

Flooding...from Page 1A

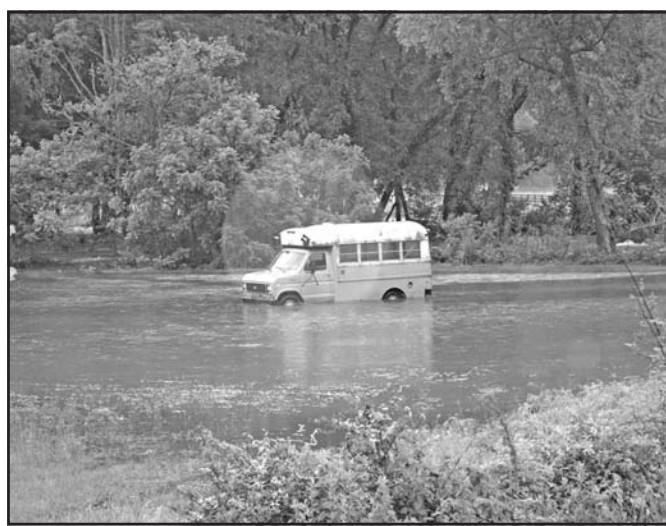
as well as erosion along the waterways.

"The Watershed Coalition does not come out and remove trees from streams," said Moore. "However, we can advise land owners the best way to remove them properly that's best for the stream. But we can't remove them."

"We do provide technical recommendations on the best way to fix stream bank erosion problems, and we can provide the best way and appropriate practices that should be put in place. If your culvert has blown out, it was probably undersized and should be replaced with a larger pipe."

The water levels of Lake Chatuge have been so high that authorities last week were releasing water from the lake.

"When they release the water, it comes through with such a force that you can



Rex Walls' camper in floodwaters coming from the Hiwassee River.
Photo by Lowell Nicholson

hear it prior to seeing it," said Moore.

Also last week, Georgia 75 up from Helen closed for more than a day due to torrential

downdraining that caused an eroded bank to fall away from the highway, requiring an emergency repair.

Festival...from Page 1A

Iraq War Veteran and Purple Heart Medal recipient Chuck Honaker.

"First of all, I'd like to say it's a tremendous honor for me to be here, to be in the presence of other brothers and sisters in arms," said Honaker. "This past Monday on Memorial Day, we gave honor to more than one million service members who gave their all in service to our country since its founding. It is because of their sacrifice that we enjoy the freedoms that we enjoy today."

Added Honaker: "I would like to thank the organizers of this event for setting aside a block of time for veterans to enjoy being here, and at no cost for them to get in."

Honaker asked all the veterans in attendance to stand to a round of applause and thanks for their service to the country.

Next, Young Harris Mayor Andrea Gibby addressed those in attendance.

"We're here to have a good time, but we're also honoring and remembering everybody who has served and everybody who has sacrificed," said Gibby. "So, for those of you on the stage with me, for those of you who are helping, for those of you in the audience, thank you for all you have done."

Continued Gibby: "Last year, it was so hot we could barely stand it, so we're going to have a good time regardless of the rain, and we're going

to dance because there is a fantastic group that's getting ready to start, and the mayor likes to dance."

On the history of the festival, Gibby said there was much uncertainty about the idea of holding a seafood festival in the mountains, but the idea has gained steam and become a huge success.

"Because of the people who make this happen, we have been so successful over the last three years," said Gibby. "So, I say thank you to everybody - people who are cooking, people who are eating, people who are vendors. I'm so thankful for every one of you."

Added Gibby: "I love where I live. We love this

beautiful, enchanted valley."

Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw also welcomed the crowd to Towns County and presented ribbons for the seafood competition.

Stephen Cross, owner of Florida's Finest Seafood, took three blue ribbons for his participation and food preparation, and Black Jack received one as well.

After the ceremony, Cross gave thanks to his mom, Chalar Cross, who was present with him at the festival.

"If it wasn't for my mom's recipes, I wouldn't have received these ribbons today," said Cross.

As the ceremony closed, entertainment was provided by the Gold Standard Band from Atlanta.



