

# Towns County Herald

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## Patriots cheer Independence Day fireworks during annual display

By Chad Stack  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

The Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds welcomed area patriots on Saturday, July 4, to celebrate America's 244th birthday.

Festivities kicked off on Lake Chatuge with the annual boat parade, followed later in the day by a performance from the Vintage Vixens from 6-9 p.m. on a small stage in front of the fairgrounds' main office.

Throughout the evening, volunteers grilled hotdogs to offer along with barbecue, chips, and drinks to guests. Members from the Towns County Lions Club collected donations at the gates as visitors poured in to celebrate Independence Day.

Fairgrounds General

Manager Hilda Thomason said she was extremely pleased with the turnout and that so many people were having a good time celebrating America's birthday.

"So many counties canceled fireworks," Thomason said. "We had people drive from Atlanta, Commerce and Toccoa just because of no fireworks in their counties."

With the fairgrounds offering so much room for camping and parking, Thomason said it allowed for everyone to enjoy the day while still practicing social distancing due to COVID-19.

"I want to thank all our sponsors, people who gave donations, and all the staff and volunteers who helped," she said.

Amy Melon, a resident

from South Florida, parked in the fairgrounds parking lot and had a relaxing tailgate party with her family leading up to the fireworks.

"We have been coming to Towns County for several years now to celebrate America's birthday," Melon said. "I felt safe bringing my family here for the weekend. There is a lot of space here at the fairgrounds for everyone to be able to have fun safely."

With everything that is going on in the country today, Melon said she hopes celebrating America's birthday will allow for everyone to be happy and enjoy the freedoms this great country has to offer.

"No, our country is not perfect, but I think a lot of us forget just how good we have

See **Fireworks**, Page 8A



The Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds did it again in 2020, hosting a fantastic fireworks display for area residents. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

## TCSO offers reward in graffiti incident advising 'Kill All Cops'

Osborn offering additional \$500 reward



Someone spray-painted "Kill All Cops" and similar ideological messages on various surfaces along US 76 between Sunnyside Road and Papa's Pizza To Go over the weekend. Photo/Submitted

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Editor

Towns County Sheriff's Office investigators are looking into a string of roadside graffiti incidents that occurred over the weekend along a stretch of US 76 between Sunnyside Road and Papa's Pizza To Go.

Graffitied on the side of a building, a wall, some roadside signs and utility poles were various messages in black spray paint seeming to advocate extremist views such as "Kill All Cops," "Death 2 Amerikkka" and "ACAB," which stands for "All Cops Are Bastards."

Investigators believe

the messages were scribbled sometime overnight between July 4 and July 5. The perpetrator's efforts were short-lived, however, as residents Brett Nash, Donald Palmer and Brian Caldwell volunteered to clean the graffiti Sunday afternoon, per Facebook.

There were no substantive leads in the case by press time, though investigators were hard at work reviewing additional evidence Monday.

The Sheriff's Office has issued a \$1,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person(s) responsible.

A campaign sign by Daren "Bear" Osborn was also

tagged. Osborn is a lieutenant with the Union County Sheriff's Office and a candidate for Towns County Sheriff. He is offering a separate \$500 reward for an arrest and conviction in the incident.

Several residents reported the graffiti on Facebook with photos Sunday morning, expressing their disgust at the messages displayed on the side of the road.

When reached for comment, Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw said he was disturbed by the appearance of the graffiti and hoped the person(s) responsible was caught.

See **Grffiti**, Page 8A

## Bradshaw contracts with CPL for \$8 million courthouse project

By Mark Smith  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw has signed a contract with architectural, engineering and planning firm Clark Patterson Lee, or CPL, to design and oversee the \$8 million renovation of and addition to the Towns County Courthouse.

The signing took place in Bradshaw's office inside the courthouse during a called meeting on Wednesday, July 1, following the reading of a resolution determining the results of the June 9 voter-approved Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax and Debt referendum.

Bradshaw said the contract stipulates that the county will pay a fee of 7 percent of the total cost of the project to CPL, which he negotiated down from what was originally proposed.

With the approval of the 1-cent SPLOST – to collect an



Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw signed a contract with Clark Patterson Lee last week to move forward with the courthouse project. Photo by Mark Smith

estimated \$12 million over the next six years – Bradshaw said the courthouse project could now move forward.

Approval of the SPLOST also means approval of the issuance of "not more than \$8

million in aggregate principal amount of the county's general obligation debt" to pay for the courthouse renovations and addition.

That includes See **Bradshaw**, Page 8A

## Parade attracts dozens of boats to celebrate America's 244th birthday

By Jarrett Whitener  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

The Lake Chatuge Chamber of Commerce hosted its annual Fourth of July Boat Parade Saturday morning, with more than 40 boats lining up behind Aqua Tiki in Sunset Cove.

Chamber President Candace Lee was excited to see the turnout of patriotically decorated boats and spectators for the parade, which moved between the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds Boat Ramp and Towns County Beach on Lake Chatuge.

"We have around 40 boats signed up for the contest this year," Lee said. "Some more boats will come in the parade that don't want to be judged, but the 40 that signed up is the most we have had in the last couple of years."

Lee said she finds the parade to be important to the county because "it brings



The ever-popular Lake Chatuge Fourth of July Boat Parade featured more than 40 entrants this year. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

## Towns County community puts worries aside to enjoy Fourth of July



Residents took to the lake, shops, restaurants, the fairgrounds, the beach and plenty other local spaces in celebration of Independence Day Saturday. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

By Jarrett Whitener  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Even though the topics of COVID-19 and widespread social unrest have taken over much of the national discourse,

many people in Towns County felt over the weekend that the Fourth of July was a time for celebration to relieve some of the anxiety the last few months have brought.

Dan Neilson of Colorado,

who was shopping at Gracie's Cottage on July 4, said he finds the holiday to be a celebration where people are unified as a country.

"Times have been hard this year, nobody is denying that," Neilson said. "I think today is a time for reflection and a time for unity. We have had some racial conflict and riots going on alongside this virus stuff, but as a country, we will get through it. This is still the greatest country to ever exist in my eyes."

"Maybe we can't do everything we are wanting to do today, but we can still have a celebration. There are still fireworks and still some gatherings for people to enjoy. This day brings people together, and we can put our worries aside."

Lucy Bennett of Gwinnett was out enjoying lunch at the County Kitchen Saturday, and she said she

See **July 4th**, Page 8A

## Monument Committee taking names of deceased Towns County veterans



The Towns County Veterans Memorial Monument Committee will be meeting with loved ones of deceased Towns County veterans at the Old Rec Gym on July 10 for the purpose of adding names to the monument in Veterans Park. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

By Chad Stack  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

It's that time of year again, when the Towns County Veterans Memorial Monument Committee will be meeting with families to accept applications for Towns County veterans who have passed on to have their

names engraved on the granite monument at Veterans Park in Hiawassee.

The committee will hold its first meeting of the year with any and all loved ones of deceased Towns County veterans at the Old Rec Center in Hiawassee on Friday, July

10, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Family members of deceased veterans are being asked to bring the required documentation to secure their veteran's name on the wall.

Memorial Wall criteria include: 1) honorable discharge See **Monument**, Page 8A

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Chatuge 1,925.27  
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Statewide Bible Reading Courthouse Steps July 14 @ 7 AM

Enchanted Music on the Square Suspended

Ninth District Opportunity Cooling Help

Dancing with the North GA Stars hits "Pause"