

Towns County Herald

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Wednesday, March 8, 2023

False alarm triggers hard lockdown at schools

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

Accidental activation of the new security app in place at Towns County Schools led to a campuswide lockdown on Thursday, March 2, providing a useful – if inadvertent – test case of the new protocol adopted last semester.

“We had an accidental hard lockdown at school this morning through our new Centigex Alert System,” Superintendent Dr. Darren Berrong said Thursday. “The lockdown was accidentally initiated on a staff member’s phone as they were setting up the app.

“They were not familiar with the interface, so when they thought they were going through an activation of the app, they were actually activating a lockdown.”

Once set up, the Centigex Alert System works with staff member name badges via a button that, when pressed three times, lets school administrators know that a staff member needs help in the classroom. Continuously pressing the button alerts 911.

“On a positive note,” Berrong said, “our School Resource Officer and a county deputy were at the scene with-

in 30 seconds.”

Sheriff Ken Henderson stated that he was pleased with his office’s quick response to the alarm.

“This is a clear example that if an active shooter situation were to ever occur, (our) deputies will not hesitate to head to the threat immediately,” Henderson said, “whether it be a real or false alarm.

“This was good training for everyone involved with the new security app and proves that (we are) working together with School Resource Officers, deputies and Towns County Schools Administration to keep our children safe.”



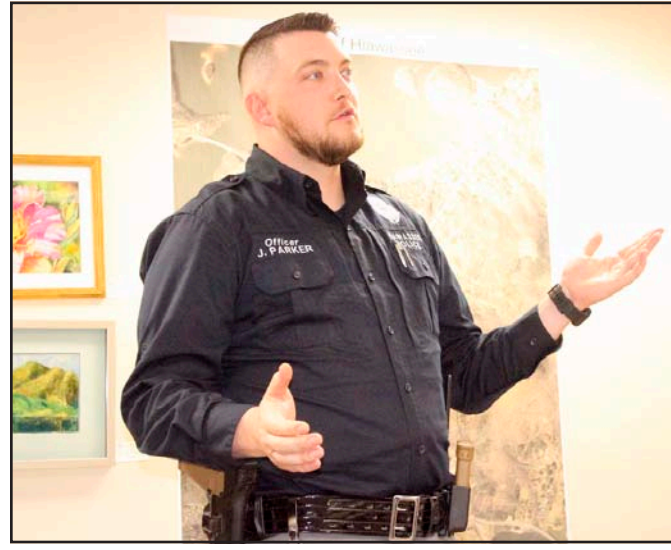
Council talks audit, insurance and interagency dispute

By Brittany Holbrooks
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Hiwassee City Council and Mayor Liz Ordiales held their monthly work session on Feb. 27 to discuss, among other topics, the results of the city’s audit analysis, health insurance for city employees, and updates from the Hiwassee Police Department.

Police Chief Jeremy Parker highlighted recent criminal activity, including the vehicle break-in incident at the hospital and the chase of a suspect from Hiwassee to Blairsville, and council members commended his department for doing a good job in the city.

“There’s been a lot of controversy here – there was a lot of controversy here before I got here,” Parker said, alluding to the ongoing beef between HPD and the Towns County Sheriff’s Office. “That’s not



Hiwassee Police Chief Jeremy Parker in a recent Hiwassee City Council work session. Photo by Brittany Holbrooks

what I’m here for. I’m here to run the Hiwassee Police Department and make sure the officers are safe and that they’re taken care of.

“And any relationships

that we can build around us, I am more than willing to build and make those right. Again, all I’m doing is putting the facts out there. In the paper,

See City Council Meeting, Page 8A

Towns County Fire Rescue quickly knocks down blaze



This was the dramatic scene Towns County Firefighters encountered as they rolled up to a home off Lakeview Acres the evening of Valentine’s Day.

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

The men and women of the Towns County Fire Department understand that there’s no such thing as a convenient emergency. Come rain or shine, dinner or bedtime, holiday or weekend, hell or high water, firefighters drop what they’re doing to answer the call.

And last month, a call came shortly after 8 p.m. on Feb. 14 – the official day of love – alerting 911 that a home was burning on Lakeview Acres, just off Bell Creek Road in Hiwassee.

The resident had been

taking a shower while awaiting company. After hopping out, he heard some noises coming from inside his house. He thought it was the visitor he’d been expecting, but when he opened his bathroom door, he discovered fire raging throughout the home.

