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Made In Georgia Festival opens this weekend

By **Jeremy Foster**
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

YOUNG HARRIS—The family-friendly fun and excitement of the Made In Georgia Festival is returning to the North Georgia Mountains this weekend, featuring two days of access to over 100 Peach State vendors at the Towns County Recreation and Conference Center June 25-26.

2022 marks the fourth time the Lake Chatuge Chamber of Commerce has brought in vendors from across Georgia who specialize in products that were grown, harvested, canned, baked, stitched or crafted right here in the Bulldog, Hawk and Falcon Nation.

The event will kick off on Saturday and run from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., with the second day of the festival set for Sunday from 11 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Guests can expect a complete gamut of foods, arts and crafts, including but not limited to pecans, jellies, soaps, body lotions, human and dog clothing, bread, candles, pickles, pottery and syrups.

And Made In Georgia has come to be known for its workshop demonstrations over the years, this time featuring blacksmithing, falconry, a shrub cocktail demonstration, gardening and wildlife, and more, all combined with pure Southern Pride.

As usual, Chamber President Candace Lee is spearheading the event and was excited last week to share her delight for what is to come.

"The idea transpired years ago," Lee said, "when we were flipping through the Georgia Grown annual magazine and saw how many

Georgia-based farmers, growers and different products that they made.

"So, we thought that it would be a great idea to have a festival that highlighted and showcased all of them and their hard work together under one roof to share with the public so they can be aware of them and enjoy their products as well, because they are providing services to the people of Georgia, and it will help grow their business as well to help it all just stay within the state and community.

"We can already tell this year will be the biggest one yet, as we already have added nearly 25% more vendors than last year's festival, and some of them will be making their debut. We did not want to turn anyone away, because some people do come all the way from near the Georgia/Florida

line just to be a part of the action here.

"The vendors mean the most to me personally because of how hard they all work to make things for us to enjoy, and they take so much pride in what they do."

Of course, Lee also "absolutely loves" the crowd and the mass amount of people who turn up each year, along with "the happiness they get out of it and the great sense of togetherness."

"It is without a doubt my other favorite thing about this festival, because although the vendors are the backbone to it, none of us could do anything at all and this even be possible without all of the great people in our community," Lee said. "So, thank you everyone for making this bigger and better each year."

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Buster Brown of Georgia Mountain Falconry with owl Yonah. Georgia Mountain Falconry will be offering exciting demonstrations at the family-friendly Made In Georgia Festival this weekend. Photo/Submitted

Towns Co. GOP observes Flag Day Tuesday, June 14



Towns County veterans Brandy Creel and Ash Todd performed a symbolic American flag-folding ceremony with assistance from veteran Scott Drummond on June 14 Flag Day. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

By **Mark Smith**
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

To celebrate Flag Day 2022, the Towns County GOP hosted a Flag Fest on Tuesday, June 14, in the parking lot of Patriot Plaza from 5-7 p.m., featuring hot dogs, cake, baked beans, coleslaw, chips, soda and patriots.

Sole Commissioner Bradshaw attended the event and spoke briefly; Towns County's own Summer Rahmsang the National Anthem;

and Becky Jake, who recently moved to Young Harris from California, sang an inspiring rendition of "America the Beautiful."

Veteran couple Ash Todd and Brandy Creel performed a flag-folding ceremony as veteran Scott Drummond recited the symbolism for each fold, and Bradshaw spelled out the importance of Flag Day, noting with pride that "the flag stands for our freedom."

"A lot of people have fought and died for our freedom in this country, and I

think that people should respect the flag and respect the freedoms we have, and never take that freedom for granted," Bradshaw said.

Per www.constitution-center.org, the flag was authorized by the Continental Congress on June 14, 1777, by a motion specifying that "the flag of the thirteen United States be 13 stripes alternate red and white; that in the union be 13 stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation."

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Development headlines Civic Association meeting

By **Brittany Holbrooks**
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

In a show of support for the community, the Towns County Civic Association held its annual membership meeting at the Senior Center on June 16, opening the doors for members and the general public alike.

Made up solely of volunteers, the Civic Association does not receive funding from local sources or otherwise. Its purpose is, according to President John Clemens, to serve as an advocacy group for residents, and especially during the meeting, as advocates on the subject of development.

Guest speaker Laura Morrissey opened the event by explaining cryptocurrency to the audience, considering its increasing relevance in the world and local discussions about the mining process.