Stephen Cross, owner of Florida's Finest Seafood, took three blue ribbons for his food on June 1. Pictured here with mom Chalar Cross.
Photo by Mark Novak

DoD: At least 126 bases report water contaminants linked to cancer, birth defects



By Tara Copp, Military Times

The water at or around at least 126 military installations contains potentially harmful levels of perfluorinated compounds, which have been linked to cancers and developmental delays for fetuses and infants, the Pentagon has found.

In a March report provided to the House Armed Services Committee, the Pentagon for the first time publicly listed the full scope of the known contamination https://partner-mco-archival.s3.amazonaws.com/client_files/1524589484.pdf.

The Defense Department identified 401 active and Base Closure and Realignment installations in the United States with at least one area where there was a known or suspected release of perfluorinated compounds.

These included 36 sites with drinking water contamination on-base, and more than 90 sites that reported either on-base or off-base drinking water or groundwater contamination, in which the water source tested above the Environmental Protection Agency's acceptable levels of perfluorooctane sulfonate or perfluorooctanoic acid, also known as PFOS and PFOAs.

The man-made chemicals, which can be used to make items heat or water resistant, are found in everyday household, food and clothing items, even take-out food wrappers.

At military bases, however, they are concentrated in the foam used to put out aircraft fires.

Maureen Sullivan, deputy assistant secretary of defense for environment, safety and occupational health, said DoD has already made safety changes at affected bases, including installing filters and providing bottled water to families living there.

ed in a lengthy chart attached toward the end of the congressional report, and will be working with the Centers for Disease Control next year on a study of the potential long-term effects of exposure.

Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson was asked about the exposure this week on Capitol Hill, where she was testifying about the service's fiscal 2019 budget needs.

"It's an issue not just in New Hampshire, but at military installations across this country," said Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, D-New Hampshire. "We have 1,500 people who have been tested with elevated levels in the Portsmouth area, who are anxious about their future and their children's future. And I know there are many people throughout the Air Force and our other military installations who share that concern."

In all, 25 Army bases; 50 Air Force bases, 49 Navy or Marine Corps bases and two Defense Logistics Agency sites have tested at higher than acceptable levels for the compounds in either their drinking water or groundwater sources. Additionally, DoD tested 2,668 groundwater wells both on and in the surrounding off-base community and found that 61 percent of them tested above the EPA's recommended levels.

It won't be a quick fix, Sullivan said.

The first target for the department was to address the 36 direct drinking water sources that are contaminated and "cut off that human exposure as soon as possible," Sullivan said. DoD was only able to do that quickly at the 24 locations where it manages the water supply. At those locations it has installed filters at the water source or inside base housing, relocated water usage to another well, or provided alternate drinking water, such as water bottles, for personnel, Sullivan said.

For the other 12 drinking water sources, provided either by a contracted vendor or through the local utility, it's a harder fix, because the EPA's guidelines are not enforceable. For example, commercial airports and industrial sites also use the foam, which could impact a municipality's drinking water, but it will be up to

that municipality to determine if it will test and make fixes to comply with the EPA's guidelines, Sullivan said.

"It's up to the owner of that system to make a decision on what they're going to do," Sullivan said. "So we're on a fine line of trying to provide drinking water to our folks when we're buying it from somebody else."

In those cases the department is working with the vendors or utilities on a solution, and providing bottled water or filters as needed, Sullivan said.

Each base should have its water information posted, Sullivan said. Families with any concerns should be able to go to the base's restoration program manager - on-site point person tasked with addressing environmental cleanup issues - with their questions.

DoD has already spent \$200 million studying and testing its water supply, and also providing either filters, alternate wells or bottled water to address contamination.

For the groundwater sources, both on-base and off-base, however, cleanup will take years to address, Sullivan said. Those groundwater sites will be added to the department's long list of environmental cleanup responsibilities it has at each of its more than 2,900 facilities around the world, and will prioritize that cleanup based on risk. Sullivan estimates the groundwater perfluorinate cleanup will add about \$2 billion to the \$27 billion previously identified cleanup projects for which the department is responsible.

