

# Bradshaw: CodeRED signup days are coming up

By Mark Novak  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Signing up for the free CodeRED Emergency Alert System is as easy as walking into the courthouse office of Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw.

Bradshaw announced in his Tuesday, April 17, regular commission meeting that he will be hosting two days to sign up for the CodeRED service.

"There's a lot of folks in the county who are not signed up on this," said Bradshaw. "We're going to have two signup days at the commissioner's office for folks who need help signing up."

"We're going to do that May 1, on a Tuesday, from 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the commissioner's office, and again on Tuesday, May 8, from 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m."

CodeRED is an emergency alert system that notifies residents of emergencies such as a tornado, wildfires, snow storms and impending floods, missing children and other persons, and power service interruptions.

Importantly, CodeRED delivers notifications by phone calls to landlines and cell phones, emails, texts, social media and/or mobile alerts.

"It will only take five or six minutes per person," said Bradshaw. "You do not even need an appointment."

Residents can also sign up at [TownsCountyGA.org/emergency-alert-system.html](http://TownsCountyGA.org/emergency-alert-system.html).

In other business, Bradshaw discussed that he will be working closely with Towns County Sheriff Chris Clinton's office to stop the graffiti painting on Bell Mountain.

"I received a letter from our liability insurance com-



Photo by Mark Novak

**County Attorney Robb Kiker and Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw in the regular county meeting on April 17.**

pany," said Bradshaw. "It's recommended that allowing park attendees, people who attend the park, to paint the rocks be stopped."

Added Bradshaw: "We are going to stop the painting."

Five cameras have been installed and five more are on the way, and each camera is equipped with GPS and sends the pictures directly to the monitoring station.

Sheriff Clinton has promised to conduct extra patrols on Bell Mountain, and his department will be monitoring the cameras closely.

"We want everyone to enjoy the beauty of Bell Mountain, but do it safely," said Clinton after the meeting. "We also want to make sure it remains a family-friendly environment."

Residents that attend the park and see someone painting are encouraged to contact the sheriff's office.

Also in the April 17 meeting, Bradshaw announced that the county's phone systems and internet services will be

switched from Windstream to ETC and Blue Ridge Mountain EMC.

"That will save the taxpayers of this county between \$18,000 and \$19,000," said Bradshaw. "To be exact, right now, it's \$1,566 per month."

Towns County Attorney Robb Kiker is working hard to recover some of the costs incurred by the county because of the opioid epidemic.

"There's been a lot of pressure from law firms throughout the United States, contacting states, cities, counties and various governmental institutions concerning the pending opioid litigation that is being filed in the Northern District of Ohio," said Kiker.

Added Kiker: "The crisis in the United States is that opioid abuse is the leading cause of death for people under the age of 50."

Kiker has been talking with many different law firms to protect the county's interests in these upcoming lawsuits, and he gave his recommendation to

Bradshaw.

"My recommendation is to go with the law firm from Athens, Georgia, local," said Kiker. "Now, that sounds a little strange when you consider the scope of this, but the law firm, Blasingame Firm in Athens, has dealt with class action suits and is one of the leading firms in the United States for class action suits."

Added Kiker: "Right now, nationwide, over 700 counties and cities have signed up on the opioid litigation, and there's 159 counties in Georgia, and I think they are approaching 100 right now and the other ones are trying to decide."

After the meeting, Bradshaw confirmed he will be signing the agreement with the Blasingame Law Firm within the next week to move forward with the lawsuit.

Towns County renewed its agreement with Air Methods Advantage to provide free coverage for every Towns County resident in the case that they may need to be airlifted in a medical crisis to another hospital.

Union General Hospital Administrator Leslie Daniel addressed those who attended the meeting.

"On behalf of Union General, we're more than happy to partner with the commissioners' office in doing this wonderful service for the citizens of Towns and Union counties," said Daniel.

Award-winning 4-H speaker Hannah Minchew recited her speech on the topic

of child abuse in the April 17 meeting.

James Powell was appointed by Bradshaw to the Towns County Board of Elections and Registration, also.

A proclamation was signed by Bradshaw proclaiming May 5 to be Towns County Wildfire Preparedness Day.



