

# Towns County Herald

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## Cloer donates prize money for 69th Annual Georgia Mountain Fair Parade

By Chad Stack  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Last year, Towns County native Bob Cloer donated \$5,000 in prize money for float builders in the Georgia Mountain Fair Parade.

And thanks to the terrific turnout, he's back with another donation this year, upping the amount to \$6,000 for the 69th Annual Parade.

The theme of this year's parade is "Making Memories Since 1950," which Cloer was excited to hear all about in a meeting on Wednesday, March 27, with his daughter Pat and Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds General Manager Hilda Thomason.

Cloer, who is 88 years old and calls Hiwassee home, built the Fieldstone Inn years ago – now known as the Ridges Resort – and to this day, the Georgia Mountain Fair holds a special place in his heart.

His mom Bessie and his Aunt Jessie used to quilt at the Quiltin' Bee in Pioneer Village decades ago, and Bessie also sold dried leaves off the ever-popular money tree for a \$1 popular at the Fair.

One of his major desires is to see more members of the community get involved with the Fair and the parade so that the event can continue to grow for years to come.

Sharing that desire is Fairgrounds Manager Thomason.

"The parade used to be the biggest thing around here, but as the years have gone on, it has kind of dropped off some," said Thomason. "Several local businesses that used to get involved and build floats for the parade have stopped getting involved."

"The Georgia Mountain Fair has many new and exciting additions for this year's fair and parade. We want to honor our mountain heritage as we are looking forward to a bright future."

Cloer is hoping that his \$6,000 donation will inspire people to get in on the fun of building floats for the parade, which certainly helped to reinvigorate the parade in 2018.

"I think the response was great last year," said Cloer. "The comments I heard last year were that there was a little more excitement. I think

it's something that needs to be expanded, and I want to see all the kids out on the side of the roads excited about the parade."

The First Place float design will win \$2,700 in this year's parade, while Second Place will earn \$1,700 and Third Place \$600.

Thomason and the Fairgrounds are now taking applications from anyone interested in building a float for the parade, and already two applicants have submitted.

Business owners and community members are encouraged to get involved by building a float and maybe winning the contest, all while helping to support a long cherished community endeavor.

People can apply in person at the Fairgrounds Office or call 706-896-4191 for more information.

The parade will take place on July 20 at 11 a.m., though all entrants are requested to pre-register and arrive before 9:30 a.m. the day of the parade.

All the floats that are in the parade should reflect the theme of the parade "Making Memories Since 1950."



Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds Manager Hilda Thomason with Bob Cloer and his daughter, Pat, on Wednesday, March 27.  
Photo by Chad Stack

## Citing study, city reveals residential water rates to double in five years

By Chad Stack  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Members of the Hiwassee City Council and Mayor Liz Ordiales met on Monday, March 25, to discuss a variety of business in their monthly work session, including upcoming water rate increases.

Ordiales announced a water study conducted recently for the city by the University of North Carolina, which recommended an increase in residential water rates from the current monthly price of \$19.27 per 1,000 gallons to \$42.25 per 1,000 gallons over a five-year period.

"This is their recommendation right now," said Ordiales. "It's 1,000 gallons of water that you get for that base price, but I'm looking at trying to get 1,200 so it doesn't affect the elderly people that are in single homes that maybe use 1,010 gallons."

"This is strictly addressing residents, not business. Business rates we are going to leave alone for a while



Elijah Moody of Eastgate Life Academy delivering a speech to those gathered for the Hiwassee City Council Work Session on March 25.  
Photo by Chad Stack

because we want to attract new business."

By comparison, the residential water rate for Towns County Water Authority customers is currently \$24/month.

The mayor defended the need to raise residential water rates in the meeting, sharing

that the city hadn't raised rates for its residential customers in six years, and that the water/sewer systems are currently operating at a deficit.

In 2018 alone, the water/sewer system cost the city \$159,000 more to run than it took in from customers, which is something Ordiales says is unsustainable moving forward, especially since the city still owes \$3 million for outstanding water/sewer loans.

The city is still working to finalize its water rate plan, which will be made public as soon as it's available, and there are no plans currently to raise rates.

Also in the meeting, Ordiales welcomed Eastgate Life Academy student Elijah Moody to share a speech he'd prepared about Artificial Intelligence and how it might alter the world in the near future.

