

Taylor ...from Page 1A



Taylor with his fellow 2018 Towns County Board of Education members and Superintendent Dr. Darren Berrong.
Photo by Shawn Jarrard

item on my plate at the moment is finalizing preparation for the publisher of Volume II of *Hearthstones of Home*, a local family history book.”

Taylor also plans to be a 2020 census enumerator, as he was in 2010.

Taylor’s advice to future Towns County Board of Education members:

“Pay attention in the training sessions provided in your first year. You will learn a lot about what exactly you can and can’t do as a board member.”

“Lean on your fellow board members, as they are a

wealth of knowledge and an excellent resource.

“Lastly, don’t make decisions based on what is right for one or two students, but rather what is best for all students in the system.”

Continued Taylor, “The fundamental role of a local board of education is to establish policy for the local school system with a focus on student achievement. It is not our job to get involved with athletics or the everyday operations of the schools. Those jobs belong to the administrators.”

“It is not the job of the board members to run the

school, yet, it is our job to make sure the school is run effectively.”

Taylor said that he ran for school board initially because he thought it was important for “someone in the trenches” to be there to offer their insight regarding school policy and operation.

“I am proudest of the fact that, in the past eight years, Towns County Schools have become one of the highest achieving systems in our region and across the state,” said Taylor, looking back over his many accomplishments on the board.

Christmas Trees...from Page 1A

been higher and higher. This year is about average. You’ll still get 20 to 25 trees average, which is going to take them probably two or three trips with two boats, so it’s not a long day for them, but it’s still good for a short notice.”

The chamber started this tradition in the early 2000s because of an idea from Keep Our Mountains Beautiful, which took care of disposing trees by turning them into mulch with the woodchipper.

Since then, the chamber decided to take on their own way of recycling Christmas trees, so they started dumping them in a lake to better the environment for fish.

This practice ended a few years back, with 2019 being the return of the project as a way for the chamber to maintain the lake after the recent tournaments, such as the 2018 Toyota Bassmaster Angler of the Year Championship.

“The number of tournaments we had on the lake this year just shows that we need to give back to the lake to hopefully help the population of the fish and keep them healthy,” said Lee. “That’s what our Fishing Committee has decided to do, is work with the local



Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds General Manager Hilda Thomason provided the meeting place for the Chamber and DNR to hold their Christmas tree/fish habitat project.
Photo by Lowell Nicholson

biologists and do whatever we can to keep the fish healthy out there.

“So, again, we are excited because this hasn’t happened in a long time, and to bring something like this back and let people know the chamber brings in all these events and is trying to keep the lake healthy for everybody to fish, not just

the people that are here for the tournaments.”

The chamber plans to continue this project again, and next year, it will be working with DNR to make the new “manmade” fish habitat that works so well and doesn’t biodegrade, according to Lee.

Baby ...from Page 1A



Scott and Alicia Rose with their newborn daughter Abigail Grace on New Year’s Day. The family received a gift basket from the Union General Hospital Auxiliary for having the first baby born at the hospital in 2019.
Photo by Shawn Jarrard

basket from the Union General Hospital Auxiliary.

The basket included a baby bathtub, over-the-counter newborn baby medications, clothes, a haircare kit and more.

As for their time at the hospital, the Roses said they couldn’t have been happier.

“The nurses and staff are fantastic,” said Alicia, with Scott adding, “It was a good experience.”

Brittanie Rowland, the registered nurse who cared for Abigail after she was delivered, said she enjoys helping moms bring their babies into the world.

“When I was in nursing school, I always wanted to go into Labor & Delivery,” said Rowland.

Nurse Jessica Queen, who helped Alicia during her labor, said she felt the same way and that she was happy to have played a role in Abigail’s delivery.

“It was special to be a part of it, for sure,” said Queen. “I love laboring patients, that’s my favorite. Just to be part of their whole experience, from when they get here to when they deliver – I love taking care of them.”

Concerning Labor & Delivery at Union General Hospital, Queen said there was no shortage of caring medical professionals who are always ready at a moment’s notice.

“People aren’t just a number to us, we really do care,” said Queen. “Everybody that works here, we try to just

treat our patients the way we would want to be treated. I feel like that makes a difference.”

Added Rowland, “We all work well together, too, to make sure everything gets done for our patients.”

Labor & Delivery at Union General Hospital features four OB-GYN providers with the Women’s Health Center, five state-of-the-art labor and delivery rooms, recovery rooms, an operating room suite, a triage room, heavy security and more.

Women from all over the region, including Towns County, have their babies at Union General Hospital, which shares affiliation with Chatuge Regional Hospital in Hiawassee.

Cable TV...from Page 1A

Bill 227, was passed by the Georgia General Assembly in its 2007 Legislative Session, though federal law limits the franchise amount the state may authorize to no more than 5 percent of the cable operator’s gross profits per annum.

Pursuant to this Act, Towns County charges Windstream, a cable service provider that operates in the county’s unincorporated areas, a fee of 5 percent of its gross

revenues.

Windstream pays the fee to Towns County on a quarterly basis, with collections totaling roughly \$39,000 a year.

However, the Act also authorizes Windstream to recover the franchise fees from its subscribers “as a separate item on the bill and recover such amount from the subscriber, provided, however, that such separate listing be referred to as ‘franchise’ or ‘franchise fee.’”

So, the state authorizes Towns County to charge Windstream a franchise fee of no more than 5 percent of its gross profits from subscribers

in its unincorporated areas, and it also authorizes Windstream to collect reimbursement of that fee from its customers.

Hiawassee Mayor Liz Ordiales confirmed that the City of Hiawassee, a municipality, is also authorized to charge Windstream a franchise fee, which Windstream collects from customers who reside within the city limits. Hiawassee charges Windstream 3 percent.

Franchise fees are commonly used by local governments as a way of collecting additional revenues for local initiatives without having to raise property taxes.



The Blue Ridge Mountain Chapter of Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) is comprised of services who’ve served our country as Commissioned Officers in the military or U.S. Public Health Service. Members may be active, inactive, reserve or retired.

The local chapter serves both Western North Carolina and North Georgia and meets on the third Wednesday of each month at different locations in our area.

For information on membership enrollment in the Blue Ridge Mountain Chapter, call Joff Filion at (386) 530-0904 or email joff27@aol.com and visit www.moaa.org/chapter/blueridgemountains.

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Labor & Delivery at Union General Hospital is equipped with everything families need to feel comfortable having children in the mountains.
Photo by Mark Smith

Budget...from Page 1A

while maintaining the current Towns County millage rate and without touching the

\$3.1 million in reserve funds.

Major one-time increases to the 2019 budget are due to the construction of the new fire station in Young Harris, the purchase of a backhoe for the transfer station, and the purchase of a new ambulance for the county.

Recurring expenses added to the 2019 budget going forward are funds to help pay for a new school resource officer for Towns County Schools, the incorporation of increased insurance costs, and a 50-cent per hour pay raise for all county employees.

Bradshaw has said that he anticipates annual insurance costs to decrease over the long run barring any increased claim activity as happened in 2017.

“I feel like each department is very frugal with the money,” said Bradshaw. “They understand that it’s taxpayer money and they’re on top of it.”

“They do not waste money, and all the bills come through here, so we’re looking and watching and making sure there’s no money being spent on something you don’t have to have.”

Democratic Party to meet

The Towns County Democratic Party will hold its monthly meeting at 6 p.m., January 10th at the Civic Center in Hiawassee, next to the courthouse. Newcomers are always welcome. Feel free to direct any questions to TownsCountyDemocrats@gmail.com. T(Jan9/FL)SH