As it turned out, while he was readying to receive his guest, particularly gusty winds had knocked over a charcoal grill he’d been using on his porch, spilling smoldering embers that quickly set the home on fire, undoubtedly exacerbated by wind conditions.

The resident had just enough time to grab his dog and escape safely through the base-

ment of the home, according to Fire Chief Harold Copeland.

When firefighters rolled up, the home was dramatically aflame, with fire licking out of every opening in the upper floor of the house.

Copeland was particularly proud of his team’s response, as firefighters knocked the blaze down in under an hour, stopping the structure from collapsing in on itself and preventing the fire from possibly spreading onto nearby properties.

“I’ve got the best volunteer/combination fire department in the state of Georgia, and maybe in the South,”

See Valentine’s Day Fire, Page 8A

Lee receives Georgia ACVB Lifetime Membership Award

News Special
Towns County Herald

The Georgia Association of Convention & Visitors Bureau presented Candace Lee with a Lifetime Membership Award at the organization’s Annual Conference on Feb. 14 in Albany, Georgia.

Lee served as president of the Towns County/Lake Chatuge Chamber of Commerce from 2011-2022, plus five years in a prior term, totaling 16 years devoted to tourism and economic development.

She was an invaluable asset to the North Georgia Mountains, having been a longtime fixture in the local landscape. Lee had her finger on the pulse of the entire region, and no one was better informed than her.

Friends, family, colleagues and newcomers alike valued her as an inexhaust-

ible source of information; she could easily conjure up old dates and names from memory while having electronic files ready at hand if ever needed.

It’s difficult to imagine the area and tourism industry without Lee’s contributions because of how deeply entrenched she was in its inner workings.

Lee retired from the chamber world in the summer of 2022 and has since been enjoying a slower paced life in a new home with a new best friend, a puppy named Riley.

Over the course of her career, she served as a board member of the Georgia Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives between 2019 and 2020; was a board member of Lake Chatuge Rotary for many years and received the Rotarian of the Year Award; and sat on the board of the Northeast Georgia Mountains Travel Association for at



Candace Lee

least 10 years.

She was honored locally for achieving the GACVB Lifetime Membership Award in a recent meeting of the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce.

Congratulations to Candace Lee on this honor and award.

TCSO reports drug convictions in most recent court term

News Special
Towns County Herald

As the Towns County Sheriff’s Office continues its Drug Suppression Initiatives, the Enotah Judicial Circuit District Attorney’s Office is busy prosecuting offenders.

As a result, the following individuals have been convicted and sentenced during the January 2023 term:

Kevin Joseph Sears, 66, of Young Harris: sale of methamphetamine, 20 years to serve five in confinement, \$5,000 fine; sale of meth, 20 years to serve five concurrent with



above sentence; possession with intent to distribute meth, 20 years to serve five concurrent with above sentence; pos-

session of meth, three years concurrent with above.

Johnathan Clyde Dills, 41, of Young Harris: possession of a Schedule II controlled substance, three years to serve 120-160 days (deemed served), with the balance to be served on probation, and a \$2,500 fine; possession of drug-related objects, 12 months consecutive to above sentence.

Bryson Daniel Wood, 19, of Cleveland, Georgia: violation of Georgia Controlled Substances Act, three years of probation, \$1,250 fine.

See Drug Convictions, Page 8A

Satterfield’s legacy rooted in service, community giving

By Brittany Holbrooks
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

It’s hard to overstate just how much Joe Satterfield meant to the people of the North Georgia Mountains.

As a husband, he was incredibly loving. As a father, he was a strong role model. To his coworkers and employees, he was a selfless source of inspiration. And for the community, he helped to usher in a new era of growth and communication leading Blue Ridge Mountain EMC.

To all, Satterfield was a man of honor, and following a battle with cancer that ultimately took his life on Jan. 29, at the age of 75, he left behind a legacy that will be cherished by everyone who knew him.

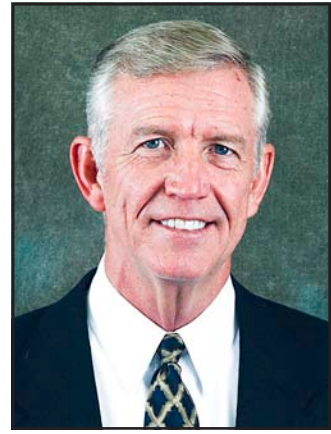
Roy “Joe” Gilbert Satter-

field Jr. was born in Porterdale, down in Newton County about 36 miles east of Atlanta. He was a precocious young man who met the love of his life, Betty, on a blind date when the two were just a week shy of their senior year in high school.

