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Patriotism flies high at fairgrounds July 4th

By Shelly Knight
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Oh, what a night! More than stars lit up the skies above the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds last Thursday evening as hundreds of spectators turned out to watch the annual Fourth of July Fireworks.

The fairgrounds have provided a show, free to the public, for over 40 years. It was a pyrotechnic extravaganza, with more than \$10,000 in fireworks on display.

"We do this for the community to celebrate our Independence Day," Fairgrounds General Manager Hilda Thomason said. "We want everyone to come, have a good time and just celebrate our nation's birthday."

People gathered early to stake out the best views. Visitors set up tents, flags and barbecues. The smell of hamburgers and hot dogs filled the air all

night. Many spectators showed up in elaborate costumes, from Uncle Sam himself to every design red, white and blue lends itself to.

Crowds turned out en masse to soak up the rock 'n' roll sound of the Vintage Vixens. The all-female band from Atlanta pounded out the beat, showcasing everything from "Gimme Some Lovin'" by the Spencer Davis Group to "I Feel the Earth Move" by Carole King. The gatherers were immediately mesmerized.

Calvary Baptist Church provided plenty of things for the kiddos to do while they waited for the big show. There were several bouncy houses, cornhole, mechanical bull riding and even a rock-climbing rig. Plenty of vendors were also on the scene.

Kathleen and Roger Zocki are from Florida, and this was their first time at the Hiawassee celebration. Asked

what the Fourth of July means to them, Kathleen responded, "It means everything."

"It's about our freedom and our country and our servicemen and women," Kathleen said. "We're just proud to be Americans."

Clay Reitmeier and Brandi Aiken of Franklin, North Carolina, were also first timers, and they will absolutely be back for future events.

"The Fourth is a fine celebration of time with the kids and time to be grateful for what we have in this country," Reitmeier said, with Aiken adding, "Having freedom of speech and religion, as well as being able to celebrate with our friends and family the birthday of America."

James Gibson of Murphy, North Carolina, expressed similar thoughts, noting that Independence Day is "a great way to spend time with friends and family."

"I love the Fourth of July. It means pride in the country," Gibson concluded.

Ben Seymour, late of Savannah, said, "It's a great way to remember where we come from, our country's founding and a time to enjoy family every year," while attendee Steve Edmunds admitted, "When we sing the National Anthem, tears come to my eyes, and I'm afraid too many people have forgotten what it took to earn our freedom. I'm glad to be here and see the turnout."

One of the pickup trucks sported POW and American flags, and Aysia Mitchell of Hiawassee explained why her husband decorates each year.

"He is all about America," Mitchell said. "He loves the USA and red, white and blue. He lives for that stuff, just like we all do, I reckon. Hot dogs and hamburgers on the Fourth of July and Memorial Day." See *Fairgrounds Fireworks*, Page 6



The Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds did it again, hosting a free Independence Day event for families, complete with fantastic fireworks on July 4. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Sewage leaks into lake near Hawks Harbor cove

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

The City of Hiawassee took to Facebook last week to warn residents and county visitors not to swim in the Hawks Harbor area of Lake Chatuge due to sewage having leaked from a private lift station near the intersection of Frog Pond Road and US 76.

Residents in that area of the county were also notified in person.

For now, the city is advising people to stay out of the water near Hawks Harbor until the cove and surrounding area can be deemed safe for recreational use.

City officials learned of the leak on July 3 and stopped it the same day. While investigating the source, Hiawassee Wastewater Treatment personnel dug up the sewer force main along that stretch of highway and determined that the city's infrastructure was

not leaking.

Upon further investigation, the leak was discovered at a nearby private lift station. The city fixed the leak within minutes of finding it by installing a new sewer check valve at the lift station, but not before

sewage had made its way into the lake.

The city informed the owner of the lift station who to call to pump out the excess sewage, which occurred last week, and nonprofit conserva-

See *Sewage Leak*, Page 7



This unnamed creek was contaminated with sewage spillover after a private lift station failed in the Hawks Harbor area of Lake Chatuge. The leak was contained July 3. Photo/Facebook

Superintendent Berrong re-ups for three years



L-R: Towns County School Board Members Stephanie McConnell, Brandon Grimsley, Superintendent Dr. Darren Berrong, Board Members Caroleen Woods, Sara Rogers and David Phillips. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

By Shelly Knight
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Towns County School Board members worked through a packed agenda in

their regular monthly meeting on Monday, July 1, to include the approval of a three-year contract renewal for Superintendent Dr. Darren Berrong.

