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Page to retire as elementary school principal after 33-year career

By Chad Stack
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Towns County Elementary School Principal Dr. Sandy Page will retire at the end of the 2019-2020 school year following 33 years of serving students as an educator. The announcement came during the Feb. 11 Board of Education meeting at the schools.

Page has spent the last eight years of her career as elementary school principal, and she said leaving will definitely be a bittersweet occasion.

"I'm excited and looking forward to my new journey, but I'm really going to miss the children and getting to see them every day," Page said.

"This is a great staff and a great school, and I'm going to really miss it."

Page aspired to be in education as far back as she can remember, she said. Before accepting a position as Towns County Elementary School assistant principal in 2003, she worked in the White County School District for 17 years.

"I just knew I always wanted to work with children," Page said. "I always enjoyed school and learning, and I wanted to share my passion for education with children."

Looking back over her many years at Towns County Elementary, Page said it's easy to see why the school has been such a success, thanks in large part to all the great teachers who have provided a

fun learning environment that makes students eager to learn.

As the school's leader, Page said it's important for the students, parents and staff to see her every day, which will certainly make it that much more of a bittersweet occasion when she leaves.

She loves her school and students, Page said, noting that every morning, as parent's pull through the student drop-off, she is always standing there to greet the children.

Of course, being a principal is a tough job that comes with its own particular challenges as well, Page said, though she has immensely enjoyed her time at Towns County Elementary.

"I truly love working with the students and teachers



Towns County Elementary Principal Dr. Sandy Page

at Towns County Schools, and most of all, I am going to miss seeing the smiling faces of my students each day," Page said.

Regarding next steps for the longtime educator, she

said she's ready to embrace all that being retired has to offer, including travel and family time.

"I have been working in education for 33 years now; both my boys are married and starting their own families," Page said. "I am ready to spend time with my family and enjoy retirement."

The school board approved Page's resignation in the Feb. 11 meeting, to be effective at the close of the current school year.

Board members, along with Middle School Principal Dr. Connie Hobbs and Superintendent Dr. Darren Berrong, expressed how much they will miss her at Towns County Schools, and Page received a standing ovation

from the board and her peers during the meeting that Tuesday night.

"I am so thankful to have had the opportunity to work for Towns County Elementary," Page said. "Towns County Elementary School is a fantastic school with so many great people, from the students to the staff and the parents."

Berrong said that Page has been a great asset to the school system, adding that everyone is very thankful for all she has done for Towns County Schools.

The board office is currently working to fill Page's position for next school year, and an announcement regarding specific next steps will be made in a future board meeting.

Young Harris joins Joint Development Authority, hears from Van Horn



L-R: Young Harris City Councilmen John Kelley and Donald Keys with Deputy City Clerk Nicolette Wade in the Feb. 4 regular city meeting. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

YOUNG HARRIS – Young Harris City Council members voted unanimously in their February regular meeting to join the Joint Development Authority with the county and city of Hiwassee.

Council Members Steve Clark and John Kelley met with Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw and Hiwassee Mayor Liz Ordiales recently to make sure that all three entities involved would be on the same page in forming the nine-member Joint Development

Authority. "It's going to be a leap of faith," Kelley said. "We are just going to have to assume that people are going to work together in such a way that it will be a true partnership and teamwork."

See Young Harris, Page 6A

School board names CTAE director, welcomes robotics students



Towns County Middle School Principal Dr. Connie Hobbs getting a robot driving lesson from two Robotics Team members following last week's school board meeting. Photo by Chad Stack

By Chad Stack
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Towns County Board of Education members discussed the need to expand the system's career, technical and educational offerings in their Feb. 11 regular meeting.

The schools have accomplished much with their Future Business Leaders of America, Future Farmers of America and HOSA – Future Health Professionals programs, but Superintendent Dr. Darren Berrong said it was time to expand CTAE employability

opportunities for students.