“We were both 17. It wasn’t love at first sight, but it wasn’t long after that,” Betty recalled.

The couple dated for two years before deciding to tie the knot in December of 1967, and on July 3, 1968, they got married. Their honeymoon didn’t last long, however, because by July 23, Satterfield was in Vietnam with the U.S. Army.

While serving his country, he earned the rank of sergeant working with mortars in the Fourth Infantry Division. A year and a day later, on July 24,



Joe Satterfield

1969, Satterfield returned to the U.S., and the couple settled into their new home in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

He completed his military service at Colorado’s Fort

See Satterfield Legacy, Page 7A

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Lake Levels

Blue Ridge 1,675.10
Chatuge 1,918.63
Nottely 1,762.74

BASEBALL

3/9 vs. Hiwassee Dam
JV 4 PM Varsity 6 PM

GA Legislature Updates See page 3A

County Birthday Celebrations See page 8B

STAR Student/Teacher Kudos See page 7A

The support you need for your next big dream.

Talk to us today about your loan and line of credit options.

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This is not a commitment to lend. Normal credit criteria apply.

Matt Miller
706-435-1106

HIWASSEE MAIN OFFICE
NMLS# 744609

Satterfield Legacy ...from Page 1A

Carson before being discharged in 1970, at which point the Satterfields returned to Georgia and Joe began his electrical career at Snapping Shoals EMC southeast of Atlanta.

In Covington, he started with reading meters, then gradually moved up to an office job. The family moved back West for a spell, where Joe unlocked another door by becoming an office manager at Union Rural Electric Association in Brighton, Colorado.

It wasn't until 1984, when the Satterfields' daughter Joy was in sixth grade and son Justin was 5 months old, that they moved to the mountains of North Georgia and Joe got his start at Blue Ridge Mountain EMC.

"Jackie Sellers, who was the manager at Blue Ridge, called Joe and told him he was getting ready to leave there and wanted to see if he was interested in coming here for the manager's job," explained Betty.

With the knowledge he'd gained at Union REA in Brighton, Satterfield took on the job as the General Manager at the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC, which would become his area claim to fame – and road to valuable relationships – for more than two decades.

"He very quickly came to know almost everybody in the company in a lot of different ways," remembers Larry Kernea, who worked for Satterfield for 10 years. Even now, at Murphy Power, Kernea carries the lessons and values instilled in him by his old boss.

"You could not work harder," Kernea said of his former employer's work ethic, adding, with a humble chuckle, "It took a long time for me to understand I couldn't outwork Joe Satterfield."

Betty and Kernea – and indeed, the other workers at BRMEMC – knew how eagerly Satterfield approached his job; in fact, Betty recalls the time that Satterfield disclosed that if he "didn't get to work before everyone else, it was hard to get anything done."

In over 25 years, Betty can't remember ever hearing her husband say he didn't want to go to work. His dedication to his employees and to his duties was simply immense. Satterfield was known to change tires, repair diesel trucks, and even help paint when the need arose.

The deployment of fiber-optic technology in Union County can also be attributed to Satterfield. Justin Satterfield, owner of DMI Collision and Custom Body Shop, recounted the important professional relationships his father fostered to serve his community.

"At the time, the (Tennessee Valley Authority) had only three board members, and they were appointed by the President of the United States," Justin said. "He was very close with that bunch in getting the grants and all the stuff setup for the high-speed internet."

And thanks to the connections he forged with TVA, Satterfield was also able to convince the federally owned agency to allow higher summer water levels in Lake Nottely from the 1980s onward, which greatly benefited both local enjoyment and economic development.

Another aspect of Satterfield's legacy is the care he took in making time for his "work family" and the power company's customers.

For example, during the infamous Blizzard of '93, he left home for five straight days and stayed at the office, working tirelessly to restore power despite an outpouring of angry calls and even death threats. And he always made sure the people under him worked hard, too.

"He expected quite a lot from you, but he let you know that he knew you could do good work for him," Kernea said.