The services are also phasing out the firefighting foam they use and working on replacements that do not contain perfluorinated compounds, Sullivan said.

Brought to you by Vietnam Veterans of America chapter 1101, Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 1101 and the Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America (AVVA) meet on the third Thursday of every month at the Major Leon Davenport Veterans Center at 1:15 PM. All Vietnam ERA veterans are welcome to join.

We also meet every Wednesday morning for have biscuits and BS at the Blairsville restaurant at 8 AM.

Library...from Page 1A

funds for those two libraries," said FOLTC President Suzanne Carter. "The money is used to buy books and other materials, also to supplement children's programming. So, we help to pay for part of the summer reading club every year."

"And we do it through bake sales, book sales - and this is an ongoing book sale all the time. This is a book store."

Indeed, the Friends used to host a once-a-year book and bake sale, but ever since the completion of the \$1 million renovation of the Mountain Regional Library, the Friends have had use of space in the Young Harris library for a permanent book store.

"The wooden shelves are always full of books and they can be sold anytime the library is open," said Carter. "All the books in here have been donated. We keep our shelves full. And all the proceeds that we raise go for our two libraries."

Even the membership fees collected to join the Friends of the Libraries of

Towns County go to buy books, and the members are all volunteers.

"Back when the state wasn't giving any money for books, we were the only funds they had to buy books," said Carter. "Now, the state has reinstated some of the materials money, based on per capita ... (but) it's not a lot of money."

The Mountain Regional Library System operates and maintains both public libraries in Towns County as well as one in Union County and one in Fannin County, serving a combined population of about 58,000 people, according to the MRLS website.

"Our goal is to offer library services to all citizens of the participating counties that meet their informational, educational and recreational needs," said MRLS Director Vince Stone at MountainRegionalLibrary.org.

Continued Stone: "We are committed to free and equitable access to basic library service for all, lifelong learning and the enjoyment of reading,

and service that is thorough, impartial and confidential."

The Friends go a long way in helping Stone keep library services going in Towns County.

One of the things money raised by the Friends allows the MRLS to do is put on the annual summer reading programs for children.

Both Towns County branches offer children the opportunity to participate in a reading list of books based on a particular theme, listen to live storytelling, participate in games, learn arts and crafts, and attend special guest appearances.

Another service the Friends help with is the TumbleBook Library, which is a collection of online e-books. If a child is not physically able to travel to the library for whatever reason, then the library can come to them electronically.

This same concept applies to adults as well via the internet, thanks to help from the Friends.



Customers of the FOLTC Book/Bake/Media Sale on Saturday, June 2.
Photo by Mark Smith

Concerts...from Page 1A

city is to have family events, and that's one of the things we talked about during the campaign, was to have more family events on the square," said Ordiales. "So, I felt it was great if we could provide some type of option for the kids to come watch a movie."

"At first, it was going to be a fairly expensive proposition, because the licensing for each movie is not cheap. But the Towns County Library has a license for the year, so we've been able to use their license to offer these movies every other week."

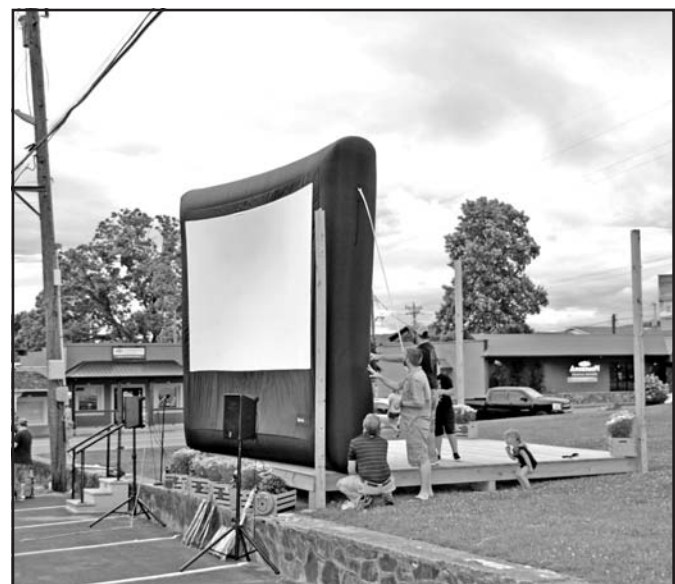
Before the movies, Ordiales provided footballs and bean bag toss games for the children to play, bringing life and fun to the Hiawasse Town Square.