In order to do this effectively, the schools needed to name a full-time, dedicated CTAE director, as well as the current CTAE and Work-Based Learning programs have been undertaken in part-time

See School Board, Page 6A

Hiwassee plants weeping willows at 25th Arbor Day observance



Georgia Forestry Commission officials met with Hiwassee Mayor Liz Ordiales, Tree Board Chair Joan Crothers and BSA Troop 407 on Feb. 14 for the city's 25th Arbor Day observance. Photo by Chad Stack

By Chad Stack
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

On a cold and windy yet sunny Friday, Feb. 14, Hiwassee celebrated its 25th

Arbor Day as a Tree City USA community by planting two weeping willow trees at Mayors Park.

National Arbor Day takes place in April, though many

states celebrate the occasion during prime planting times, which is February in Georgia.

Present for the planting were Georgia Forestry Arborists

See Arbor Day, Page 6A

Thompson enjoying new role as Young Harris City Clerk



Young Harris City Clerk Bobbie Thompson

Now in her second full month as Young Harris City Clerk, area native Bobbie Thompson is enjoying her new job, which currently consists of a steady training schedule.

Thompson officially began her new position in December, working with longtime City Clerk Shirley Jarrard for a brief time before Jarrard retired at the end of 2019.

"I'm looking forward to this job, and I am looking forward to the training portion for sure, because that will help me become more familiar with the systems that the city uses (and other municipal duties)," Thompson said.

The new city clerk grew up in Hayesville, North Carolina, where she attended school before going on to college to earn a business degree. She moved to Hiwassee 14 years ago and lives there to this day.

Thompson said.

"I have two girls, one is 25 and the other is 19, and I've been married for 27 years to my husband Dwayne, but everyone calls him 'Dip,'" Thompson said. "I just recently left working for Young Harris College as the assistant athletic director after being there for 10 years."

Fortunately for Young Harris, Thompson's previous employment positions and

studies in college have focused on business and finance, giving her the perfect background needed as city clerk to begin looking after the city's finances and other business.

"I started in banking, so I was with Citizens Bank in Hayesville before United came, and then I was with United for a while before I took some time off to have children,"

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Early voting begins March 2, runs through Friday, March 20

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor



Three weeks of early voting for the March 24 Presidential Preference Primary will begin on Monday, March 2.

Every weekday between March 2 and March 20, during the hours of 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., registered Towns County voters will be able to cast their votes at the Towns County Board of Elections & Registration Office next to the courthouse, even during lunchtime.

Voters who find themselves too busy to vote during the scheduled weekdays will be able to take advantage of one weekend day of early in-person voting on Saturday, March 14, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the courthouse, and also during lunchtime.

As this is a primary, voters will need to declare a political party to receive a ballot, though voters will be able to declare a different political party when voting in

the May 19 General Primary Election.

Election Day for the Presidential Preference Primary, in which voters will be selecting a presidential candidate to lead their party of choice, will be on Tuesday, March 24, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. That day, voters should report to one of the three pre-assigned Towns County precincts.

Registered voters who will be at least 18 years of age by Election Day will be

eligible to vote during early voting, and Monday, Feb. 24, is the registration deadline for voters looking to participate in the Presidential Preference Primary.

For information on applying for an absentee ballot, visit the Georgia Secretary of State's Office website at sos.ga.gov; swing by the Towns County Board of Elections & Registration Office at 67 Lakeview Circle, Suite A, in Hiwassee; or call 706-896-4353.

Demonstrations of the new voting equipment being used in this year's elections are no longer being held, as the board office is busy preparing equipment for early voting, though instructions for using the new equipment will be available during early voting and on Election Day.

Voters can access.mvp.sos.ga.gov ahead of the election for information on

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Blue Ridge 1,681.26

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BASEBALL

Feb 24 vs. Riverside 5:30

SOCCER

Feb 20 @ Stephens Co

We Are Towns County Schools

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12th Annual Watershed Gala

February 27th

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2020 CENSUS

Towns County CENSUS Information

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