

# Towns County Herald

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## After 21 years, Mayor Mathis says she'll be retiring soon

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Earlier this week, Hiawasse Mayor Barbara Mathis said that she would be retiring before the end of her term this year.

She addressed her retirement amid the swirling of local rumors.

"There's too many rumors out here," said Mayor Mathis when reached for comment over the weekend. "People are saying that I've retired, that I am retiring, that I'm going to retire by (March) 21st - I haven't set a date yet. I have no date yet."

Added Mayor Mathis: "When I decide to retire, I will be announcing it. I am going

to retire, but I have not set a date yet."

And though she has yet to set a date, the mayor did say that she would be retiring sometime in the next two months.

On Monday, the mayor signed a document authorizing Hiawasse City Councilwoman and Mayor Pro Tem Liz Ordiales to:

"Negotiate contracts with third parties for the provision of services to the City of Hiawasse, including but not limited to, code enforcement, building inspections, website and social media services, landscaping and lawn maintenance services, cleaning services, trash pickup services, demand services for the maintenance and repair



Hiawasse Mayor Barbara Mathis

of the city's water and sewer systems, and any other third party with which the city desires to do business."

Furthermore, Mayor Pro Tem Ordiales "may obtain for the proposals. See Mathis, Page 6A

## Sen. Wilkinson wants to offer voters a choice

By Charles Duncan  
North Georgia News  
Editor

Georgia voters could soon experience a blast from the past as members of the Georgia House of Representatives weigh Senate Resolution 192, introduced by District 50 State Sen. John Wilkinson.

The resolution proposes an amendment to the Constitution so as to authorize the General Assembly to provide by law for election of local school superintendents by voters and election of members of local boards of education by grand juries, as an alternative to appointment of local school superintendents See Wilkinson, Page 7A



State Sen. John Wilkinson, District 50

## Hiawasse Post Office to become one-way from Main Street

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

The Hiawasse Post Office will soon feature a one-way entrance from Main Street, with a one-way exit out the back of the lot toward Ingles, expected by the end of this week.

The Georgia Department of Transportation is supplying the city with four DO NOT ENTER signs, two to stop people from turning onto Main Street from the post office, and two for the turn-in from Ingles.

This new one-way traffic flow will stop residents from exiting the post office onto Main Street, but will allow them instead to access multiple exits from the Ingles parking lot, including from the Ingles Gas Station, the street between the gas station and The Fire Place store, at Bell Street, or



This driver made a right out of the Hiawasse Post Office last Friday. By the end of this week, the post office turn-in from Main Street will be Enter Only.

over to the traffic light at River Street.

Making the post office a one-way drive from Main Street to Ingles is a project that's been in the making for a year and a half.

Back then, Hiawasse Councilwoman Liz Ordiales saw a wreck occur there, one she felt could have been avoided if the busy post office didn't let out directly into the

See Post Office, Page 6A

## Nelms continues to update community on Blue Ridge Mountain EMC

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

BLAIRSVILLE - Blue Ridge Mountain EMC General Manager Jeremy Nelms wants everyone to know that the EMC has turned over a new leaf.

He delivered this message at the Rotary Club of Union County weekly meeting on Thursday, March 9.

"We're coming out of some of the darkest times, based on what I can tell, that that EMC has ever experienced," said Nelms, who has been busy getting to know all the employees of the EMC since coming on board last July. "You have a very dedicated staff of employees."

"We have roughly 200 employees over there - that's an awful lot of people. And 99.5 percent of those employees had absolutely



BRMEMC Jeremy Nelms speaking at the weekly Union County Rotary Club meeting on Thursday, March 9.

nothing to do with what was going on over there.

"We just had a really unfortunate event that came to light, and it's taught us all a hard lesson on how you address things. You don't hide from it, you don't run from it, you just address it."

Elections conducted by the EMC membership in the last couple of years have changed the EMC Board of Directors over to newly elected members. Coupled with Nelms' arrival, it's safe to say that the leadership of the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC has seen a complete overhaul.

