

Happy Independence Day

from the staff of the Towns County Herald and West Printing Company

Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

www.townscountyherald.net

Your Hometown Newspaper Since 1928

50 Cents

Publication Number 635540 Volume 89 Number 35

Wednesday, July 4, 2018

Scattered T-storms persist across North Georgia

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

For nearly two weeks now, daily thunderstorms have swept through the region, producing gusty winds, heavy rain and frequent lightning.

Overnight and afternoon storms have become seemingly commonplace here in the North Georgia Mountains, and first responders remained busy all last week responding to a number of weather-related emergency calls.

Sudden winds produced during thunderstorms have wreaked havoc throughout the area, toppling trees, snapping power poles and scattering debris countywide.

Driving conditions have worsened from all the rain, and numerous trees have fallen across roadways and onto

several structures since the summer storms began.

Fortunately, no one has been seriously injured resulting from the storms as of press time Friday (early deadline for the July Fourth holiday).

Many folks have gone without power at various times over the last two weeks, as wind and falling trees have taken out powerlines or caused other weather-related outages on a near-daily basis.

But thanks to the hardworking men and women of the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC, power is always restored in a timely manner.

EMC members can now access the live outage map found under the "Useful Links" area on the BRMEMC.com homepage.

According to the latest weather patterns and forecasts,

area residents could be in for stormy weather for a while longer.

Appropriately enough, last week served as National Lightning Safety Awareness Week, June 24 through June 30, sponsored by the Lightning Safety Council.

According to Weather.gov, thunderstorms typically develop in the early afternoon, and people should make plans according to the most up-to-date forecasts.

It is never safe to be outside during a thunderstorm, and those who find themselves in dangerous outdoor weather conditions would do well to adhere to the following advice from the National Weather Service.

Avoid open fields, the top of a hill or a ridge top.
See Storms, Page 6A



Fierce winds flipped this dock in Lake Chatuge early last week.

Photo by Noel Turner

Georgia's Hands-Free Law now in effect statewide

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

Georgia's new Hands-Free Law went into effect on July 1.

Proponents of the new law are hoping to change the way many people interact with their phones while driving, and lawmakers, peace officers, safety advocacy groups and others believe the law will save lives.

Motorists can visit www.HeadsUpGeorgia.com to find lots of valuable information concerning the new law, including a Q&A on the various intricacies of HB 673.

Heads UP Georgia is an online campaign by the Governor's Office of Highway Safety, or GOHS.

The overarching goal of the law is to "prohibit actions which distract a driver while operating a motor vehicle."

So, what are the basic do's and don'ts of the Hands-Free Law?



Hands-Free Law Front: As of July 1, drivers must use hands-free technology to talk on their cellphones.

Photo by Shawn Jarrard

For starters, a driver cannot have a phone in their hand or use any part of their body to support their phone. This is where hands-free technology comes into play.

Drivers are allowed to use their phone's speakerphone, Bluetooth technology, an earpiece, a headphone or other device to communicate on a hands-free basis.

Headsets and earpieces can only be worn for communication purposes and not for listening to music or other entertainment, and people may only use one earbud while driving - using both is illegal.

Even with hands-free technology, drivers cannot write, read or send text messages, emails, social media

See Hands-Free, Page 6A

Stanley Gunter now chief judge of Enotah Judicial Circuit

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

Enotah Judicial Circuit Superior Court Judge N. Stanley Gunter is the new chief judge of the circuit, following the resignation of Judge Murphy C. Miller on July 1.

"It's an important role, and I feel like I can do a good job representing the judicial branch for our circuit," said Gunter. "I know a lot of people at the state level and locally, and wherever I can use those connections and the skills and education that I've got, I'll be glad to do it."

Miller began his tenure as chief judge in 2012, the same year that Gunter swore in as a judge of the circuit.

"Judge Miller has always been a good friend," said Gunter. "He and I used to litigate against each other when we were young attorneys in the circuit. He always beat me. He was an excellent attorney, always very gracious."



Chief Judge N. Stanley Gunter
Photo by Shawn Jarrard

"And since becoming a judge, he's been very easy to work with. We've always supported each other, closed cases for each other whenever we could. It's been a good working relationship between us."