The EMC echoed this sentiment in an official post on the co-op's Facebook page after his passing:

"Under Mr. Satterfield's visionary leadership, BRMEMC grew its electric distribution system, its membership and its ancillary service offerings. Most notably, Mr. Satterfield recognized BRMEMC's critical role in regional economic development and laid the foundation on which BRMEMC built its fiber-optic broadband network in our rural mountain counties."

Of course, Satterfield's community contributions extended beyond his professional

life. Along with Jim McAfee, he was selected from the Chamber of Commerce to organize the Blairsville Scottish Festival and Highland Games in the early 2000s, and for 15 years, he volunteered at the event despite a lack of Highland ancestry.

"Joe was one who would always work with the community to do anything he could to bring in tourism or something of that sort," Betty said. "That was just the way he was. He liked doing things like that that would help the community."

In furtherance of this civic-mindedness, Satterfield also joined forces with Jimmy Talent years back to start the Blairsville Rotary Club, which to date has volunteered countless hours of community service to projects benefiting the area.

And the list goes on: Satterfield spent nine years on the North Georgia Technical College Board and participated in the Young Harris College Advisory Board; served as president of the National Rural Electric Managers Association, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, and of the Georgia Electric Membership Cooperative; was a chairman at the Tennessee Public Power Association; participated in the local Lion's Club; and became a deacon at the First Baptist Church in Blairsville.

"People need to realize the amount of sacrifice he made to move this community forward and to get people what they needed, even get them what they didn't think they needed at the time," Justin said of his father's many engagements.

But despite his busy personal and professional lives, Satterfield always made time for others.

"He never, never let his phone go on voicemail," daughter Joy said. "Anytime his phone rang, he would stop whatever he was doing to answer it, no matter who it was."

In 2009, Satterfield retired from the EMC after more than two decades as general manager. He grew restless, however, unable to simply let himself stay at home and wax his tractor. So, he practiced the same hard work and modesty in retirement that he had adopted in the electricity business by go-

ing to work with his son at his body shop, repairing and customizing vehicles for about 10 years, all while maintaining the same commitment to others.

"He was just so solid and could fix anything," Joy said. "He was always there for you. He would stop whatever he was doing to listen to you or help you or anything. He always had great advice."

In addition to his many friends, Satterfield is survived by his wife of over 54 years, two children, and five grandchildren, for whom he always served as a guiding light.

They will remember their patriarch, who did so much for so many people, for dedicating time to them, too, by attending ballgames, going fishing, making ziplines, fashioning a sled from a car hood, golfing, swimming, teaching his grandkids, and so much more.

The Thursday before his last day on earth, Joy asked her dad if he wanted to come home from the facility where he'd been receiving cancer treatments.

She recalls telling him that, "his whole life, he thought about everybody else, and if (coming home) was what he wanted to do, he needed to do it, that we would be fine."

"So, he came home the next day and died on Sunday," Joy said.

Now that he's gone, his loved ones say it's difficult to come up with one favorite memory of somebody who "never did bad to you, never wanted to do anything but help or see people progress."

"He wasn't a person that stood out in a crowd, but he just had a presence about him that you could admire," Betty said. "He was one of a kind. The best of the best."

"He was as close to perfect as anybody I've ever known," said Joy. "Just a great person. It's hard to lose someone like that."

"Everything he did was for somebody else," Justin added.

"That was my good friend. He was my buddy. He was my good friend and I loved him," Kernea said in summation of the man he got to know so well over the years. "My life's been so much better because of having known Joe Satterfield."

For the people whose lives were touched by Satterfield, the words of Jim McAfee undoubtedly ring true: "Because of Joe's involvement and tireless work on our behalf, our mountain area is an improved place to live. His family, friends, and associates are the better for

having known him." At his memorial service, Pastor Ricky Powell offered some particularly fitting, poignant lines from Georgia Harkness' poem, "To My Father": "A giant pine, magnificent and old. It fell one day. Where it had dauntless stood was loneliness and void. But men who passed paid tribute and said, 'To know this life was good, It left its mark on me. Its work stands fast.' This giant pine, magnificent and old."

The family requests that those who feel led to honor Joe Satterfield's memory do so by donating to one of the following organizations: First Baptist Church of Blairsville, Mission Dignity, Samaritan's Purse, The Gideons International or St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

NGTC Announces Open House Dates and Free Applications for Prospective Students

North Georgia Technical College will host three Open House sessions for prospective students during March. The Blairsville Open House is scheduled March 8, the Clarkesville Open House is March 15, and the Currahee Open House is scheduled March 22.