According to previous statements by the new board, transparency is the ultimate goal for those involved, and Nelms said last Thursday that the membership won't be seeing any cover-ups or abuses of power by their EMC leadership moving forward.

"You don't have to worry about that anymore," said Nelms. "I'm here, and you've got a great board, we have some awesome leadership there in the boardroom. They all want to do the right thing. They brought me in, and everything's

See BRMEMC, Page 6A

## Elections board holds precinct consolidation meeting

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

A major change to be implemented by the Towns County Board of Elections met with mixed reviews during a public hearing held by the board last week.

The idea is simple - consolidate Towns County's four voting precincts down to just one.

Such a change would eliminate the Young Harris, Macedonia and Tate City voting precincts, and everyone would vote at the Towns County Civic Center, which is where Hiawasse voters are used to voting.

See Elections, Page 7A



Towns County Board of Elections Chair Janet Oliva and Co-Chair Scott Ledford in the Thursday, March 9, public hearing at the Towns County Civic Center.

## Despite snowy weather, Judd rocked Anderson Music Hall

By Lily Avery  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Wynonna Judd and the Big Noise took Anderson Music Hall by storm on Saturday, March 11, with a concert that Country Music fans across the region are not soon to forget.

Fans braved the inclement weather with big smiles and boots ready for dancing to see the famed Country Music singer whose words and songs have touched millions of fans throughout the years.

The high-intensity Judd's hits from her new album, "Wynonna & the Big

Noise," such as "You Make My Heart Beat Too Fast." Judd also showcased long-time fan favorites throughout the concert, like "She is His Only Need," that had the crowds cheering and singing along.

While many in the audience may have been hoping for that one special song, for Carolyn and Phillip Moss, they were simply happy to have the opportunity to hear Judd sing.

"I've been listening to Country Music all my life," said Phillip. "But Wynonna, I've been listening to her since she started. She's incredible and really just has a unique voice that you can't match."

See Judd, Page 6A



Wynonna Judd & The Big Noise in Hiawasse on Saturday, March 11.

## Young Harris City Council previews revised college zoning

By Lily Avery  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

YOUNG HARRIS - After months of deliberation and research regarding a Young Harris College expansion, the Young Harris City Council finally made steps toward a resolution during the monthly meeting on Tuesday, March 7.

Several months ago, the city attempted to receive an exemption from the county pertaining to an YHC expansion of housing facilities for on-campus students. Former Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall refuted the request, explaining that the exemption could

See Zoning, Page 6A



Councilmen Jared Champion and Matt Miller go over a Young Harris City Council.

## American Legion honors Hoyt's 60 years of membership

By Lily Avery  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

American Legion Post 23 took time out of its regular meeting to honor long-time member Jim Hoyt on Tuesday, March 7.

Hoyt, past commander of Post 23 for seven years, received recognition for his outstanding dedication to the American Legion for 60 years and was presented with a Certificate of Continuous Membership award as a token of the post's gratitude.

"Each year records are selected for American Legion veterans who qualify for 50, 60, 70, 80, 85 or 90 years of continuous service certificate."

See Hoyt, Page 6A



Jim Hoyt, left, receiving his "Certificate of Continuous Membership" from Commander John Harkins in the regular meeting of American Legion Post #23 on March 7.

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**Lake Levels**

Blue Ridge	1,683.13
Chatuge	1,923.39
Nottely	1,772.60

**Spring Hammer-In Trackrock Campground**

See page 7A

**Mountain Movers and Shakers Student Development and Speaking Class**

See page 2A

**Community Shred day**

GA Mtn Fairgrounds

April 8th

See page 3A

**Baseball**

Wed Mar 15 @ Tallulah Falls 4:30  
Thurs Mar 16 @ George Walton 5:30  
**Soccer**  
Wed Mar 15 @ Prince Ave 5 & 7  
Mon Mar 20 @ Highlands 6 PM