Berrong has led Towns County Schools as superintendent for the last 10 years, and the board voted unanimously to retain his services for at least the next three years. See *Board of Education*, Page 3

Made In Georgia holds another successful festival

By Shelly Knight
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

YOUNG HARRIS – There's just something special about Georgia. The NFL knows it. They drafted 10 Bulldogs in 2023. Hollywood knows it. How can anyone forget "Gone With the Wind?" Ray Charles knew it. He had "Georgia on His Mind."

But most of all, the people of this region know it, with scores of residents showing their devotion to the Peach State at the Made In Georgia Festival June 29-30.

The annual fundraiser hosted by the Lake Chatuge Chamber of Commerce at the Towns County Recreation & Conference Center features the talents and treasures of vendors from around the state.

"We're really excited about the event this year," said Chamber President Julie Payne. "In the past, we've had classes and demonstrations showcasing many of the items, but this year we've changed that so we can host more vendors."

"We have over 80 vendors participating this year, many new participants and many of our old favorites. And



The Towns County Recreation & Conference Center is the perfect venue to host the dozens of vendors and hundreds of guests who attend the Made In Georgia Festival each year. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

of course, many of our community partners are in attendance as well."

Members of the Towns County Historical Society sold hamburgers and hot dogs to fundraise for their organization, and the Towns County Lions Club brought a funnel cake truck to the delight of festivalgoers.

Other local groups sup-

ported the festival, too, like the Towns County Firewise Citizens Coalition, the Hiawassee Downtown Development Authority and the Lake Chatuge Rotary Club "to get the word out about their organizations, which we really appreciate," Payne said.

Particularly pleasing to youngsters and other curious

See *Made In GA*, Page 7

TCCA hosts local leaders in anniversary meeting

By Brittany Holbrooks
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Towns County Civic Association celebrated its 20th anniversary on June 25, and in keeping with the organization's track record of acting in the best interests of the community, guest speakers were invited to present on some of the biggest changes coming to the area.

Before the talk started inside the Civic Center that evening, Civic Association President John Clemens opened the floor for public announcements.

Noel Turner called up former Hiawassee Mayor Liz Ordiales to recognize some of her achievements in office and thank her for a job well done, calling her "The Fixer."

For his part, Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw thanked those involved for the role they played in starting the long process to eradicate the invasive parrot-feather that threatened to take over Lake Chatuge.

Bradshaw's main focus, however, was on housing, and he discussed the apartments that are due to be built in Young Harris.



Hiawassee Mayor Pro Tem Jay Chastain Jr. filled people in on how his first couple weeks leading the city were going in the June 25 Civic Association meeting. Photo by Brittany Holbrooks

Valley Trail Apartments will feature 42 units, estimated to complete construction sometime in 2025 with leasing to begin in 2026. Rent will be based on median-area income, and potential residents will undergo extensive background checks before they can rent.

"I think it's a good thing. I would never support

or do anything that would hurt our county or our quality of life, but I think (this project) is a plus," Bradshaw said.

On the topic of development, Economic Development Director Denise McKay followed up Bradshaw's introduction by adding that the company managing the

See *TCCA Meeting*, Page 3

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Commissioner Bradshaw to Speak 7/12 See Page 2

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Blue Ridge 1,685.57
Chatuge 1,924.83
Nottely 1,775.17

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Home & Garden Shows Return 7/20-21 See Page 7



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TCCA Meeting...from Page 1

apartments' tax credits must follow strict government requirements to ensure healthy competition and responsible ownership.

McKay also gave an update on the Paris Business Center by saying that construction is steadily advancing.

Currently, nine clients are in the "incubation" process and working with McKay to start up their businesses. Most clients are from Georgia with two in North Carolina, though business owners from surrounding states like Tennessee are also welcome at the center.

Some of the rent received from the tenant going into the anchor building will go toward paying off the note taken out to help cover the costs of the project.

McKay shared that the dream of the Paris Business Center was conceptualized before the advent of COVID-19, but due to inflation and supply chain difficulties brought about by the pandemic, a loan had to be taken out to help make the center a reality. Additionally, SPLOST funds are being used to supplement those costs.

