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90-day moratorium on building permits in Hiawassee

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

In a 3-1 vote, the Hiawassee City Council decided on Tuesday, May 2, to impose a 90-day moratorium on building permits for new construction within the city.

During the 90 days, the city will be working to fix its building guidelines contained within the 2010 Comprehensive Plan.

The moratorium, according to Acting Mayor Liz Ordiales, is the responsible way for the city to update its building guidelines, so that the city is not granting permits

that go against what it's trying to fix.

"The only thing that is really stopping is brand new construction," said Ordiales. "If you want to put an addition onto your home, no problem. If you want to add a bathroom, no problem. If you want to put in solar panels, no problem. It's only brand new construction."

"Any kind of trade permits, such as electric, plumbing, HVAC, those are all available right now without a problem. It's just brand new structures."

Council member Jay Chastain Jr. and several members of the public who were in attendance objected

to the moratorium, but Ordiales explained that the moratorium was necessary to get the city's 2010 Comprehensive Plan in order.

One complaint lodged against the moratorium in last week's meeting had to do with the lack of public notice leading up to the moratorium.

Ordiales replied to this complaint by saying that the city attorney had advised the city council that it only needed a resolution to impose the moratorium, and since the city was eager to begin fixing the Comprehensive Plan, they went forward with the moratorium.

The acting mayor also said that, should the city

complete its overhaul of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan sooner than 90 days, the moratorium would be lifted early.

"I'm getting a lot of questions about the moratorium," said Ordiales following the meeting. "The intent of the moratorium is to make sure that our guidelines that we have in place, which are seven years old, are appropriate to adjust for the growth coming into the city."

"Growth is coming, we just need to make sure that it is within what we want our city to look like. Right



Hiawassee City Council members Kris Berrong and Rayette Ross. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

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Gov. Deal signs important legislation to protect firefighters

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

ELLIJAY – Firefighters don't ask what they might be exposed to before running into burning buildings.

And before the signing of House Bill 146 on Thursday, May 4, if they contracted cancers from exposure to carcinogenic burning chemicals, their own insurance coverage for cancers were on their own.

Effective Jan. 1, 2018, firefighters all over Georgia will gain access to insurance coverage for cancers specific to firefighting.

Gov. Nathan Deal met with legislators to sign what has become known as the "firefighter cancer bill" last Thursday at Gilmer County



L-R: District 51 State Sen. Steve Gooch, Towns County Fire Chief Harold Copeland, Gov. Nathan Deal, Union County Batt. Chief Richard Jones and Union County Fire Chief David Dyer. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

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TVA: Lake Chatuge means jobs, money

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

BLAIRSVILLE – As part of a yearly "River Tour," the Tennessee Valley Authority held a briefing for local officials at Cabin Coffee in Blairsville to discuss area lake levels and recent recreation studies on Monday, May 1.

Members of the various departments within TVA spent the last week traveling throughout TVA properties in the valleys in Georgia, Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Virginia, Tennessee and North Carolina giving updates of the spring fill and what is happening in the river system.

Lake Chatuge and all other lakes within the TVA should be at full summer pool by June 1, possibly before if



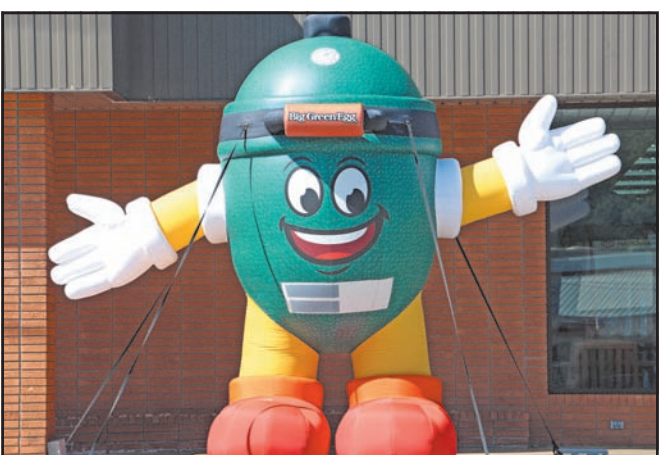
Burt Robinson of TVA speaking at Cabin Coffee in Blairsville on May 1. Photo/Lily Avery

rainfall continues at a steady and consistent rate.

In addition to water levels, information from a

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Georgia Mountain Eggfest a delight for food lovers



The inflatable Big Green Egg character outside Hiawassee Hardware.

By Shawn Jarrard
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Staff Writer

The Seventh Annual Georgia Mountain Eggfest is almost upon Hiawassee, and the savory smells of more than 100 Green Eggs cooking will soon be drifting down into

the city.

Festivities kick off on Friday, May 19, with a free-to-attend meet and greet from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds. Guests are asked to bring a covered dish for six people

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Wildfire Preparedness Day promotes fire safety in Towns county

By Lily Avery
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Staff Writer

Smokey Bear, fire trucks and the smell of grilled hot dogs filled the Hiawassee Square for the National Wildfire Preparedness Day celebration on Saturday, May 6.

Several facets of fire safety and awareness were presented at the event last weekend, including representatives from the Towns County Fire Department, Towns County Fire Corps and the Towns County Fire Coalition.

And to add a little color to the mix, Operation PUP (prevent unwanted PUP) pitched a tent on the square as well to sell beautiful spring

See Wildfire, Page 6A



Fire professionals who work in Towns County gathered to promote Wildfire Preparedness Day on the Hiawassee Town Square on Saturday, May 6. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

National Day of Prayer a big success for county, area

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

YOUNG HARRIS – More than 100 people from Towns and beyond gathered to pray for the nation, their community and each other at the 66th annual National Day of Prayer.

The event was held at the Towns County Recreation and Conference Center on Mining Gap Trail, Thursday, May 4.

Each year, a theme is selected for the countrywide observance, with this year's being "For Your Great Name's Sake! Hear Us... Forgive Us... Heal Us." This year's theme is inspired by Daniel 9:19 from the Bible, "O Lord, listen! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hear and act! For your sake, my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear



Donnie Jarrard with the Towns County Sheriff's Office. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

your Name."

After enjoying a time of fellowship and a free breakfast of donuts and coffee, attendees took their seats at tables all across the gymnasium to join together in pray and listen to

the keynote speaker for the event, District 50 State Sen. John Wilkinson.

Sen. Wilkinson, above all else, is a teacher, having

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Young Harris City Council adopts changes to overlay district

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
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YOUNG HARRIS – The second and final reading of an amendment to the overlay district to allow Young Harris College to build a 5-story residence hall was held at the Young Harris City Council meeting on Tuesday, May 2.

After a variance request asking the county to allow construction of a 5-story residence hall was denied last fall due to a county ordinance against building 5-story structures, the council began working toward finding a solution that would allow YHC to build adjacent to the campus, in the overlay district, while still adhering to the ordinance.

The proposed building consisted of increased housing options for students. Currently, the college is close to housing



L-R: Young Harris City Council members Samuel Leslie, Dr. John Kelley, Angela Smith and Deputy City Clerk Nicolette Wade. Photo/Lily Avery

capacity and expects growth to continue, leading to the need for more on-campus housing.

The council first decided to move forward with an amendment to the zoning ordinance to gain construction

approval during the March meeting, after which City Attorney Marvin Harkins began rewriting the ordinance to reflect the desires of the council.

Before the first reading

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Chatuge	1,924.24
Nottely	1,772.24

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N. Mt. Zion

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