Moody and other students will deliver their speeches in the Top of Georgia Speech Contest on Thursday.  
See *Water Rates*, Page 8A

## Towns County to send record number of students to FBLA Nationals



Towns County FBLA students after the awards ceremony at the 2019 State Leadership Conference in Atlanta.

By Chase Crawford  
FBLA Reporter

Georgia Future Business Leaders of America held the State Leadership Conference and Competitive Events at the Hyatt Regency Hotel and Conference Center in Atlanta between March 22 and March 24.

Nineteen members from Towns County FBLA competed in 12 different individual, skill and performance business events.

TCHS was very successful, with 14 competitors finishing in the Top 10 in their

event. From those, 12 competitors will represent Georgia at the National Leadership Conference in San Antonio, Texas, from June 28 through July 2.

At Friday night's opening ceremony, senior member Emily Williams was awarded the Who's Who in Georgia FBLA Award and received a FBLA Who's Who Scholarship. Both were presented by Georgia FBLA Executive Director Monty Rhodes.

Towns County FBLA also received the Superior Chapter Award, the Market

Share Award, the Largest Local Chapter – Division 1, and the Gold Seal Chapter Award at the opening ceremony.

After months of preparation, the Awards Ceremony was the pinnacle of the conference, and the awarding of Top 10 Winners from Towns County High School included:

Jessica Johnson in Word Processing; Chase Crawford in Word Processing; Wes Calhoun in Word Processing; Nick Bradley in Computer Applications; Chase Rogers in Spreadsheet Applications  
See *FBLA*, Page 8A

## Battle of the Bands brings tough competition to Anderson Music Hall



Battle of the Bands winners were the Andrew Chastain Band and the Terry Dean Band, both pictured here.  
Photo by Lowell Nicholson

By Jarrett Whitener  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Eight bands took the stage at Anderson Music Hall on Saturday, March 30, to compete for the opportunity to be the opening act for Hank Williams Jr. on April 6.

Each band prepared two songs and were scored based on how they performed and audience reaction.

With the pressure on for

each group, the first group, Buck & Oz made sure to bring the energy to the audience, as people stood and danced or sang along to the songs with the band.

After the band finished its performance, the show went into a small intermission for the next band to set up while judges took the time to discuss and add up the scores of the band they just watched.

Local band Steven Phillips & Midnight Express

took the stage after Buck & Oz, impressing the judges with their performance and trying to outdo the competition.

During some of the performances, bands would throw out prizes and items to the audience such as shirts, with one group throwing out beach balls to be bounced around the music hall while people cheered for more music.

When the Andrew Chastain Band and the Terry Dean Band performed, they were the winners.  
See *Battle of Bands*, Page 8A

## Judge postpones Gowder, Heaton jury trial; new date to be determined

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Editor

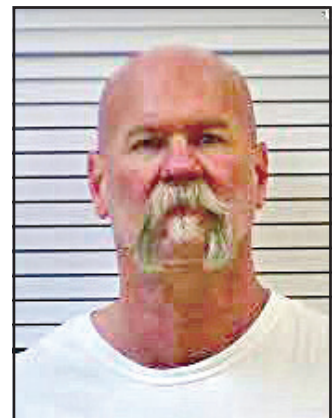
U.S. District Judge Richard W. Story has decided to postpone the jury trial in the federal prescription drug case against Mike Gowder and Dr. James Heaton.

Story made the decision in a March 27 telephone conference with Gowder and Heaton's attorneys, finding that continuing the trial would best serve the ends of justice.

The trial, which was to be held on the specially set date of April 8, will now be reset for a second time, though no new trial date had been scheduled by press time.

Feb. 11, 2019, was to serve as the initial trial date in the federal case, but Story agreed to reset the trial in December 2018 due to scheduling conflicts with Heaton's attorney.

His decision to continue,



James Heaton



Mike Gowder

or postpone, the trial comes after several recently filed motions by lawyers of both defendants.

In a joint motion filed on March 26, Gowder and Heaton's legal teams asked the judge to bar evidence introduced by federal prosecutors on March 25.

A week ago Monday, prosecutors submitted a

summary of the evidence they sought to introduce in the trial, including details about salacious encounters with patients and other alleged criminal activity.

As outlined in the summary, Heaton is accused of having sexual relationships with multiple female patients while prescribing them controlled substances; prescribing

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