Also, some additional services of the Paris Business Center came to light during the presentation, such as the partnership with North Georgia Technical College to host a testing room for the GED program for adult education.

Young Harris' Main Street Director Rosemary Royston talked about the Main

Street Program, which largely involves the push for responsible growth that McKay also tries to maintain. Things like economic vitality and promotion along with community outreach are at the forefront of the freshly launched nonprofit.

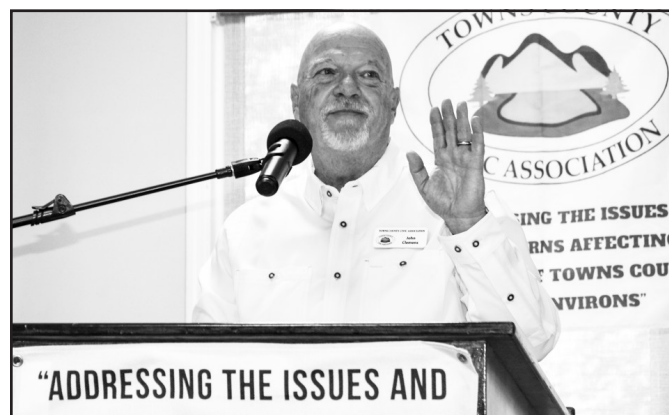
Royston herself is no stranger to the area, having worked for nearly three decades at Young Harris College while raising her family and living in neighboring Blairsville. Through the years, she's developed a deep love and appreciation for the Enchanted Valley and hopes to do well by the other residents who call it home.

Sharing the goals of the Main Street Program, Royston reassured the audience that along with responsible development, she and her board want to preserve history and carefully maintain the small-town charm that draws so many to Young Harris in the first place.

Last but not least, Jay "Junior" Chastain Jr., now leading the City of Hiwassee as Mayor Pro Tempore, shared some background on himself and some insight into his upcoming choices as he learns to navigate running the city.

"I was born in the city limits of Hiwassee. I've been raised in the city limits of Hiwassee. My father gave his life in 1974 as the sheriff - he was shot - protecting the citizens of Hiwassee," Chastain said.

As a paramedic of over 30 years, Chastain has come to



Civic Association President John Clemens led the 20th anniversary membership meeting for the organization last month.

Photo by Brittany Holbrooks

know those citizens very well himself. Along with saving lives, he has served on the City Council since 2008 and has a history of working well with the Commissioner's Office.

"Everybody wants to know how everything went since I come into office. It's went pretty smoothly, and there's one reason it's went pretty smoothly," Chastain said before recognizing City Clerk Bonnie Kendrick and thanking her for helping him understand the ins and outs of organizing Hiwassee.

"I can't tell you what two years is going to bring, but I can tell y'all, just like Liz said, just like Denise said, growth is coming," continued Chastain. "It's coming whether we want it or not, and we are going to have to manage this growth."

One of Chastain's goals is to work closely with McKay and the Downtown Development Authority to shape that growth in ways that benefit the

city, though for now, his focus is on preparing and what he can do for the city in the present. That includes keeping an eye on maintenance and infrastructure especially.

"I'm looking forward to what's ahead. I just need the community's support, and that's the reason I'm here," said Chastain in closing.

Georgia House District 8 candidates Stan Gunter and Charlotte Sleczkowski also made an appearance shortly after the potluck dinner to offer brief explanations of why they deserve residents' votes.

Board of Education...from Page 1

"I struggled with it a bit because I could retire in two years, but with SPLOST passing in the fall, there are several projects that I want to see through before I leave," Berrong said.

E-SPLOST is a voter-approved 1% sales tax benefiting local school systems, and those funds can only be used for capital improvement projects such as the new agricultural facility the school has been working to complete.

"It's still dirt at this point, but we're hopeful," Berrong said of the ag project. "It will eventually expand our vocational offerings."

The board meeting went by speedily with no dissent. Annual service contract bids were awarded to Arrow Exterminators for \$4,800, M.J. Propane for \$1.07 per gallon and Allen Disposal for \$25,140, which was the same as last year.

Renewal of the contract between the Towns County Sheriff's Office and the Board of Education was approved to provide for School Resource Officers on campus.

"We pay 75% of the officers' salary for traffic control and school resources officer support. The contract in the amount of \$19,659 has not changed from last year," Berrong said.

The board approved the contract with the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension, which provides services such as 4-H for students.

