

## Art contest to benefit Hamilton Gardens

Hamilton Gardens invites you to submit your two dimensional art in their "As Our Gardens Grow" art contest. This contest will benefit Hamilton Gardens at Lake Chatuge, Inc. and is the fore-runner to A Blooming Affair at

Hamilton Gardens. On April 14 and for several weekends following, there will be plant sales and various activities to celebrate the beauty of the Gardens and share with the community what is happening as our gardens grow.

Artists are encouraged to include one or several botanical elements in a creative yet realistic piece. The image size must be no smaller than 11" x 14" in oil, acrylic, watercolor, mixed media or drawing. Cash prizes will be awarded to the first, second, and third place winners with amounts to be announced later. The deadline to enter your art will be April 20th.

Our friends at Artworks in Hiawassee will be displaying all of the entries beginning April 23rd. ArtWorks Gallery is owned and operated by the Mountain Regional Arts and Crafts Guild, Inc. a 501c-3 organization, where members may sell their work and share their expertise with students on a regular basis by teaching classes. Artists participating in Hamilton Gardens' Art Contest, with the exception of the winner, may have their art entries available for sale while the exhibition is open at Artworks. A complete set of rules and guidelines and an entry form are available at [hamiltongardens.org](http://hamiltongardens.org). You may also call (706)970-0011 for more information. NT(Apr4,1)SH

## Classes at Towns County Library

Clean and Green: Thursday, April 12, 2018, 4 PM to 6 PM. Learn how to make and use homemade cleaning products without harmful chemicals! Make tub & shower, fruit & veggie, window & glass samples. Cost for supplies and materials for all 3 will be \$15. Kristy Ruryk, doTerra Wellness Advocate.

FIT Nutrition: Thursday, April 19, 2018, 4 PM to 5 PM. This free class will help you understand and gain knowledge on macro-nutrients, losing weight through a healthy diet, and minimizing your likelihood for disease through diet. A sample meal plan will be included, as well as how to shop for healthy foods on a budget! Class presented by: Celina Pizarro, RHIA, Wellness Coach, Holistic Nutrition, [www.cpfitpro.com](http://www.cpfitpro.com). T(Apr4,F1)SH

## Union/Towns County Tea Party Luncheon

Union/Towns County Tea Party has a monthly luncheon the 2nd Tuesday, 11:30 AM at Steve's Steakhouse.

## Tri-State Business Women – A Year of Giving

Once again in 2017, TSBW had the opportunity to offer donations to local charities and scholarships to students within the area. "We are so very proud of the hard work and commitment made by our membership," stated Paula Padgett, TSBW president. "Along with the outstanding support of area businesses and residents, we were able to coordinate two fundraising events in 2017 – Cinco de Mayo and the Fall Expo and Marketplace. Both events were financially successful and provided funding for 16 area non-profit organizations."

In 2017, TSBW was able to provide donations to S.A.F.E., Inc., Georgia Mountain Pregnancy Center, CHANGE, Habitat for Humanity, Union County Anti-Drug Coalition, Union County Family Connection, Union

and Fannin Counties Shop with A Cop, Almost There, Inc., Union/Towns Foster Children, Whisker's Project, We Care Support, NAMI GA, Inc. Union County Affiliate, as well as scholarship dollars to Mountain Education Charter High School, University of North Georgia-Blue Ridge and the North Georgia Technical College Foundation.

With the continued support of the community, the organization's goal to provide financial assistance in 2018 to local charities and scholarships will remain a reality as the organization begins promoting their Fiesta Night on April 20th at North Georgia Technical College. Tickets are available from any TSBW member for \$15 each or can be purchased through the Tri-State Business Women website. Sponsorships are avail-

able, and merchandise donated will be raffled starting at 7 PM to round out an evening with a delicious fajita dinner and fun to benefit our community.

Tri-State Business Women is a not-for-profit organization of entrepreneurial women in Union and surrounding counties who own, co-own, operate and/or accept full responsibility for a business and is or wants to be a positive force in the community. Meetings are held every Tuesday from 8 a.m. until 9 a.m. at Cabin Coffee of Blairsville. For more information about this organization, please contact Paula Padgett at (770) 597-7645 or Kimberly Miller at (706) 835-8582. Additional information is also available on our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/tri-state-business-women](http://www.facebook.com/tri-state-business-women) or website <http://www.tri-statebusinesswomen.com>.

## From the Desk of:



**Sheriff Clinton of Towns County**

### Safe Driving

This week I would like to talk about safe driving. It has been my experience in law enforcement that there are two contributing factors which remain the most common causes of traffic accidents: failure to maintain lane and failure to yield. According to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, over 40% of car crashes were due to driver errors caused by inattention or distractions (Farago, R. 2008). Many are concerned about speed and they should be. While speed is less often the cause of the collision, speed is likely the primary factor in determining how serious the accident is in terms of injury.

With the arrival of warmer weather we have many things to distract us. With all the extra activities on our minds it is easy to become distracted while driving. We can easily find ourselves thinking about the things we have going on in other areas of our lives, rather than thinking about what we are doing at the time. It is easy to forget that driving a motor vehicle is an inherently dangerous undertaking. We get so used to driving that we forget that we are traveling at a high rate of speed in a 2,000+ pound vehicle. Fifty-five miles per hour, or even 35

miles per hour is a high rate of speed and creates a lot of energy. In a collision, speed will determine the amount of energy exchanged; the greater the energy the more likely that serious injury or death will result.

As you travel the roadways please remember that an accident can happen in a fraction of a second. Please stay safe by being alert to possible dangers. Always look ahead and be prepared to avoid a possible collision. Always wear a seatbelt and never drink and drive. Your friends and family are counting on you to make it to your destination safely.