She covered the pros and cons of digital payments and accounts, offering up a bit of history on Bitcoin and citing the nearby Murphy, North Carolina, mining operation as an example of a facility.

A large part of the reason Towns County has put a halt to the possibility of crypto-mining establishments is because such activities require the building of warehouses that house loud equipment needed for mining.

At 70-140 decibels, it's



Hiwassee Mayor Liz Ordiales was one of the featured speakers in the June 16 Towns County Civic Association annual meeting, offering plenty of updates on the city. Photo by Brittany Holbrooks

difficult for people and animals to live near a mining facility, which could prove disastrous for a town that prides itself on its appeal to tourism and rural living.

What's more, Morrissey reported that producing a single unit of Bitcoin is equivalent to about 13 years' worth of energy from one household, which has other environmental ramifications.

But the benefits of maintaining a digital wallet shouldn't be ignored, either, Morrissey said, as with over 10,000 cryptos of varying values, there's

plenty of room for people to choose what they want to invest in, though, like with all investments, volatility should be considered, especially in the current financial environment.

Also, with transactions occurring over a completely digital medium, Morrissey pointed out that crypto can be used as valid payment around the world and nullifies the need for government regulation, and many cryptocurrencies are designed to be resistant to inflation.

And while there may be See *TCCA Meeting*, Page 5A

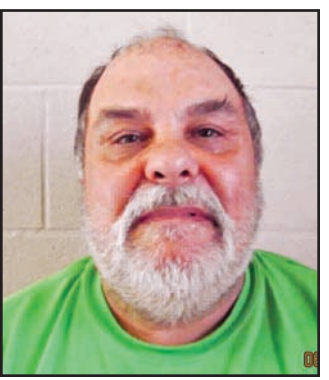
Undercover drug bust nets two arrests, meth seizure

News Special
Towns County Herald

Towns County Sheriff's Office continues to focus on drug dealers and trafficking in the county, with an undercover investigator having set up a drug bust on Thursday, June 2.



Jimmy Charles McCoy



Wilson Jack Moss



Sheriff Ken Henderson and Chief Deputy Gene Moss with one of the latest drug hauls: approximately one-half pound of methamphetamine with fentanyl. Photo/Half Facebook

The undercover investigator purchased methamphetamine laced with fentanyl from two individuals who were dealing drugs in Towns County, resulting in the confiscation of approximately a half pound of meth laced with fentanyl. Cash was also confiscated.

Wilson Jack Moss, 62, of McCaysville, was arrested and charged with possession of methamphetamine with intent to distribute, trafficking in methamphetamine, and possession of methamphetamine. Jimmy Charles McCoy,

53, of Morganton, was arrested and charged with possession of methamphetamine with intent to distribute, trafficking in methamphetamine, possession of methamphetamine, and the sale of a controlled substance.

Sheriff Ken Henderson said he was pleased to see these dangerous drugs confiscated before they could be distributed in the community.

The Towns County Sheriff's Office remains committed to making the community safe through ongoing initiatives like "Operation Sting."

Sid Turner showcases local Civil War history, items

By **Jeremy Foster**
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

For many months, the Towns County Historical Society has been unable to hold its regular meetings in the group's Old Rec Gym headquarters as the facility undergoes retrofitting to house local government offices in advance of renovations beginning at the Towns County Courthouse.

Its temporary meeting place has been the Towns County Civic Center, however, due to conflicts over the Board of Elections requiring the center for runoff early voting purposes last week, the society held its June meeting in the Senior Center.

The night began with old and new business, financial and membership reports, and a welcoming of new members Chris Durham, Stephanie Brown, Brenda Shook, Van and Denise Burns, Ezekiel Rogers, Paul Taylor and Marcie Mauldin, as well as lifetime members Bill and Mary Ann Nicholson.

The main event of the evening was another informational slideshow presentation, led on June 13 by local history buff Sid Turner, who discussed



True to form, local historian Sid Turner dressed in period clothing to discuss local Confederate history with the Towns County Historical Society last week. Photo by Jeremy Foster

the Company D 24th Infantry Regiment of the Confederate Army during the Civil War Era of 1861-1865.

Turner brought with him many historic artifacts from the period, including several models of guns and muskets,

a canteen, clothing like hats, boots and shoes, rings made out of soup bones that prisoners of war would make while bored in jail, old cannon artillery shells, and much more that spectators could come to gaze

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local prohibitions on the construction of cryptocurrency mining operations, digital transactions could still open new avenues for local business.