TCHS graduate Zeke Gribble was approved as the new head coach of middle school baseball. Kendall Floyd, another alum, will be the assistant coach for middle school boys' and girls' basketball, as well as the middle school assistant baseball coach.

Finance Director Myra Underwood updated the board on the May 2024 financial statements and the sick leave bank.

"The end of the fiscal year is June 30, so final figures will not be available until September," Underwood said. "The property tax revenue was \$616,000, and we met bud-

get. Sales tax revenue for the month of June was \$294,000."

The district also applied for a OneGeorgia grant. Grants in the amount of \$500,000 are up for grabs. Eligible uses of the monies are projects relating to water and sewer infrastructure, road, rail and airport improvements, industrial parks, workforce, technology and tourism.

"We're still working on complying with the administrative requirements, but once we get through this part it should be easy going forward," Underwood said.

Pertaining to the sick leave bank, this fund is comprised of "days donated by members as is intended for critical care."

"Members access the sick leave bank when they have used all of their own sick leave," Underwood said. "We have 126 members. Members do not need to contribute any of their own days unless the bank drops below 50 days. Currently, we have 118 days remaining."

The meeting adjourned without a closed session.

When asked about the coalescence of the School Board, Berrong explained that "every two years we have elections, and it depends on how that dynamic rolls out."

"This group for the past four years has been fantastic," Berrong said. "I trust them, they seem to trust me, and they feel like we're doing the right things for the kids. It works out great. There's no dissention."

"We can have difficult conversations and then walk out and there are no hard feelings. There is mutual respect for one another, so it really leads to being able to run a school system the way it should be run."

"We keep out of politics 100%. We're not here for right or left, we're here for kids. This is home. I graduated from Towns County High School, and so have my children. Whatever affects the students is what matters to me."

Board Vice Chair David

Phillips concurred with Berrong's assessment.

"We all get along, we have a great rapport," Phillips said. "We all know each other very well. We all like each other. We all work together for the good of the kids."

Board Chair Caroleen Woods added to the sentiment, stating, "We can agree, and we can disagree, but we're respectful and understand one another's point of view. It is like David said, it's all about the kids. We leave our egos at the door. Everything we do is about the good of the students, the staff and the community."

Asked about bureaucracy generally, Woods replied: "Not dealing with a teacher's union takes out a whole other layer and makes our job easier. We work to the best that we can with the resources we have without getting mired down in the political aspects bombarding education today. All that minutiae does not do anything positive for our children."

Michael Courey, representative of the Towns County Civic Association who regularly attends School Board meetings, said he was pleased that Berrong's contract was renewed.

"Education is a vital part of the structure of the community," Courey said. "Meals, cleaning the floors, bus drivers - all of that is a part of a child's education, and Darren has done a remarkable job. Not just with the accounting of all of the players but also the way he enables a unification of those players for the good of the students."

"We have the same problems here that happen all over, but it's critical the way those problems are handled. He handles problems in a logical, sane manner. We're very fortunate to have him."

The Towns County Board of Education meets the first Monday of each month, with a work session at 6 p.m. followed by a business meeting at 6:45 p.m. in the High School Media Center. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend.

Children's Summer Art Classes at Artisan Center

Mountain Regional Arts and Crafts Guild is excited to announce the 2024 children's summer art program! Classes will start the week of July 8 and run for 3 weeks. The cost per child, per class is \$12 and includes all supplies.

Classes will be held at ArtWorks Artisan Center, 243 Big Sky Drive, Hiwassee, GA. The children's summer arts program is part of our community outreach program.

Class Schedule: July 11 - 10:30 AM to Noon - Pop-up Cards (2 of 2 sessions) - ages 6+. July 11 - 1 PM to 2:30 PM - Bug Magnets -ages 6+. July 16 - 10:30 AM to Noon - Windchimes - ages 8+. July 16 - 1 PM to 2:30 PM - Rainbow Suncatcher -ages 8+. July 18 - 10:30 AM to Noon - Marble Mania Painting - ages 6+. July 18 - 1 PM to 2:30 PM - Bubble Painting - ages 8+. July 23 - 10:30 AM to Noon - Painted Slate Rocks- ages

6+. July 23 - 1 PM to 2:30 PM - Painted Flower on Canvas - ages 8+. July 25 - 10:30 AM to Noon - String Art - ages 8+. July 25 - 1 PM to 2:- Plastic Canvas Picture - ages 8+.