Another serious factor in motor vehicle crashes is driving under the influence. Towns County Sheriff's Office continues to aggressively enforce DUI laws in an effort to keep our citizens safe. Alcohol related crashes occur only when someone chooses to drive while impaired. Thus, they are 100% avoidable. Anyone who chooses to drink should not drive. Anyone caught driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be charged.

Another serious distraction is the use of a cell phone to text or even dial numbers. In the fraction of a second it takes to look down at the phone, a life can be lost. The Georgia General Assembly has passed a bill that will require the use of hands free technology for those who still choose to talk on the phone when driving. It is still safest to not use the phone at all, especially for younger and less experienced drivers.

It is my sincere hope that each of us will enjoy a happy and safe season of warm weather. Rest assured that your sheriff's office will continue to

work to protect the safety of our community. We encourage anyone with any questions or concerns to contact us via the internet at [www.townssheriff.com](http://www.townssheriff.com), or by calling 706-896-4444, or simply come by our offices at the Towns County Courthouse or Towns County Detention Center.

## Arts & Crafts Guild meeting

Mountain Regional Arts & Crafts Guild meets monthly on the second Tuesday of every month at Calvary Alliance Chapel, 1390 US Hwy 76 East in Hiawassee, GA. Calvary Alliance Chapel is in the Chatuge Harbor Shopping center across from the Towns County Schools. The Guild meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. Plan on arriving at 6 p.m. for networking with members.

Anyone interested in the Guild is invited to come to any monthly Guild meeting and are encouraged to bring a sample of your work. For more information, call ArtWorks at 706-896-0932. NT(Apr4,22)CA

## So. Appalachian Modern Quilt Guild meeting

Come join us on the second Thursday of each month, 6 p.m. at Bless My Stitches quilt shop in Murphy, NC. Our guild serves the tri-state area of Western North Carolina, North Georgia and Eastern Tennessee. Come explore new ways to create modern quilts! Questions call Pam Howard – 828-835-6025. N(Apr4,22)CA

## Hands-free...from Page 1A

distracted by other things. Inexperienced drivers are especially susceptible.

"For those who work in public safety and for the families that have lost loved ones, this is a very serious issue. I hope that Georgia drivers will heed this law and we will see fewer accidents on our roadways."

Gov. Deal is expected to sign the bill.

Also at the state capital last week, Gov. Deal announced that education initiatives all around Georgia were about to get a shot in the arm, thanks to an increase in the Fiscal Year 2019 state revenue estimate of more than \$194 million over initial projections.

"As a result, Deal amended his budget recommendation initially presented in January to include an additional \$167 million for K-12 education," per a news release. "These funds will ensure the state is fully funding the Quality Basic Education funding formula and providing local school systems with 100 percent of the state's share in financing for local schools."

Next school year will be the first time since 1985 that the state has fully funded QBE for all schools statewide, and Gov. Deal was excited to share the news.

"Georgia's strong economic growth in recent years has allowed us to invest heavily in education, transportation, public safety and health care," said Gov. Deal. "These investments have in turn helped to create more economic growth by helping Georgia achieve and maintain its state as the No. 1 state in which to do business."

"This year, as a result of stronger-than-anticipated state revenue performance and federal tax reform, I'm amending my FY 2019 budget to include additional funding in a number of areas, including education and transit, two areas that companies often cite as important factors in determining where they wish to grow and expand their businesses."

Towns County Schools Superintendent Dr. Darren Berrong said that the news was exceptionally welcome, especially since it has been so

long since the state was able to fully fund its portion of education.

"That will mean an increase of about \$70,000 for Towns County Schools this coming year," said Dr. Berrong. "We are extremely pleased with this decision, as over those years of austerity cuts, Towns County Schools has lost over \$4 million cumulatively. This is a step in the right direction for the education of Georgia students."

Also during the legislative session, Gov. Deal signed into law HB 918, the first state income tax reduction since 1937.

The tax cut will result in a drop in the top income tax rate for individuals and corporations in 2019, from 6 percent to 5.75 percent, and the bill doubles the standard deduction for taxpayers of all filing statuses.

The Georgia General Assembly is one of the largest state legislatures in the nation and meets each year from January until late March.

Composed of a House and Senate, the General Assembly's job is to set the state's annual operating budget and to propose laws.

overall consumer cost as low as possible.

"We haven't had a rate increase in five years. 2013 was our last rate increase," said Ordiales.

If the council votes to add this coverage, customers will receive a notice along with their water bill.

"The city will continue to have discussions on how to implement the program, the price of \$1.80 per month is a worthwhile investment," said Ordiales after the meeting. "This is not a mandatory program and you may choose not to participate. We hope that we are able to make this offer available by the summer."

ServLine is not a warranty program, according to the National Rural Water Association, and is backed by Hanover Insurance Company.

## Water Leak...from Page 1A

leaks," said Hazelet. "The primary benefit is that you would begin to kind of recapture some of that lost revenue. So, rather than you having to write off anything, ServLine would reimburse the city for the cost of the high water bill."

Customers will be able to choose to have water leak protection and the additional coverage that would cover water lines from the meter to the house, as well as an option to cover sewer lines.

"This is your choice," said Ordiales. "I brought Jenna here so she could explain to you what I think is a pretty good deal. For \$1.80 per month, so under \$24 per year, you have protection on your water."

Water line damage inside

the home would not be covered by the water leak protection, however, ServLine will pay a claim for the increased water bill due to leaks should residents choose to take the coverage.

The way it is now, the city will help with one high water bill due to a leak, and insurance customers will get the same one water leak bill per year claim.

"I will say that this is the way we would have to do it too, it would be once, so your customers would have to choose," said Hazelet. "Be aware, this is your one adjustment per 12 months, policy or claim."

The city council is considering which way to go on coverage and trying to keep