Speaking of local businesses, Hiwassee Mayor Liz Ordiales shared a bit about the city's plans to help budding entrepreneurs, offering an update on the renovation of the Paris Buildings that will house a business incubator program just off the Town Square.

"It took nine months to get a grant for \$600,000 to do the Paris Buildings; it took three months after that to get a surveyor to do a survey before we could go on with the Paris Buildings," Ordiales said, adding that, just the day before, the surveyor had looked at the buildings.

Though the process has been slow, it is getting done, with \$1.2 million of the \$1.5 million goal having been reached, and with further fundraising and donations, it's only a matter of time before the project is fully covered.

Briefly, Ordiales talked about her plans to have a boardwalk constructed between Lloyd's Landing and Mayor's Park. It will span 814 feet and end in a sidewalk to keep pedestrians out of the way of boat traffic.

"If you go there now on the weekends, you'll see people in here taking their lives into their own hands on the rocks to try to fish," Ordiales said, referencing the rocky shoreline. This problem will be addressed with a couple of planned fishing piers, hopefully to be done by next summer.

To match the updated sewer plant, the City of Hiwassee has dedicated the past two years to enhancing its water treatment plant. There has been a need to backtrack on progress because of rising costs across the board, but Ordiales does not plan to pause the project because, "once we get done, we'll be good for water and sewer for 20 years."

Finally, to great applause, Ordiales shared that Hiwassee's previous debt of \$4.7 million has been lowered to \$1.4 million since she's been an elected official.

Towns County Joint Economic Development Director Denise McKay covered updates from the City of Young Harris, as unfortunately, Mayor Andrea Gibby was unable to make it to the meeting.

For the past 20 years, Young Harris has made great strides toward growth and has subsequently thrived considering its relatively small size and the fact that the city now only has four full-time employees.

As McKay detailed, even more changes are on the horizon, with preparations being made to shape new development around the upcoming Georgia 515 bypass construction.

Despite the Main Street Program's denial of Young Harris last year, this year's application saw city officials attending a start-up program that would, upon acceptance, implement another part-time position for city management.

"Another thing that we worked on in the City of Young Harris is a Parks and Trails Recreation System Plan," McKay said. "Their goal is to have all of the city connected with sidewalks and trails, with little pocket parks and big parks in-between."

Public art has also become a distinct aspect of Young Harris, with painted



Resident Laura Morrissey gave a detailed presentation on all things cryptocurrency in last week's Civic Association meeting.

Photo by Brittany Holbrooks

crosswalks, displays and art sales becoming an increasingly common sight even in natural areas like Cupid Falls.

Finally, the Barn Quilt Program will be starting a trail of barn quilts throughout the county, featuring different styles of craftwork from traditional to abstract quilting.

Next, Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw talked about the recent changes at the Transfer Station to give customers a safer, more sanitary experience.

"It is so congested right there where you have to back in to throw your garbage in the dumpster underneath that metal building," he said. "And the floor is always nasty, and then you get back in your car and it's on your floor mats."

"We have finally got the residential part open, and it's so simple – it's just a loop. You just drive around, get out, drop your garbage in the dumpster right there, and get in your car and go. You don't have to lift them real high."

Bradshaw also discussed the SPLOST-funded renovation and addition project at the Towns County Courthouse.

Initial construction estimates came in at about \$8 million. Of course, this was calculated before recent price hikes, and due to that, Bradshaw wanted to make clear that he was aware of potential economic hurdles that might affect the project's ultimate price tag.

"If a recession hits – I'm not saying one's going to hit, but with all the signs that are coming, we want to be prepared. But usually, during a recession, it takes a couple years before we actually start seeing the numbers drop," Bradshaw said.

With development comes new construction, and Bradshaw also mentioned a bit about the new firehouse and road repairs. On that note, there's been some serious upgrades to the county's emergency transport system in recent years.

"We have spent well over \$600,000 there in the last three years, bringing the CAD system up to date (at 911 Dispatch)," explained Bradshaw.

CAD, or Computer Assisted Dispatch, is a system utilized among a circle of emergency personnel from police to EMS workers. According to Bradshaw, information like a patient's address can be sent from the call center to the dispatched ambulance, providing quicker aid and potentially saving lives.

"I'm very thankful to be your commissioner; I want you to know that. My door is always open," closed Bradshaw, allowing McKay to take over again to wrap up the meeting by giving an idea of just how much Towns County – and the surrounding area – is changing.