To register your child or grandchild, please visit our website www.mountainarts-crafts.org.

A link for the schedule

and registration paperwork are on the main page. You can drop off the registration form at the store. Payment is required at the time of registration.

Please call for ArtWorks Artisan Center at 706-896-0932 for more information. Classes are small and fill quickly.

Citizens For A Better America

Are you happy about the way things are going in Cherokee County, NC, the U.S. and the world? Let's work together to create change, peacefully & patriotically!

Payton McNabb will be our guest speaker. She was injured by a transgender male playing High School volleyball here in Cherokee County and has played a big part in Fairness In Womens Sports Act in NC and the country. Citizens for a Better Amer-

ica meets third Thursday of each month. Next meeting is Thursday, July 18 at Legends Steakhouse in the private meeting room, 42 Tennessee Street, downtown Murphy, NC. Meeting starts Promptly at 6-7:30.

This meeting is free & open to the public. For more information: Website: <http://www.CitizensForABetterAmerica.com>; Email: Contact@CitizensForABetterAmerica.com; Call: (828) 494-7403.

Fairgrounds Fireworks...from Page 1

rial Day. For me, it is about remembering the people that fought for us and the freedoms we have in this country.”

For William Scott Thompson, the Fourth of July is for the veterans and the people fighting to keep America free who have lost their lives and limbs in the process.

“It’s important to be patriotic for them,” Thompson

said. “I feel sorry for them because they don’t get the support they need.”

Stan Wood served with the 7th Special Forces Group out of Fort Bragg, and he believes that Independence Day stands for “freedom and liberty.”

Wood’s buddy Scott Shattles concurred, adding that July 4 is all about freedom

and being able to “do what we want.” Kristi Shattles reinforced her husband’s ideas, saying the celebration is for “those who have served and a time for thanking God for the air He gives us to breath.”

For more information about the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds and upcoming events, visit <https://georgiamountainfairgrounds.com>.



As if bouncy houses, facepainting and cornhole weren’t enough, the Fairgrounds Fireworks also featured mechanical bull riding that was a big hit with children in the lead-up to the colorful display.

Photo by Lowell Nicholson



Family comes first at the annual Fairgrounds Fireworks, where Calvary Baptist Church provided plenty for kids to do in 2024.

Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Traffic stop by Sheriff’s Office results in double meth arrest

News Special

On Thursday, July 4, a Towns County Sheriff’s deputy initiated a traffic stop on Georgia 288 near US 76 West.

During the traffic stop, probable cause was developed to search the vehicle, which resulted in an amount of methamphetamine that field-tested positive being confiscated.

James Grady Cornett,

64, of Temple, was arrested and charged with felony possession of methamphetamine and possession/use of drug-related objects.

Troy Atkins Cornett, 61, of Cartersville, was arrested and charged with felony possession of methamphetamine, possession/use of drug-related objects and failure to drive within a single lane.

Sheriff Ken Henderson is pleased with the commitment to these concentrated patrols, which will continue.

All individuals are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.



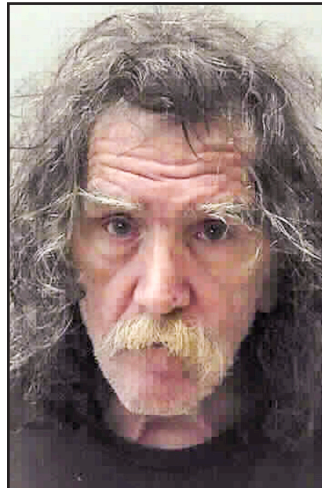
VFW Fish Fry

The VFW is pleased to have you come and have Fish Fry with us at our post on Sunny Side for \$12 or \$15 all you can eat.

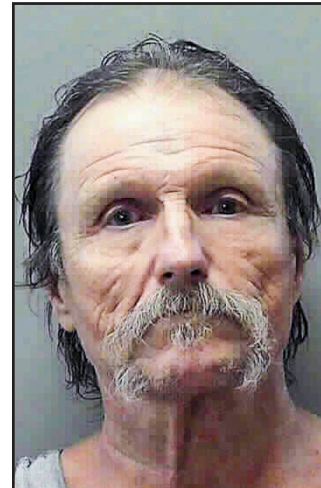
The nights of the fish fry is still the 2nd and the 4th Fridays of each month. Remember no Tax & no Tip. We hope to see you there!