Photo by Mark Novak

**Towns County Sheriff Chris Clinton with one of the new painting prohibited signs at Bell Mountain Park.**

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Photo by Shawn Jarrard

**Photo by Shawn Jarrard Fourth-grader Jaycie Cross and fifth-grader Callie Drew Livingston demonstrating the "straw egg drop" for the board. The drop is one of 18 events the Science Olympiad Team competed in at the March 24 regional tournament. They will compete at state on May 12. Also pictured, team sponsor Lisa Ledford.**

be removed from the outfield to make room for a four to five-inch sand base layer.

"Right now, we're looking at possibly putting in a Kentucky bluegrass instead of the Bermuda," said Dr. Berrong, noting that the grass phase will likely begin this fall. "The bluegrass will stay green throughout the winter, where our Bermuda is going dormant and then all winter long just soaking up all of that snow and all that water. We think that's part of the issue as well."

Dr. Berrong said he was hopeful that total project costs would come in under \$80,000 and completely solve the problem.

"I know that seems like a high number, but it's probably the lowest possible number we could get to fix this field without going into some drastic numbers," said Dr. Berrong.

The High School baseball team has been unable to play a single home game this year,

though Young Harris College did let them play a game in Zell B. Miller Stadium.

In other news, Dr. Berrong said that, for summer construction projects, bids came in higher than expected.

"So, we had to go back and take some things out of the construction process for this summer," said Dr. Berrong.

The main projects for this summer include roof replacement of the middle/high school building, HVAC systems replacements, and new drop ceilings throughout, though rewiring will have to wait until next summer.

"Speaking about school safety, we did have a GEMA meeting this week with all emergency personnel in the county," said Dr. Berrong, switching gears in his report. "We went through, not just a school shooting situation, we went through our entire emergency operations handbook."

Added Berrong:

"Someone from GEMA was here to walk through that and point out things that they thought were issues in our operations plan. Everyone was able to point out certain issues that they felt were a problem for their specific department, and we'll be meeting back again in May to make sure we've made the correct changes in that handbook."

Dr. Berrong said that the schools are planning an active shooter drill for when kids are out for the summer, and that they'll likely make it an annual exercise "to maintain the safety of our school system."

Also in the meeting, the board enjoyed a live demonstration from two students on the elementary school's Science Olympiad team, which finished Second Place in the Straw Egg Drop at a March 24 regional competition at the University of North Georgia.

## Bumblebees are very busy pollinators



By Carol Chandler  
Preservation Committee,  
Master Naturalist

The bumblebees have arrived here in North Georgia. They are frequenting flowers with a native heritage: azaleas, blueberries, crabapples, early blooming apples, pears and more. Since blooms are often less abundant than some pollinators, I often allow some early blooming "weeds" such as turnip or collard greens, violets and more to provide more

sources of pollen or nectar. Also, I recently learned that Bumblebees are endangered. So, many of those I mentioned are providing early pollen and nectar and help bumblebees and other insects. Providing pollen and nectar throughout the year is very helpful for their survival.

Blueberries are native all across Georgia. There are low bush and some rabbit eye in southern Georgia, rabbit eye varieties in middle to northern Georgia. The northern high bush varieties are more cold tolerant and mine ripen early June. Stretching the season with clustering those that pollinate each other helps both people and pollinators. One pearl of wisdom is learning that birds prefer mulberries to blueberries. Red mulberry is the variety that is native to

the US. A pollinator, male and female, will be needed. I like to use the University of Georgia's very helpful website: [uga.edu](http://uga.edu) for many gardening questions and to verify with other websites.

The native crab apples have a good reputation for providing pollen over a longer time span. I have found this valuable in attracting pollinators. I have tried to choose species that are pollinators for the duration of their bloom times. It also is helpful for adverse weather in that at least there is another increased opportunity for more fruit. Hope the birds and deer leave us some fruit.

For more information, contact Clare Johnson at the Georgia Mountain Research and Education Center (706-745-2655) or visit the website: [www.gmrec.uga.edu](http://www.gmrec.uga.edu).  
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