First, McKay thanked Mayors Ordiales and Gibby along with Commissioner Bradshaw for their outstand-

ing work at not just allowing Towns County to flourish, but for maintaining its rural charm along the way.

Second, she illustrated why there is a need for county leaders to continue allowing development. Comparing land usage maps of the North Georgia Mountains in 1974 and 2016, McKay pointed out the drastic differences between the two when it came to urbanization.

Where there was hardly any development in Towns County before, 48 years of change from '74 to today has steered the county in a direction of growth. To put things into perspective, Towns County's population has increased by 19.3% in just 10 years.

"You can see the growth that is coming in all these different areas, and it is coming whether you want it or not," McKay said. "So, you have to plan for it and try to get what you want instead of (taking) what comes and (having to) live with it."

Once again crediting the mayors and commissioner, McKay said that the trio came together a couple years ago to strategize the best way to move forward, ultimately forming the Joint Development Authority.

"The first directive I was given was to cause no harm," McKay said. "People come here because of the beauty of this area. They like the mountains, they like the stars, the lake. They don't want to change that."

As for preserving that appeal moving forward, McKay suggested continuing to look at ordinances for solutions, saying that while they may not be favorable, a modest sprinkling of guidelines can go a long way.

"(Ordinances) are not to put restrictions on you, (they're) to protect why everyone is here and (what they) cherish the most," McKay said. "We want to complement and enhance what's here, not change it."

And Civic Association President Clemens agreed, noting that the organization existed for the very purpose of making sure residents feel the proper balance between development and nature.

"We feel like it's important for citizens of Towns County to be active in what's happening in not only the city government, but the county government. We have a stake in making this county as great as it can be and have it grow responsibly," said Clemens, who was pleased with the message and the turnout of the meeting that evening.

"We like the small-town charm," he added, "but we do want growth."

And indeed, with how much local officials showed they care that evening, there should be no doubt that the direction in which Towns County is headed is toward a very promising, bright future.

4th Annual Made in Georgia Festival



Don't miss the 4th Annual Made in Georgia Festival on Saturday and Sunday, June 25 and June 26.

The event will feature 100 vendors from across the State of Georgia specializing in products that were grown, harvested, canned, baked, stitched or crafted in Georgia. Items that will be shown and sold at this big event are pecans, jellies, soaps, body lotions, dog clothing, clothing, bread, candles, pickles, pottery, syrups, and lots, lots more! This is an inside event so you can shop in the comfort of air conditioning!

This year's demonstrations and workshops will be conducted by Carlton Chambelin of Farm 2 Cocktail, Olivia Rader a Georgia Grown chef, Jacob Paul Williams of the UGA Extension Agency and Buster Brown with his birds of prey. We have a real special treat this year – we will have a

blacksmith onsite demonstrating this traditional skill.

A full schedule of events will be posted on the calendar page of www.golakechatuge.com beginning Monday, June 13.

The event will be held June 25 from 10 AM – 5 PM and June 26 from 11 AM – 4 PM at the Towns County Recreation & Conference Center in Young Harris. The address is 150 Foster Park Road, Young Harris, GA 30582. Admission is \$5/adults; children under 14 are free. There will also be a weekend price (attend both days) for \$7.

North Georgia Tri-State Amateur Radio Club, Inc. Field Day

Ever wonder what it might be like to talk on a radio to someone nearby or across the globe? This exciting hobby is called Amateur Radio and the North Georgia Tri-State Amateur Radio Club, Inc. in Blairsville will be demonstrating our radios and participating in Field Day Saturday afternoon, June 25, 2022.

This free event will be

The Made in Georgia Festival is a great place to find one-of-a-kind gifts and items that are grown in remote parts of Georgia. Please support our Georgia growers and crafters and attend this big event on June 25 and June 26.

For more information call 706-896-4966. The Made in Georgia Festival is sponsored by the Lake Chatuge Chamber of Commerce, Towns County Commission, Towns County CVB, City of Hiwassee, Hiwassee Downtown Development Authority, Century 21 Black Bear Realty and LeafFilter. NT(June22,A2)JH

at the Meeks Park Pavilion near the Senior Center and is open to all. Please join us to learn more about Amateur Radio and if you find you have an interest, we even offer testing so you can get your HAM License.

For more exciting photos of the event and to find out more information about Field Day, our Club and Ham Radio visit www.w4ngt.com/field-day.