VFW Karaoke

Karaoke every Friday night from 7 PM until 10 PM at the VFW Post on Sunnyside Rd in Hiawassee. Come join us for some fun! It is open to the public. T(july10,A)JH



James Grady Cornett



Troy Atkins Cornett

Sewage Leak...from Page 1

tion group MountainTrue said on July 4 that parts had been ordered to fix the lift station, "but repairs likely won't be completed until Monday."

According to the city, the private lift station does not belong to the Hawks Harbor neighborhood of apartments, "and they are not responsible."

The lift station failure was not the city's responsibility, either, though Hiwassee Mayor Pro Tempore Jay Chastain Jr. said city employees stepped in to stop the leaking sewage from continuing to go into the lake.

Importantly, the city clarified that drinking water was not impacted.

Chastain said the city has taken samples of the water in the cove for testing and alerted the Georgia Environmental Protection Division, which was expected to respond to the leak location after press time on Monday, July 8, to investigate.

MountainTrue, which regularly conducts water qual-

ity testing throughout the area, said Saturday that the spill "is not affecting any other waters except the unnamed stream near Hawks Harbor Apartments and the Cove of Lake Chatuge where it drains in."

Responding to a Facebook comment, MountainTrue said the organization was hoping to learn from Georgia EPD soon whether the private lift station owner would face a fine in the spillover event.

"The county has no role here and won't be getting any fines," MountainTrue said. "The owner of the private lift station could potentially be fined, but I'm not sure if it will happen or not. There's no need to worry about your taxes going up."

In addition to city and EPD testing, MountainTrue has been and will continue to conduct water testing at multiple points throughout the cove, with "good news" results being returned as early as Sunday.

"Three of four sites

came back clean in the Hawks Harbor cove from (Saturday's) sampling!" MountainTrue reported July 7. "The only one not safe for swimming is right where the stream that carried the sewage spill enters Lake Chatuge."

"MountainTrue uses 126 CFU/100mL to determine safe swimming for our Swim Guide sites. The sites at the top (entrance to the cove) and the site midway in both had <1 CFU/100mL, which is essentially zero E. coli."

"The site down close to the big boat dock in front of the apartments only had 33 CFU/100mL. And even though the site where the stream enters the lake failed, it was only 366 CFU/100ML, which is solidly better than expected."

"We've received word that the state is planning to sample (July 8). Hopefully we'll be able to share their results on Tuesday (July 9)."

One Facebook user asked about the likelihood that the sewage had impacted a nearby popular lake attraction known as Splash Island, and

MountainTrue put their concerns to rest:

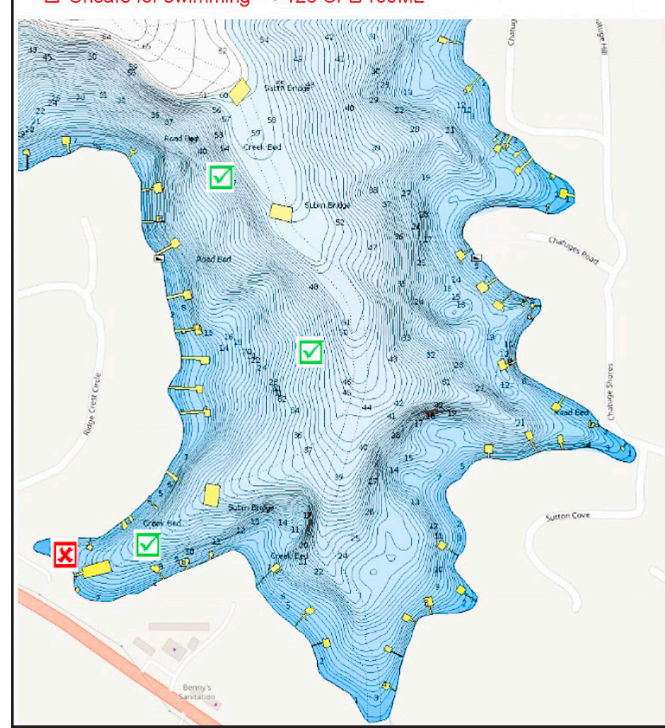
"There's no way that this spill would've caused any contamination on the other side of the peninsula, much less all the way over at Splash Island. There is no reason to believe that it's not safe to swim at Splash Island. Lake Chatuge has a huge amount of volume of clean water that is quickly diluting any pollution that went in early last week."