Each Open House session will feature demonstrations from various programs and departments, hands-on activities, question and answer sessions with faculty members, self-guided campus tours, and

information regarding admissions, financial aid, scholarships, and NGTC Foundation scholarship assistance. Lunch is also provided.

Students are encouraged to register by March 7 to secure a visit to the campus of their choice depending on program interest. To register, visit northgatech.edu/marketing/open-house or contact Katherine Johnson at katherine.johnson@northgatech.edu or 706-754-7895.

NGTC is also waiving the \$25 application fee for all

college applications submitted by March 31. The fee waiver is valid for any semester selected on the application. Visit northgatech.edu/apply to apply. The priority deadline for summer 2023 applications, financial aid, and NGTC Foundation scholarships is April 27, 2023. Summer classes begin May 22, 2023.

For more information including a list of programs offered, tuition rates or the admissions process, visit northgatech.edu or call 706-754-7700. NTMar8Z16CA

72nd Annual Georgia Mountain Fair Parade

72nd Annual Georgia Mountain Fair Parade

It's time to celebrate the 72nd year of the Georgia Mountain Fair and we want you to be part of the festivities! The Georgia Mountain Fair has many new and exciting additions for 2023. While honoring our mountain heritage we are looking forward to a bright future. Our theme for the 2023 Georgia Mountain Fair Parade is "Stars, Stripes & Summer Nights". The parade will take place on Saturday, August 19, 2023. We are offering cash prizes, awards and lots of fun! Prize money for floats listed below:

1st Place - \$4,000 / 2nd Place - \$2,500 / 3rd Place - \$1,500

Please pre-register to ensure you are entered in the contest and that you have the best placement possible. Enclosed is the entry form for the Parade and a copy of the rules. Make your plans now; this is going to be an eventful year!

Sincerely, Georgia Mountain Fair Parade Committee

REGULATIONS GEORGIA MOUNTAIN FAIR PARADE

- Parade begins forming at 9:30 a.m. behind the South State Bank.
- Judging will begin promptly at 9:45 a.m.: Those who wish to be judged must arrive prior to 9:30 a.m. If not, your float will not be judged.
- Floats should reflect the theme of the parade.
- Parade starting time: 10:55 a.m. - rain or shine.

72nd Annual Georgia Mountain Fair Parade Entry Form

Theme: "Stars, Stripes & Summer Nights" Parade Entry Form

Organization / Business / Family: _____
 Specify Entry Type: Float _____ Vehicle _____ Other _____
 Contact Person: _____
 Telephone: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Mail completed entry form to Georgia Mountain Fair:

Georgia Mountain Fair, Inc.
 PO Box 444, Hiawassee, GA 30546

4 Ways to enter:

- (1) In Person: Take completed entry form to the GMF office located at 1311 Music Hall Road, Hiawassee, GA
- (2) Email: gamtfairQ.windstream.net
- (3) Fax: (706) 896-4209
- (4) Mail: Georgia Mountain Fair PO Box 444, Hiawassee, GA 30546 August 19, 2023
 Parade starts at 11:00 A.M.
 All entrants are requested to pre-register
 Arrive before 9:30 A.M.

Due to the outstanding number of vintage vehicles we have participating in our parade, it makes judging in this category impossible! However, we do GREATLY appreciate your participation. The vintage vehicles are a huge crowd pleaser.

- Moving and motorized vehicles of all types must be kept away from the horses.
- Position of entries in the parade will be determined by the Georgia Mountain Fair Parade Committee.
- Parade marshals will maintain a 20-foot distance between entrants for the parade announcer to identify floats and category winners.
- Alcoholic beverages will not be permitted on the parade route or on the parade grounds. Violators will be referred to law enforcement officials. Motorized vehicles must keep in pace with the parade and will not be allowed to "stay back" and then use non-parade friendly speeds to catch up.

Sheriff's K-9 Dakota sniffs out drugs, leading to arrest

News Special
Towns County Herald
 Uniform Patrol Deputies and a K-9 Deputy working drug suppression for the Towns County Sheriff's Office made a traffic stop on US 76 at 12:30 a.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 28.

The vehicle was initially stopped for a traffic violation. K-9 Dakota alerted on the vehicle, and a search was conducted that resulted in the confiscation of methamphetamine along with a Schedule IV controlled substance and drug paraphernalia.

