

Towns County Herald

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Election officials solicit poll workers; Bradshaw talks SPLOST renovations

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

Towns County Board of Elections Chair Janet Oliva and Elections Supervisor Rachel Edwards attended the June 18 regular county meeting.

Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw welcomed the women that Thursday – along with everyone else – saying he was excited to be returning to regular commission meetings in the courthouse.

Oliva gave a brief overview of the June 9 General Primary Election, which enjoyed nearly 50 percent turnout but experienced longer than usual wait times with lines on Election Day due to the need to host all three polling places at the Hiwassee Precinct due to COVID-19.

Following the commission meeting, Oliva spoke with Georgia Elections Director Chris Harvey about local complaints, informing him that many voters

had been asking if the Elections Board could deviate from June 9 procedures to open all precincts for the Aug. 11 Primary Runoff.

The Macedonia and Young Harris precincts were reassigned to Hiwassee for the General Primary due to a lack of poll workers and the closure of two public buildings that have since been re-opened.

Oliva received the go-ahead to open all precincts contingent upon her ability to staff them, so now, she needs about 15 more poll workers to volunteer from the public as soon as possible so training can begin in earnest.

“We’re just doing a countywide search for poll workers, looking to find anybody that’s willing to help to ensure that we give voters in Towns County the best opportunity and access to voting,” Oliva said. “That’s what the purpose is.”

Added Oliva, “We’ll be

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The preliminary concept for the new Towns County Courthouse is inspired by the old courthouse design, most notable in the stair tower proposed at the corner of the existing building, according to architecture, engineering and planning firm CPL.

Hiwassee votes to increase Water Authority wholesale rate

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

In their June regular Council meeting, Hiwassee unanimously voted to increase the wholesale water rate for the Towns County Water Authority, more than doubling the previous rate.

Hiwassee pumps water out of Lake Chatuge, treats it for drinking, then sells it to the city’s approximately 2,200 water customers.

The city also sells drinking water at a reduced wholesale rate to the Water Authority, which in turn re-sells to distribution to its roughly 4,000 county customers. The two entities have worked together in this manner for decades, in addition to participating in joint-funding initiatives for the

See Water Authority, Page 5A



The Hiwassee Water Treatment Facility pulls water out of Lake Chatuge to treat for drinking and other uses. Photo/HiwasseeGA.gov

Towns County’s libraries moving forward with reopening process

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

In March, the Mountain Regional Library System closed to protect staff and patrons from the spread of COVID-19, and over the last month, the libraries have begun a phased reopening to the public.

Mountain Regional Library in Young Harris reopened on June 8 with limited hours, including two full days and one curbside service day.

“We opened a week later than other libraries due to our staffing,” Branch Manager Marlene Cannon said. “That is also the reason we have limited hours. We are open on Mondays and Thursdays. And on Wednesdays, we are open for curbside by appointment only.”

The Towns County Public Library in Hiwassee is open Monday through Friday, having welcomed the public



Towns County Public Library Assistant Cathy Shook and Branch Manager Debbie Phillips are glad to be serving the public inside the library again, even during the pandemic. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

back inside on June 1.

“We did three weeks of lobby service,” Branch Manager Debbie Phillips said. “What that meant was, nobody could come inside the building,

we did it in the foyer.

“Everybody came in our door and out the same door. If they had a book on hold, we let them pick them up. If

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Residents continue to approach novel coronavirus with caution

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

As COVID-19 continues, some people feel the virus will eventually become a thing of the past and that the community will definitely be able to return to the lives they led before the pandemic.

While shopping at the Dollar Tree Saturday, Betty Hicks of North Carolina said she felt confident that, as far as the virus was concerned, “we have seen the last of it,” but she still believes people should err on the side of caution.

“It is still out there, but it is not as big as it was a few weeks ago,” Hicks said. “I do think that people should continue wearing masks, though, and I don’t understand why they don’t keep wearing them. It doesn’t hurt to keep wearing them.”

“Social distancing is still important, too, and I am glad that people are enforcing that.



Families have been enjoying tons of fun in the sun at the Ridges Resort’s Splash Island. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

It is a good thing that shops and restaurants have opened back up because they needed to. We can’t just be afraid of this virus the whole time.