Currently, it is not known how long sewage was seeping into the lake, as the leak was only reported to the city after someone noticed a smell.

The Towns County Herald heard rumors last week that multiple people had gotten sick from swimming in the cove area before seeking medical treatment at Chatuge Regional Hospital in Hiwassee.

When reached for comment Friday, Union General Health System could not confirm an outbreak of illness related to the leak but said it would continue to monitor the situation.

MountainTrue Sampling Results - 7/6/2026
Lake Chatuge, Towns County, NC
EPA-approved 3M Petrifilm E. coli Sampling Method



On Sunday, MountainTrue West uploaded this graphic to Facebook showing three clean of four test samples collected on Saturday from the waters near the sewer leak.

Made In GA...from Page 1



Mary Ann Miller and Julie Payne of the Lake Chatuge Chamber of Commerce are grateful for all the 2024 sponsors of the ever-popular Made In Georgia Festival. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

onlookers, Buster Brown of Georgia Mountain Falconry brought his birds of prey and taught visitors about the Red-Tailed Hawk.

There was a wide variety of products for sale: jewelry, wind chimes, wood carvings, beef jerky, quilts, birdhouses, artwork, clothing, pottery, syrup, dehydrated foods, and so much more. All the products were brewed, handcrafted, grown, harvested, stitched, and/or made in Georgia.

Sheryl Osborne of Soaps by Sheryl is a repeat participant in the festival.

"This is my fourth year,"

Osborne said. "I started making soaps about 13 years ago and did the soapmaking at the (Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds). Someone approached me to join in with this festival, and I was happy to."

"I like to be involved. The festival is always really well attended - just look at the crowd. And people really support their community here, and I like that. I shop the vendors, too."

Michael Holland of the GrillMan BBQ Company has been plying his wares at the festival since its inception.

"I just murder it," Hol-

land said, referring to his sales. "I'm retired, so I do what I love, and I love what I do. This is a competition-level product that I've been making for 50 years. I was a finalist in the 'Flavors of Georgia' contest the first year I introduced my sauce. This is the way barbecue sauce is supposed to taste. I come to the festival every year."

Vendor Ginger Rogers said that Julie Payne with the chamber saw her wreaths and wanted her to join in on the festival, which she has for three years running.

"I make many types of

wreaths and other crafts, as you can see," Rogers said. "I also make small wreaths to accommodate anybody's budget."

"It is quite busy today, and when the Christmas festival happens, it will be again. I'll have all kinds of items for sale. I'll be back again next year."

Shopper Eva Bellinger said she attended this year on the invitation of a friend, and

she's glad that she did.

"It's quite remarkable to see all of the creativity of the vendors," Bellinger said. "I loved the hummingbird spinner, so I bought one. It was great to see so many people from the community supporting local vendors. I've had an all-around exciting time."

Each year, Made In Georgia serves as one of the biggest fundraisers for the

chamber, which also hosts a holiday bizarre in November, and that event features vendors from anywhere.

"Many people do some early Christmas shopping and enjoy the local food vendors for that one too," Payne said.

For more information about the Chamber of Commerce and upcoming events, visit <https://www.golake-chatuge.com/>.

Model "A" Club holds Annual Picnic and upcoming July 11th meeting

The Brasstown Valley A's local chapter of the Ford Model A Club of America held the annual club picnic Saturday, June 22nd at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds. Many members attended the fun event and 5 drove their A's to the event at the Paris pavilion at Hamilton Gardens.

Next event is the annual Georgia Mountain Fair parade on Saturday, August 17th where the club will join dozens of other Model A's from all over the state who participate in the parade.

The Brasstown Valley A's local chapter of the Ford Model A Club of America will hold the monthly members meeting Thursday, July 11th.



Model A's at the club picnic at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds Paris pavilion

The meeting will be held at a new location, the Community Room of the United Community Bank in Hayesville, NC at 11 AM. Lunch will follow the meeting at a restaurant to be determined by meeting attendees.

Model A owners and

those interested in this iconic automobile are invited to attend. Come meet fellow Model A enthusiasts and to see what the club is all about.

Please drive your "A" to the meeting if possible and weather cooperates.