"It was fun at the first movie and such a joy to see the children playing on the square," said Ordiales afterward. "I would like to continue the entertainment after summer is over."

"The summer is for the kids, but after the summer ends, I would like to do more movies for the retirees in the community, like Casablanca and things like that."

Thinking quickly when the weather threatened to not cooperate for that Saturday's Holman Autry Band concert, Ordiales moved everything inside the Towns County Civic Center.

Despite the rain, concertgoers were able to sit and enjoy the band as its members played many of their



The new big screen projection setup that will allow for an ongoing movie series on the Hiawasse Town Square this summer.
Photo by Mark Novak

original songs, with a few popular covers thrown in for good measure.

"The Holman Autry Band is always our opening act for the summer concert series - they've been coming here for years," said Ordiales. "They're great guys to work with, they do Southern Rock, some of their own music and some big hits."

Moving forward, the concerts will still go on during inclement weather, providing the civic center does not have a prior engagement planned.

Ordiales promises a continuing lineup for the concert series and movies on the square, with the J.C. Cloggers/North Georgia Dance Arts on

June 9, and another family-friendly movie on June 8.

Ordiales has put the city's Hotel/Motel Tax to work for the community to pay for the equipment to show the movies, and through grants provided by Georgia Council of the Arts she was able to fix up the square and provide the concert series.

Popcorn, soda and chocolate will be sold on the movie nights, and the proceeds will benefit different community causes.

"The proceeds from the first movie went to the Towns County Football Team, and we will be donating to a different cause after every movie," said Ordiales.

Bradshaw...from Page 1A

offices.

Time has worked in the county's favor - by delaying the initial decision and continuing negotiations, the county will be receiving approximately \$21,800 in savings per year by using BRMEMC for internet and phone services.

"It's going to be a

whole new phone system for 99 percent of our county," said Bradshaw. "The sheriff's office, the tax accessor's office, we're getting all new phones, they're touchscreens."

Furthermore, county employees will no longer have to dial a phone number to reach another county office, as the

Fair...from Page 1A

thousands of people flock to the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds to enjoy the festivities made available by the Fair.

From the wide variety of music over the nine days of the Fair to the hand-made arts and crafts and pure revelry in Southern cultural tradition come alive, the Fair is a unique offering of Towns County to its residents and surrounding areas.

Also this year, the Fair is hoping to garner plenty of support for the hometown Georgia Mountain Fair Parade on July 21, which will feature a top prize of \$2,500 for the best float.

New to the Fair in 2018 is the Human Cannonball Daredevil Show, which is a family of daredevil acrobats that will be performing three shows daily.

As always, Fairgoers will be treated to old-time Southern traditions in the Pioneer Village, with plenty

of "Old Ways" demonstrations showing folks how moonshine, hominy, quilts, soap and more were made way back when.

"And we've added to our organ display down in the Antique Farm Museum in the Exhibit Hall," said Thomason. "We've got the biggest (antique) organ display in the Southeast."

Of course, Fair patrons won't want to miss out on the Miss Georgia Mountain Fair Pageant on July 23, and applications are available at the fairgrounds for would-be participants.

Those seeking information on how to volunteer for the 68th annual Fair can call the office at (706) 896-4191.

And for people who just can't wait to travel to the fairgrounds for a fun-filled family outing, Justin Moore will be returning to Anderson Music Hall on Saturday, June 30.

Tickets are still available for his show at GeorgiaMountainFairgrounds.com.

Plus, the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds will be hosting the annual Independence Day Fireworks Celebration on July 4.

The fireworks won't go off until about 9:45 p.m., but there will be tons of family activities, music and food available ahead of the big show.

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