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and resulted in him helping countless teenagers by counseling and leading them in the right direction instead of locking them up for some minor run in with the law," Commissioner Kendall said.

Former long-time Towns County Sheriff Rudy Roach agreed.

"Everett cared for people," Roach said. "He cared about teenagers, children and the elderly. He loved to make sure that Christmas was bright for our young people and that their stockings were filled.

"He helped young people get over Fool's Hill without writing them tickets and destroying their lives before they even got started," Roach said. "It was important for him to teach them right from wrong — he

would rather correct them, than bust them."

On a personal note, Roach said that Arrowood enjoyed life. As a law enforcement officer, Arrowood always had your back, he said.

"We were in several tight situations where if you blinked, circumstances would have turned out to be different," Roach said. "We were able to diffuse situations and come out with positive circumstances. Everett would stay with you until we'd seen everything through. He had your back."

Towns County Sheriff Chris Clinton said Arrowood will be remembered as a pillar of the community.

"Everett was a hard worker, he led by example," Sheriff Clinton said. "He looked after the young

people. He didn't spin his wheels. He was always at the ballgames, always pulling for the kids.

"He was always there," Sheriff Clinton said. "Folks will miss him; he was always a fair and honest fellow. He looked after folks and made sure that they didn't do without."

Arrowood died in his sleep. That's exactly how he described how he wanted to go when his time came, Roach said.

"He said last week that when his time had come that he wanted it to be quick," Roach said. "He got his wish. We'll miss him."

Funeral arrangements for Arrowood were not complete at press time. Banister Funeral Home has charge of the arrangements.

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left over will be used to roll back taxes.

County projects include parks and recreation improvements that include acquisition, construction and equipping a multi-purpose recreational and community building. It also includes money for roads and bridges improvements and may include pedestrian cross walks, parking and capital equipment.

Fire Department improvements also are on the list of capital outlay projects to include vehicles, equipment facilities and fire hydrants.

Other projects include construction and improvements at public libraries, water and sewer improvements, including solid waste,

storm water management and accompanying equipment.

Public safety vehicles and equipment including ambulances also are high on the list of capital projects. The SPLOST also includes funds for industrial and economic development.

"This means road improvements, ambulances, public safety vehicles, water and sewer and economic development," Commissioner Kendall said. "We've got \$100,000 in matching money for \$2 million in grants for our libraries.

"I want to thank the voters for showing just how much Towns County means to them," Commissioner Kendall said. "You wouldn't think 90 percent of the

people who cast ballots would say 'yes' to a tax. But, they know what that money will be used for."

Grover Garrett, who co-chairs the county's Comprehensive Planning Committee said a 'yes' vote was duly warranted.

"Forty percent of our capital projects will be paid for by people just coming to visit Towns County," he said. "That's something we just couldn't pass up."

Towns County Sheriff Chris Clinton said the approved SPLOST really means something to the people who call Towns County home.

"This is a huge step forward for Towns County," he said. "It will really make a difference."

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The Goats filmed on Lake Chatuge.

Sales tax dollars were up almost in six figures thanks to the thousands of visitors that frequented Hiawassee and Towns County during the Tourism season.

Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall said that Hiawassee and Towns County did itself proud during the Shriners' Convention in June.

"I know we've got a three-year deal with the Shriners, but I'm hoping we get to keep them for a very long time," he said. "They meant a lot to this community the three days they were here."

Restaurants were full, there were heads in every bed in the local hotels and the local merchants were smiling like they haven't smiled in quite some time.

"This economic recession has hurt our local businesses something fierce," Commissioner Kendall said. "Having the Shriners in town for three days meant the

world to them."

Ray Skiles, Potentate of Georgia's Yaarab Shrine said he was excited about the three-year commitment that the Shriners have made in Towns County.

"We have spent the last 22-plus years in Helen and Helen is a great little city," he said. "We thought Hiawassee could offer us a whole lot more so we made a three-year commitment.

"I'll tell you what, the city of Hiawassee and Towns County couldn't have been more accommodating," he said. "We bring a crowd, they come in all shapes and sizes, but in the end, we all work very, very diligently in support of our hospitals.

"Hiawassee has given us the opportunity of a new beginning," he said. "And that's what it's all about. We have not heard anything negative about this convention, everything has been positive."

The same has been said about the local experience by the thousands of

Georgia State Harley Owners Group and the rally they experienced here.

They voted to come back to Towns County in 2012. It was a home away from home for them.

Things could be bigger and better in 2012 as new Towns County Chamber President Candace Lee gets settled into her new job. She's upped chamber membership and she's worked really hard to make an impact on tourism.

Two banks did close in Hiawassee in 2011: Community Bank & Trust and Stephens Federal. The reason: the customer base just wasn't up to corporate standards.

The community has absorbed those jobs that were lost, keeping those local banking faces still local.

Oh, and Bank of Hiawassee has a new name: Citizens South Bank.

Here's hoping 2012 will be another beneficial year for tourism and local business in Towns County.



Tourism is alive and well in Towns County. Photos/Lowell Nicholson

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School.

In 2006, Williams became the director of Curriculum, Professional Development, and Federal Programs director at Jenkins County Schools. In 2008, she was named Jenkins County Schools Superintendent.

In June 2011, Williams chose Towns County Schools as her destination of choice to serve as chief of operations.

By November, Williams went public with plans for implementing a new life skills-based instruction for student's kindergarten through 12th grade.

"Georgia has joined with 44 other states to standardize a core curriculum framework that will provide consistent, rigorous knowledge of skills that will prepare all of our students, kindergarten through 12th grade for college and the 21st Century workplace," Williams said.