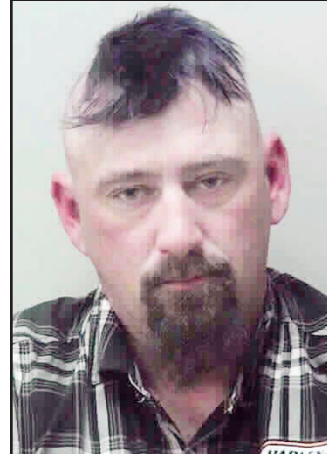
Sheriff Ken Henderson stated that it was a great job by

patrol and K-9 officers "working together to keep our community safe."

Jonathan Isreal Griffin, 38, of Westminster, South Carolina, was arrested and charged with: felony possession of methamphetamine; felony possession of a controlled substance, lorazepam; possession and use of drug-related objects; and drugs not in original container.

The driver was also charged with various traffic violations.

All subjects are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.



Jonathan Isreal Griffin

City Council Meeting...from Page 1A

I said if there's any facts of misconduct, bring them to me, and I promise you it will be handled.

"We want the City of Hiawassee to have a professional police department. We want the police officers to be somebody that the residents and business owners can trust. But we also want to be proactive on traffic safety."

The council devoted time at the end of the meeting to briefly discuss how to improve relations with the Towns County Sheriff's Office, as city officials are hoping to end the dispute between the agencies.

Councilman Jay Chastain Jr. asked if there was any kind of legal avenue, like a cease-and-desist action, to get the Sheriff's Office to leave the Police Department alone to simply let them do their jobs, but the answer appeared to be no.

In other news from the meeting, Accountant Chris Hollifield, a managing partner of Rushton Auditors, presented the results of the city's audit.

Total city revenue increased by \$153,670, or 14.1%. Property taxes decreased by \$43,959, while local option sales tax collections increased by \$38,965. Fines, fees and forfeitures increased \$12,697, and intergovernmental fees increased by \$135,549, among other metrics.

Meanwhile, expenditures increased by \$154,340, or 16.8%.

Along with the usual slideshow visualizations, Hollifield presented a graph of revenue and expenditures over the course of five years.

"Back in 2018, we were at \$868,850 in revenues," Hollifield said, offering a big-picture view. "The values later,

in 2022, were at \$1.2 million in revenues. Our expenditures for 2022 were \$1,073,990, so revenue is greater than our expenditures - what we always want to see."

This trend was consistent across the board, showing only growth as the years progressed. On the slide for the General Fund balance for the past five years, there was a similar pattern.

"You can see where we've come from in 2018 ... I don't have it there in months, but you can see (the) \$191,000 fund balance," he said. "Sitting here five years later, we've built that up to \$528,000, so we're in much better financial shape than I would say five years ago."

Revealing that the audit turned up no "findings," or deficiencies in the city's finances, Hollifield applauded City Hall for successfully strengthening its financial position in recent years.

His statement took on greater meaning in light of Ordiales reminding guests in her usual meeting report that the city was debt free after recent loan payoffs - at least until work begins to install a third filter at the Water Treatment Plant later in the year.

In other business, Tim Barrett of Barrett Insurance offered prospective insurance prices after Anthem Blue Cross' 90% price hike. After surveying other companies, UnitedHealthCare appears the most promising, as the coverage is similar to what city employees already have.

The new cost would still be a significant increase - \$150 per employee monthly - with approval of a plan pending the March 7 regular council meeting that occurred after press

time. Council members also reviewed the Third-Party Inspection Policy, which was expected to be voted on March 7. The policy allows larger and/or commercial developments to use third-party vendors for inspections, though such inspectors will require advance approval by City Hall.

Also in her Mayor's Report, Ordiales provided an update on the project to spruce up Lloyd's Landing, where considerable erosion called for a new drain and a freshly laid road. The first glimpses of the blooms in the Holocaust Memorial Daffodil Garden are beginning to be seen in anticipation of spring.

Construction work also occurred over at Mayor's Park, where the Department of Natural Resources helped repair and strengthen the fence "that was falling apart." The same group filled some potholes with 10 loads of gravel, seven loads of which have thus far been spread.

This past Monday marked the beginning of Mayor's Day on the Square, where hamburgers and hot dogs will be grilled from about 4:30-6:30 p.m. every Monday through the warmer seasons.

Toward the end of the meeting, the council entered executive session to discuss pending litigation and a potential property purchase, and no action was taken after members exited the session.