“I have been around for

72 years, and I have never seen a time quite like this. People are all in a panic, and there is a lot going on. I don’t know what has become of this country,

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Firewise reconvenes to discuss Tate City dry hydrant, future plans

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Towns County Firewise Citizens Coalition was glad to reconvene in-person gatherings on Tuesday, June 16, at the Paris Pavilion of Hamilton Gardens at Lake Chatuge.

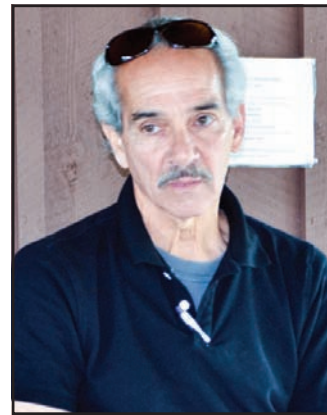
As with most civic organizations everywhere, Firewise members had been holding internet meetings to handle their business, and they resumed more normal proceedings after deciding they could safely socially distance in an open-air venue like Hamilton Gardens.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss projects and programs the group has been working on and to highlight upcoming activities to promote Firewise participation.

Coalition members discussed a dry hydrant that is being installed in Tate City, which they are hoping will be completed soon. A dry hydrant is a special pipe that is put in the ground by a lake or a pond that the Fire Department can use to pump water, according to Judy Potter of the coalition.

“(We) went out to Tate City and cut some weeds and brush,” Coalition Chair Michael Courey said. “We did some chainsaw work, and we established where the dry hydrant ought to be.”

With the town being so secluded, it is important for residents to have an effective way to protect against fires that may come off the mountain or start within a home, and having a dry hydrant will enable better access to a firefighting water source in the instance of a fire



Towns County Firewise Coalition Chair Michael Courey presided over last week’s group meeting at Hamilton Gardens. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

in Tate City.

Frank Riley is the executive director of the

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Sheriff’s Office arrests 22 more drug suspects since May 17

News Special
Towns County Herald

Over the last month, the Towns County Sheriff’s Office has continued to make good on its promise to pursue the arrests of suspects on drug-related charges in the Towns County Community, with more traffic stops and searches producing arrests.

On Sunday, May 17, a deputy made a traffic stop on Georgia 66 in Young Harris on a Dodge Durango. Upon further investigation, a passenger in the vehicle, Christi Bryne, 31, of Young Harris, was arrested and charged with possession of marijuana.

On Thursday, May 21, investigators and deputies arrested



Christi Bryne

Taylor Parrott, 28, of Andrews, North Carolina, at a residence located off Georgia 66 in Young Harris.

She was charged with possession of



Taylor Parrott

methamphetamine with intent to distribute and possession of methamphetamine.

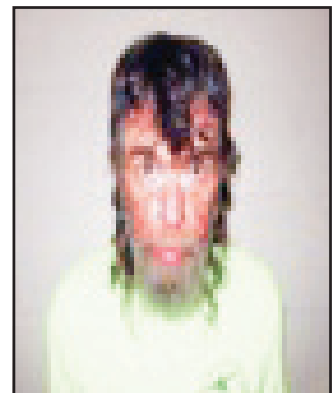
On Thursday, May 21, a Towns County Sheriff’s deputy



Dylan Chastain

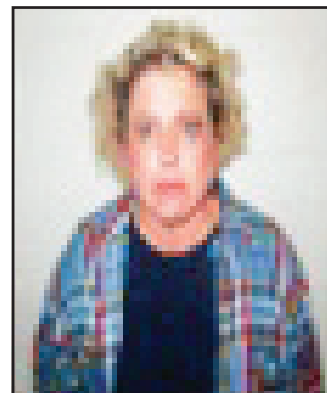
made a traffic stop on a Chevrolet Impala on Crooked Creek Connector.

Upon further investigation, a passenger in the vehicle, Dylan



Terry Nichols

Chastain, 21, of Brasstown, North Carolina, was arrested for possession of methamphetamine, possession of drug-related objects, and crossing the guard line with



Lisa Nichols

illegal drugs. On Tuesday, May 26, investigators and deputies executed a search warrant at

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