"It shifts from a curriculum that was an inch deep to a mile long, to something that was a little more substantial and intact, short, compact and goes into much more detail," she said. "Georgia has taken their Georgia Performance Standard to other states; we are building a new national curriculum."

Williams said Towns County will begin introducing the new curriculum next year in math and English Language Arts.

"We will eventually add science and social studies," she said. "The focus of this new curriculum is to add a high level of thinking skills for our students."

It also is to give more application or practical basis, she said.

"With our new curriculum, we'll be showing real life applications for our

students — the thought processes are not too abstract, they're more concrete for them," Williams said.

Williams was the new face at Towns County Schools but there were other changes. Dr. Sandra Page succeeded Don Dermody as principal at Towns County Elementary after the latter announced his retirement. Page, who was TCES Assistant Principal, was joined in the TCES administration by Stephanie Moss, who became Assistant Principal.

System-wide achievements included a Platinum Honor at Towns County High School and an eighth consecutive year of Adequate Yearly Progress in the No Child Left Behind federal initiative.

Towns County Middle School led the state in four categories in annual CRCT testing.

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different. He finished second in a five-person race to fill the unexpired term of Jim Butterworth in State Senate's 50th District seat.

Rick Austin, a Demorest Republican, was the front runner on election night, but he didn't earn enough votes to put Wilkinson away. The two squared off in a Dec. 6th runoff election.

Wilkinson, R-Toccoa, took 59 percent of the eight-county vote to win the seat.

He was sworn in on Dec. 15th at the State Capitol in Atlanta.

On Dec. 19th, Wilkinson was appointed to several committees for the 2011-2012 legislative term by the Senate Committee on Assignments.

Sen. Wilkinson will serve as Secretary of the Agriculture Committee and also will sit on the Education, Health and Human Services and Economic Development Committees.

The 153rd Legislative Session of the Georgia General Assembly convenes Jan. 9 at the State Capitol.

As Executive Director of Georgia's Future Farmers of America, Sen.

Wilkinson worked for 30 years preparing young leaders to grow jobs in Georgia. He holds a bachelor's degree in agriculture and a master's degree in education, both from the University of Georgia in Athens.

"I am overly pleased at my new committee assignments," Sen. Wilkinson said.

"I pledge to use my backgrounds in agriculture and education to further the needs of my constituents and the needs of all Georgians as we move to make this great state even better."

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Leonard, who died on Monday, Oct. 31, was such a good soul. He is truly missed.

H.D. "Dick" Paris was an astute businessman, civic leader, generous to a fault, and an incredible Georgia Bulldog fan.

Dick Paris died on Tuesday, Nov. 22 at his home. Mr. Paris loved sports, especially, the Georgia Bulldogs' football team. At the time of his passing, Mr. Paris was the oldest living alumni of the University of Georgia in Athens.

Mr. Paris was a cornerstone of the Towns County community. A year after having served three years in the European Theater of World War II, Mr. Paris moved to Hiawassee and started a business that still lasts today, Hiawassee Hardware Company.

Mr. Paris rolled up his sleeves once he arrived here in Hiawassee in 1947. He was elected mayor of Hiawassee in 1951.

A tireless worker, Mr. Paris focused his efforts on Hiawassee Hardware, the Bank of Hiawassee, the city of Hiawassee and later the Georgia Mountain Fair. He is best remembered for his generosity throughout the community.

We surely do miss Mr. Paris.

Henry Hedden was a beloved educator, adminis-



Leonard McConnell

trator and long-time Towns County resident.

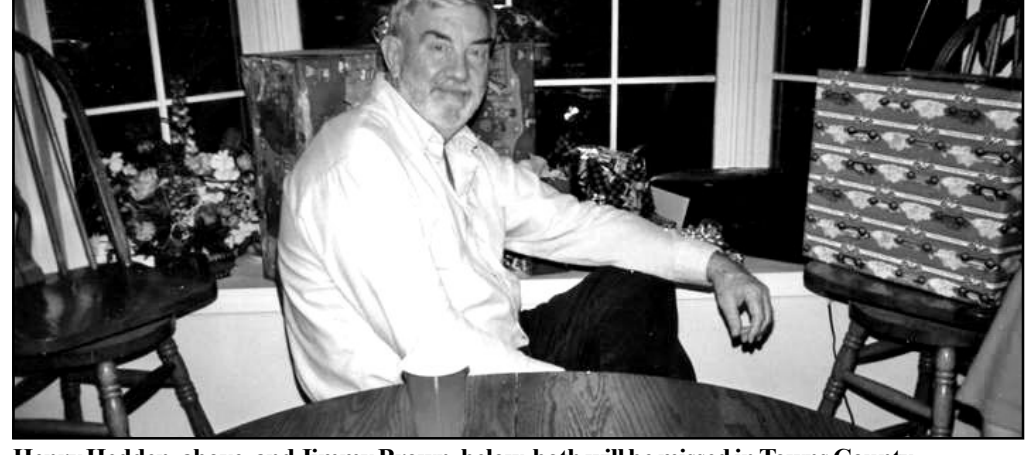
He was one of seven Towns County men who enlisted in the United States Army in 1940 and were present during one of the most violent days in our nation's history.

Hedden was a survivor of the Japanese sneak attack on Pearl Harbor, Dec. 7, 1941.

On Monday, Dec. 5, two days before the 70th Anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, Hedden died at Chatuge Regional Nursing Home in Hiawassee. His health had been declining for a while. He was 89 years old.

Last week, Henry Hedden was honored as one of ABC News' 11 heroes of 2011.

Henry was a good man, we mourn his passing. We heard a bell this week-



Henry Hedden, above, and Jimmy Brown, below, both will be missed in Towns County.