The public is invited to attend all city meetings, which take place inside City Hall located at 50 River Street. Work sessions occur on Mondays the week before regular meetings, and regular meetings are set for the first Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m.

Valentine's Day Fire...from Page 1A



Given the progression of the blaze firefighters faced when they arrived, it's miraculous this home kept standing that evening.

Copeland said. "They're heartfelt and dedicated people.

"It was miraculous and wonderful that the gentleman made it out of the house, and no firefighters were hurt. I'm just extremely proud of the

dedication and fight of this department."

The chief made sure to provide the resident with information to contact the American Red Cross in the event he needed temporary lodging.

Copeland advises people to fully extinguish any embers - whether from fireplaces, grills or brush piles - before leaving them unattended or discarding them around the home.

Drug Convictions...from Page 1A

Marquis Gwan Ford, 42, of Bennettsville, South Carolina: possession of meth, three years of probation, \$2,500 fine; possession of a Schedule II controlled substance, three years of probation to run concurrent with above sentence; possession of drug-related objects, 12 months of probation concurrent with above, \$500 fine.

Brenda Anne Baldwin, 50, of Hiawassee: possession of meth, three years with the first 60 days in confinement (deemed served), and a \$2,500 fine.

Jolena Marvilia Nichols, 53, of Hiawassee: two counts sale of meth, 15 years to serve six in confinement, \$2,500 fine; two counts possession of a Schedule I controlled substance, three years concurrent with above sentence.

Christopher Dwight Barnard, 21, of Hayesville, North Carolina: sale of meth, 20 years to serve six in confinement; sale of meth, 20 years to serve six concurrent with above sentence; sale of marijuana, 10 years to serve six concurrent with above.

Tristan Cable Brown, 20,

of Young Harris: possession of meth, three years of probation, and a \$2,500 fine.

Sheriff Ken Henderson would like to thank all the Towns County Sheriff's Office deputies, K-9s and investigators for their hard work to take these drugs out of the community.

He would also like to thank the Towns County District Attorney's Office and the Towns County Clerk of Court's Office for all the hard work they have done to bring these cases to a close.

Union-Towns Extension & Union County Young Farmers Association Host Equipment Expo

Agriculture has an important role in our community. In an effort to raise awareness of the resources that are available, Union-Towns County Extension and Union County Young Farmers Association have organized an Equipment Expo on Saturday March 18 from 10 AM - 2 PM at the Union County Horse Arena 401 Nottely Dam Rd. Blairsville, GA. The event will have agriculture equipment from different organizations around Union County on display.

"Farming is not a cheap or easy profession. We want people to know that there are local organizations here to support agriculture. This event is for anyone with an interest in agriculture," said Jacob Williams, Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Agent for Union and Towns counties. "There is a lot of equipment that can be checked out by people for free or for a very low cost."

Some of the participants in this event will be Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D, Blue Ridge Mountain Cattlemen's Association, Blue Ridge Mountain Soil and Water Conservation District, Fannin County Young Farmers, Union County Young Farmers, and Union-Towns County Extension. Representatives from the different organizations will be there to talk about the equipment and provide demonstrations.

Some examples of the equipment that will be on display at the expo will be a hog

trap, seed drill, hay probe, soil probes, spreaders, trailers, and precision ag equipment. All of the equipment is available for people to check out and use for a returnable deposit or membership in a local association that supports farmers. Come and network with other farmers, and meet local organizations and associations that are here to support agriculture. Concessions will be available.

If you have questions about the upcoming equipment expo please contact Jacob.Williams@uga.edu or call 706-439-6030.

AARP® AARP Tax Aide Free Tax Preparation

AARP Tax Aide is providing free tax preparation in Blairsville on Thursdays from 10 AM - 2 PM beginning February 9 through April 13. Location is the Brackett Community Room, behind United Community Bank, 177 GA-515, Blairsville, GA This service is by appointment only. Please call (770) 403-7959 for reservations.

Other AARP Tax Aide locations are:

Blue Ridge on Fridays from 10 AM - 2 PM, February 6 - April 14 at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 7 Ewing Street, Blue Ridge.

Ellijay on Mondays from 10 AM - 2 PM, February 6 - April 10 at the Gilmer County Library, 268 Calvin Jackson Drive, Ellijay.

Blue Ridge and Ellijay are also by appointment only. Please call (770) 312-2258 for reservations at these locations.

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