

# Towns County Herald

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## Towns 4-H welcomes new coordinator Bradshaw

By Jeremy Foster  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Kerri Bradshaw was hired in December as the new coordinator for the Towns County 4-H Cooperative Extension office, which interacts with local school children to broaden their societal horizons.

"In 4-H programs, kids and teens complete hands-on projects in areas like health, science, agriculture and civic engagement in a positive environment where they receive guidance from adult mentors and are encouraged to take on proactive leadership roles," according to 4-h.org.

And Bradshaw is thrilled to be offering these types of learning opportunities at the

local level as the new 4-H coordinator.

The 20-year-old Towns native graduated from Towns County High Class of 2019 before enrolling at North Georgia Technical College for agriculture, in which she will be finishing up classes this year.

"I have always wanted to be a teacher, and I love agriculture," Bradshaw said, "so 4-H was an opportunity to do both where I could teach and have an agriculture-based idea of sorts."

Once a month, Bradshaw will be going to the schools to teach kids about different career clusters. She will assist them in completing "County Project Achievements" focused on their individual areas of interests and things they like to do.

For County Project Achievements, students choose an area of interest to research and write about with the goal of making a presentation, which helps them to develop "leadership, creativity, public speaking, record keeping and other skills."

"Now I am learning more about the basis of my schedule and trying to get the upper hand on it," Bradshaw said. "It has been a new experience for me working with kids, but I am having a lot of fun and I love it."

"(Moving forward), I would like to accomplish starting a couple more clubs such as the horse club and garden club and getting more kids interested in 4-H."

"Our goals of 4-H are to help the students learn more

about a future career and prepare them for work and team-work skills, as well as public speaking skills.

"I want the community to know that we are growing and are hoping to get more volunteers, and that more programs are on the way, so stay tuned."

Union and Towns County Cooperative Extension Agent Jacob Williams said he hired Bradshaw to fill the role for multiple reasons, including that she is from Towns County and "has a connection with the people there."

"I think that is important for her to be successful in the 4-H program," Williams said. "She is also getting her associate degree in agriculture, and



Kerri Bradshaw is the new Towns County 4-H Program Assistant in the University of Georgia Extension Office located at 67 Lakeview Circle in Hiawassee. Photo by Jeremy Foster

See 4-H Coordinator, Page 6A

## Major courthouse renovation, addition project progresses

By Mark Smith  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

The Towns County Courthouse is long overdue for renovation and expansion and has been in the works for years now, with the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic having held things up. However, barring any more sickness scares, the project will finally be getting off the ground.

Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw said last week that he had accepted the sole bid from Powers Heating and Air out of Peachtree City to install a new HVAC system at the Old Rec Gym. The company should be starting the installation in "a couple of weeks."

A new HVAC system at the gym is necessary because all the offices at the courthouse

will have to be vacated during the renovation and addition project, and those offices will be moved temporarily over to the Old Rec Gym during construction.

"This morning we met with CPL Architects again over at the Old Rec Gym, and with other elected officials from the courthouse, to figure out who is going to be where," Bradshaw said Jan. 26. "CPL Architects is working on the drawing so that we'll know how to lay out the temporary cubicle walls."

"As soon as the heating and air is done, we should be able to secure the temporary cubicle walls. And then the electrician and the IT people will start running all the computer lines, phone lines, and power outlets to all the cubicles."



Cliff Bradshaw  
Sole Commissioner

A Request for Proposal for the services of a Construction-Manager-At-Risk is currently running in the newspaper, and proposals will

See Courthouse Progress, Page 6A

## Hiawassee discusses water operator needs, plans for 2022

By Mark Smith  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Hiawassee Mayor Liz Ordiales announced in the first monthly work session of the year on Jan. 24 that the city has been operating with only one licensed water treatment plant operator for late because, regrettably, there are no other licensed operators available.

"It is almost impossible to find a licensed water treatment plant operator," she said. "I have called every place, everywhere, in every city, and everybody is having the exact same problem."

Wastewater Treatment Plant employee Clint Royce passed the Georgia Environmental Protection Division's Friday, so he will be able to share some of those responsibilities with Water Department Manager Carl Grizzle.

But there is still a need for several more licenses, as, No. 1, the EPD requires a licensed operator on site 24/7, and, No. 2, because Hiawassee needs to have operator succession in place for the future.

Apparently, this is a statewide issue, with at least part of the cause being the Georgia EPD required exam, administered by the Georgia Water and Wastewater Institute, which has a dismal 37% pass rate, allegedly because of the way the exams are styled.

While attending the Cities United event in Atlanta over the weekend, Ordiales spoke with the Deputy Director of Georgia EPD who told her plans are being considered for a water/wastewater treatment plant licensing program through the Technical

College System of Georgia.