The circuit consists of three superior court judgeships. Two of those positions are held

by Judge Gunter and Judge Raymond George, and the third awaits filling by whomever Gov. Nathan Deal appoints to replace Miller.

Judge George also came aboard the circuit in 2012, but since Gunter swore in prior to George, Gunter has seniority and will serve in the chief judge position.

"As a superior court judge in a multi-county circuit, if I'm not having a trial week in one particular county, I'm traveling to all the counties during the week, holding hearings for all kinds of cases," said Gunter. "Criminal cases, divorce cases, other civil type cases. That's generally what I'm doing. And I'm signing a bunch of orders, reviewing paperwork, that kind of thing."

"There's really no difference in what I will be doing as chief judge versus regular judge other than some additional duties to attend certain meetings and make

See Gunter, Page 7A

Historical Society to hold Fourth Annual Heritage Day

By Mark Novak
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Towns County Historical Society will be honoring all local veterans at the Fourth Annual Heritage Day Celebration on Saturday, July 14, at 11 a.m. inside the old Rec Building.

Historical Society Secretary Betty Phillips, society members and volunteers from Alpha Delta Kappa have been working hard to prepare for this upcoming event that Phillip's holds very close to her heart.

Many of Phillips' family served in the military, including her late husband, World War II Veteran Richard A. Schmidtke.

"I have always respected the veterans," said Phillips. "My ancestry goes far back, and my family was willing to serve. Either they were drafted, or it was volunteered to protect and defend our country and our freedoms that many take for granted."

"We have many people in this area that gave the ultimate



Betty Phillips and Sandra Green of the Towns County Historical Society.
Photo by Mark Novak

price by serving in the military, that gave the ultimate price by serving in World War I, World War II, Vietnam, Korea and many other wars.

"We are very fortunate here in Towns County. We have a beautiful Veterans Park and many people that support our veterans."

According to Phillips,

her late husband, Schmidtke, served in Los Alamos, New Mexico, working on the Manhattan Project.

For the second year in a row, 95-year-old Towns County resident and Veteran Richard Lewis will be speaking to all who attend Heritage Day.

"Our guest speaker is

See Heritage Day, Page 6A

Sheriff Clinton's Quarterly Prayer Breakfast a big success

By Mark Smith
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Towns County Sheriff Chris Clinton got the idea to hold a quarterly prayer breakfast from a friend of his, a retired sheriff in Hall County.

"For me, it's a moment to step back and recognize that the real issue that we face, whether it's in Towns County or Georgia or in the nation or around the world, is a condition of the human heart," said Sheriff Clinton. "It's our job to provide for domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense."

"That's the job of law enforcement. But that job can't be done very well until we acknowledge that this is, really, a condition of the human heart. We get together as Christians at these prayer breakfasts, and we pray over the community - the community as a whole. We pray over all our public safety people and just try to give recognition where it's due."

Sheriff Clinton said he welcomes the feedback his department receives from the



Towns County Sheriff Chris Clinton at Macedonia Baptist Church during his June 28 Quarterly Prayer Breakfast.
Photo by Mark Smith

different churches that host the quarterly breakfast.

"Particularly with the prayer breakfasts, we want to go back and focus on what it is that we're doing," he said. "For me, that always comes back to prayer and to acknowledging that there's someone in control greater than me."

Both Towns and Union

Counties enjoyed representation at this second quarterly breakfast at the Macedonia Baptist Church on Thursday, June 28.

In attendance were Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw, Hiawassee Mayor Liz Ordiales, Enotah Judicial Circuit District Attorney Jeff

See Prayer, Page 6A

2 Sections 16 Pages

Blue Ridge	1,686.89
Chatuge	1,925.37
Nottely	1,776.99

Inside

Arrests	2A
Church	4B
Classifieds	6B
Opinion	4A
Legals	7B
Obits	5B

Lake Levels

The Towns County Herald will be closed Tuesday and Wednesday July 3rd and 4th

10th Annual Moonshine Cruiz-In Ga. Mtn. Fairgrounds July 12th - 14th See page 6A

Congratulations to Teela Mease, the WINNER of our ticket giveaway for the Justin Moore Concert

For breaking news and contests, follow us on Facebook