Made In Georgia...from Page 1A



The Made In Georgia Festival will feature tons of Peach State vendors and plenty else for families to do at the Towns County Recreation & Conference Center June 25-26. Photo/Submitted

The Towns County Recreation & Conference Center is located at 150 Foster Park Road in Young Harris. Admission for the indoor event will be \$5 for adults, while children 14 and under get in free, and people

can purchase a weekend pass to attend both days for \$7.

Sponsors this year are the Lake Chatuge Chamber of Commerce, Towns County Commission, Towns County Convention and Visitors Bureau, the City

of Hiawassee, the Hiawassee Downtown Development Authority, Century 21 Black Bear Realty and LeafFilter.

For additional information, visit the chamber website at www.golakechatuge.com.

Historical Society...from Page 1A



Sid Turner brought these Civil War Era artifacts to the June 13 Historical Society meeting, including rifles, a canteen, artillery shells and more. Photo by Jeremy Foster

upon after the meeting.

A military veteran himself who served in Vietnam, Turner went on to a 30-year career in the DeKalb County Police Department. He has also recently received the Bronze Challenge Coin from the Sons of the American Revolution for outstanding service.

In his presentation, Turner went through the history of all 99 Towns County volunteer soldiers from the 24th Infantry, putting a special asterisk beside four of them who were mess mates in the army: Leander Jackson Berrong, his relative; John S. Denton; John P. Osborn; and W JH Carter.

"I was always interested in war history because of my two great uncles that were in Company D," Turner said, "and this process of researching all of this information and piecing it together has been ongoing through the years, and I was always finding something new along the way."

"I like bringing history to life. I like the chronology and knowing what happened, but I try to envision what the average person felt like on a day-to-day basis because it humbles me, and it makes me feel like I got to really know them."

Folks should care about history because it is interesting, Historical Society Vice President Jerry Taylor said.

"And things like this are important for people to know because it is not just dates, numbers and dead facts," Taylor added. "It is real people that we are bringing back to life in remembrance."

The Historical Society will be taking the month of July off, with the next meeting slated for August, when people can come to learn about the presentation topic "History of the Woods" by Bruce Roberts. The August meeting location is to be determined.

To stay up to date on future announcements, follow the society's Facebook page or contact Taylor at 706-994-0218.

Flag Day...from Page 1A



Flag Day Emcee Jeanie Loiacono cutting the red, white and blue cake for guests at Patriot Plaza last week. Photo by Mark Smith

Flag Day was first nationally observed on June 14, 1877, a full 100 years after the flag resolution was adopted, and after several more stars had been added to the banner.

In the late 1800s, schoolteachers nationwide began conducting patriotic ceremonies commemorating Flag Day as a way to teach children about history. One of those teachers, Bernard J. Cigrand, lobbied Congress for many years to make Flag Day an official observance.

Cigrand, often referred to as "The Father of Flag Day," was joined in his efforts by patriotic groups such as the Colonial Dames and the Sons of the American Revolution.

As a result of those and other efforts, President Woodrow Wilson issued a proclamation in 1916 declaring June 14 as National Flag Day, and in 1949, Flag Day was finally made official by an Act of Congress.

Without exception, the general consensus of those gathered for the local observance last week was that the Stars and Stripes represent all that America holds dear, in a word, freedom: freedom of speech, freedom to congregate, and freedom to keep and bear arms, to name a few.

And ensconced within those freedoms are individual liberty and the Bill of Rights, with an understanding that the Bill of Rights is a birthright in America, rather than privileges granted by manmade govern-

ments. The American flag also represents the idea that all men and women are created equal and deserve equal opportunities while also being subject to equal consequences for lawlessness.

No other country possesses a constitution like the United States, and no other government is founded on the idea that every citizen has the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness in furtherance of a government that is subject to the whims of the people, not the other way around.

"Everybody needs to be patriotic," said Jeanie Loiacono, master of ceremonies for the event. "I think anybody that lives in the United States should be grateful to be in the United States. And they should respect the flag, not fly it upside down, not burn it, not stomp on it, because a lot of people died for that flag."

At the conclusion of the brief ceremony, Loiacono brought out a birthday cake in honor of President Donald Trump, whose birthday is June 14, the same day as Flag Day.



Becky Jake, who moved to Towns County recently, sang "America the Beautiful" on Flag Day June 14. Photo by Lowell Nicholson