That would be a welcome change, especially for small-town water treatment plants in Georgia, and Ordiales will be soon speaking with

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Hiawassee Mayor  
Liz Ordiales

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## 'for KING & COUNTRY' fills The Hall with God's love



Christian pop band "for KING & COUNTRY" rocked Anderson Music Hall Saturday with a spiritually uplifting concert performance. Photo by Brittany Holbrooks

By Brittany Holbrooks  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

The Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds is known for bringing high quality entertain-

ment to the residents of Hiawassee and the North Georgia Mountains.

That's why, in recognition of its dedication to entertaining the public here, the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds

received a Marketing Award by the Georgia Association of Agricultural Fairs over the weekend, during the three-day annual Georgia/South Carolina Joint Convention in Perry.

See Christian Concert, Page 6A

## Top of GA Speaking Contest off to excellent start in '22

By Jeremy Foster  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

YOUNG HARRIS – After rebounding from the cancellation of last year's contest due to COVID-19, training for the 2022 Top of Georgia Annual Student Public Speaking Contest got under way last week on Thursday, Jan. 27, inside the Goolsby Center at Young Harris College.

Over at least the next five Thursdays, students will be learning the craft of public speaking from a variety of local civic and community leaders who will be mentoring the students in the skill and importance of being able to speak in public settings.

The competition will feature students living in Union and Towns counties in Georgia, and in Clay County, North Carolina. Two divisions will compete, one for middle school-aged children and another for high schoolers, with private and home-schooled students also eligible for entry.

By the time training concludes, students will be expected to deliver an inspiring four to six-minute speech on the final contest day in March, to be announced at a later date.

First Place winners in each division will receive a \$400 cash prize, with Second Place winners receiving \$300, Third Place \$200 and Fourth Place \$100. Additionally, the First Place high school winner will earn a non-cash, renewable \$5,000 scholarship to Young Harris College.

There is still time for students to apply as a speaker in



Dr. Jennifer Hallett of the Communication Studies Department at Young Harris College believes students will benefit for a lifetime by developing "a combination of good written and speaking skills."

Photo by Jeremy Foster

the training and competition by emailing their name, address, phone number, school, and grade level to topofgeorgiastudent@gmail.com.

Charlotte Sleczkowski, chair of the Towns County Democrats and a retired schoolteacher of 40 years, is one of the mentors aiding in the process.

She said the importance of a training program like this is to instruct students "how to speak in public, whether it is a job interview, giving messages or speaking in front of a class or on a stage or whatever the situation may be."

"It helps people to research more background on their topics and helps them be more confident and convincing when they speak with more poise," Sleczkowski said.

"the students teach us more than we teach the students."

"Although ways of communicating have changed a lot over the years," Chotiner said, "we teach these kids how to better communicate in face-to-face interactions by maintaining eye contact, and be able to deliver instructions that are clear, and just be able to have great people skills in general."

"Public speaking is a two-phase system: first, you have to learn how to build the speech, and then, you have to learn how to perform it."

Enotah Judicial Circuit District Attorney Jeff Langley was another mentor on hand last week to offer his services.

"I have been involved with this speaking contest for a number of years, and I became involved as a way to provide community service," Langley said. "The important

See Top of GA, Page 6A

## Ninth District Opportunity, Food Pantry make a difference

By Jeremy Foster  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

With offices in 13 North Georgia counties, Ninth District Opportunity is designed to help financially struggling individuals and families by offering programs such as electric and propane heating assistance, water assistance – which started this year – and housing assistance.

"Ninth District Opportunity, Inc. provides a broad range of services designed to assist low-income families to establish self-sufficiency and economic stability," per ndo.org. "All services are local community oriented, based on local community needs."

Teresa Stephens is the Homeless Management Infor-

mation System Administrator and Community Resource Coordinator for the Towns County Ninth District Opportunity office, and she assists with the administration of the Towns County Food Pantry as well.

Stephens has been involved with Ninth District Opportunity for 22 years and finds it incredibly rewarding to be able to help the community around her.

"It is very unfortunate that there is not very much housing available in Towns or Union County," Stephens said, "so we try to help out with emergency food and shelter money that helps with rent and electric bills when the funds are available."

"We also provide community service block rent money, which is also available for



Teresa Stephens  
Ninth District Opportunity

utilities and emergency solution grants through the Department of Community Affairs, which is where homelessness and its prevention comes in.

"(For example), if you had an eviction notice come

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### SPORTS

#### BASKETBALL

2/4 vs. Lake Oconee 6 PM  
2/5 @ Greene Co. 5PM

### At-Home COVID Test Kits

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### TCHS Students Honored

See page 2A

### Memory Hearts Meals on Wheels Fundraiser

See page 2A

