidential.

Anderson Music Hall

Bill Medley and Charlie Daniels are the latest acts to commit to perform at Anderson Music Hall.

Medley will perform Jan. 22 and Daniels is scheduled for March 19, 2011.

Tickets for the Medley concert go on sale Friday; tickets for the Charlie Daniels concert go on sale Feb. 4th.

Tickets for each concert are \$35 plus \$2 handling for Level 1 seating and \$25 plus \$2 handling for Level 2 seating.

Call the Fairgrounds at (706) 896-4191 for more details.

Schools closed, side roads unsafe; cold sets in

By Charles Duncan
Towns County Herald
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It could be Thursday before freezing temperatures subside in Northeast Georgia.

An Arctic blast continued early this week as cold air and moisture filled the mountain atmosphere. That combination doesn't promise good news; rather, it means frozen precipitation.

The mercury hit a real feel of 6 degrees in Hiawassee on Monday morning as Northeast Georgia felt Mother Nature's wrath. Snow flurries persisted throughout the day as the region experienced the coldest autumn temperatures in recent memory. Brutal winds with gusts up to 30 mph made 15-degree temperatures on Monday morning feel like zero.

They felt like below zero on Tuesday as the mercury dipped to 4 degrees.

Georgia Department of Transportation road crews continue to work around the clock to keep local roads passable.

Dr. Richard Behrens, Towns County Schools Superintendent, called off classes for Monday and Tuesday for Towns County students.

"It's pretty bad out there, especially on the secondary roads," he said. "The main thoroughfares are in good shape, but we have to weigh the conditions on the secondary roads in making a decision of whether to cancel school."

Bottom line: no place felt the wrath of Mother Nature more than Towns County as chilling rain turned to snow on Sunday and brought local traffic to a grinding halt on frozen roadways.



The thermometer tells the story along with the snow flakes. Photo/Charles Duncan

More often than not, that halt was on a steep grade and caused motorists traveling in the rear to slip and slide in the snow covered roads and find the ditch.

It wasn't a pretty site on Bell Creek Road as the

hill that crests at Big Al's Pizza was a chore and a half even for four-wheel drive vehicles.

The moment the lead car began to skid, other vehicles behind that car likewise began to spin their wheels to no avail.

"When you're climbing a hill on slippery roads you don't let off the gas," said Hiawassee City Police Officer James Harkins. "You have to take a slow,

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CB&T foots the bill at Mamasu's



CB&T's Cindy Hyatt takes orders on Friday at Mamasu's Brick Oven Pizza. Photo/James Reese

By Charles Duncan
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Community Bank & Trust continued to make a local impact on the Towns County community on Friday.

For an hour and a half, lunch was on CB&T at Mamasu's Brick Oven Pizza.

Whether it was The Works (18-inch loaded pizza), a burger, calzone or a personal pan size pizza, the tab went to CB&T.

CB&T's Cindy Hyatt waited tables, took food orders and worked the cash register.

She worked one of the

busiest shifts of the work week: lunch on Friday.

Bill Pierson of ReMax Hiawassee Realty was appreciative.

"Hey, someone said free food and I'm here," he said. "This is great."

See CB&T, page 2A

City Council finalizes Capital Projects list

By James Reese
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The city of Hiawassee has approved its five-year Capital Projects List and its proposed Priority Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax list.

The Capital Projects List is estimated at \$5.285 million and includes doubling the city's water treatment plant's withdrawal permit and increasing the wastewater treatment plant's discharge permit to 500,000 gallons per day.

The five-year Capital Projects List also includes \$200,000 for a Hiawassee Mayor's Park, the purchase of a police station for Hiawassee Police Department, the purchase of a new patrol vehicle, increasing water storage capacity and increase the number of city fire hydrants.



Mayor Barbara Mathis

The SPLOST funding list by priority includes \$1.8 million from Towns County to pay for the additional 200,000 gallons per day of wastewater treatment capacity.

The "high" priority items include replacing or

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BOE achieves distinguished status

By Charles Duncan
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The Towns County Board of Education has achieved a rare distinction.

The five-member BOE, Michael Anderson, Emily Phillips, Donna Hedden, Larry Kimsey and Bob Gibby have become one of 10 school boards statewide to achieve the Georgia School Boards Association Board of Distinction.

The local BOE received the award at the annual association conference held Dec. 3-4 in Atlanta.

Towns County Schools Superintendent Dr. Richard Behrens said the award is given to school boards that achieve a list of standards that include leadership develop-



BOE members Donna Hedden, Emily Phillips, Bob Gibby, Michael Anderson, Larry Kimsey and Dr. Richard Behrens in Atlanta at the GSBA annual conference.

ment within the school system, implementing a strategic plan, reaching district goals and integrating technology.

"This is a process that has taken us several years

to achieve," Dr. Behrens said. "It says a lot for a small school system. It's an honor to be recognized by

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Kendall uses reserves to pay County jail off

By Charles Duncan
TOWNS COUNTY HERALD
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The financial return on Towns County's reserve funds has prompted Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall to pay off the existing debt on the county's detention center.

The interest return on the county's reserve funds is less than 1 percent while the interest rate on the jail debt is 5.57 percent.

Commissioner Kendall says it's a no brainer that taxpayers could save thousands by using a portion of the reserve funds to pay off the jail debt.

The county has four remaining lease purchase payments of \$122,119.71, totaling \$488,478.84, the commissioner said.

"The early payoff amount is \$466,695.89," Commissioner Kendall said. "That will result in taxpayers saving thousands of dollars."

Commissioner Kendall said today's financial situation is totally reversed from the situation of the 1970s.

"At that time while serving as School Superintendent and constructing the consolidated Towns County Comprehensive School Complex, the citizens approved a \$690,000 General Obligation Bond at 5 percent for 30 years," Commissioner Kendall said. Abandoned school property was sold for



Commissioner Bill Kendall

less than half the amount of the bonds which then Superintendent Kendall placed in a bond sinking fund drawing about 12 percent interest.

"This allowed the school bond tax to be totally eliminated and the school bonds paid off over the 30-year life of the bond issue with the excess interest the bond sinking funds were drawing above the interest rate amount of the bonds," Commissioner Kendall said.

The jail was built in 2000 for a total cost of principal and interest pay back of \$3,515,357 through a

See Jail Debt, page 10A

TOWNS COUNTY HERALD



Gatlins shine at Music Hall



The Gatlin Brothers share a moment of levity at Anderson Music Hall on Saturday night. The Brothers thrilled the partisan Country Music crowd. Photo/James Reese

By James Reese
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Larry Gatlin and his brothers Steve and Rudy took center stage at the Anderson Music Hall Saturday night.

It was the annual Christmas Show at The Hall. However, this show had an added twist. It wasn't just an Christmas songs the Gatlins were singing.

The partisan Gatlin crowd was brought to its feet as the brothers sang the songs that made them famous.

First, they sang their

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