

# Towns County Herald

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## Hiwassee enacts new density limit; Osborn joins DDA

By Chad Stack  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

In the July 6 regular meeting, Hiwassee City Council members voted unanimously to enact the Building and Planning Ordinance amendment that allows for expedient development of multi-unit residential buildings "in an effort to maintain proper density within the city."

The amended ordinance increases the previous density limit of four living units per acre on parcels equal to or greater than 1 acre to six units per acre and no more than four structures per acre and a hard

cap of 40 living units per parcel, regardless of parcel size.

"Parcels may not be divided to avoid the 40-unit limitation, and owners or successors must wait five years after subdividing their parcel into two or more parcels before building more than 40 units on a divided parcel; height restrictions are limited to 35 feet," the amendment reads.

Much discussion has taken place regarding this amendment in the last couple months, including multiple council meetings and a public hearing, and council members hope the revised density limit can begin to address the lack of affordable housing in

Hiwassee.

Serving as the impetus for revived density limit discussions, the Mountain View Townhouses project proposed by Celtic Realty Group LLC in March should be moving forward soon with construction, as the building permit has been submitted and is expected to be approved shortly.

The townhome project is set to be erected in the vacant lot next to Georgia Vision Center across from Taco Bell on Main Street.

Celtic has proposed 16 townhomes to be built on approximately 2 acres of a 5-acre lot, to include 10 two-bedroom units starting at

\$230,000 apiece and six three-bedroom units at \$280,000 each.

Additionally, the amendment changes the part of the Building and Planning Ordinance dealing with lots for recreational vehicles, requiring a minimum of lot area of 5 acres "outside of or above the 1928 Contour lines for Lake Chatuge as established by the Tennessee Valley Authority."

"If you're going to put an RV in, it has to be 5 acres, and it has to be above water, basically," Mayor Liz Ordiales said.

In other business, council members approved, Page 6A



Hiwassee City Council Members Jay Chastain Jr. and Nancy Noblet voted with the rest of the council to adopt the new density limit for multi-unit residential buildings last week.

Photo by Chad Stack

## Peyton Barrett returns from elite Italian soccer visit

By Chad Stack  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Towns County High School Class of 2021 Graduate Peyton Barrett was invited to Italy to train with the Italian National Soccer Team, and he spent nearly two weeks on his overseas trip June 18-27.

Peyton finished his soccer career as the school's all-time leading scorer with 56 goals. He also earned All-State and All-Region multiple times and led the Indians to two Final Four appearances.

In a stellar senior year,

Peyton helped his teammates finish 11-3 on the season with a 9-1 region record to give them the title of Georgia High School Association Public Single-A Region 8 Champions. He helped the Indians to a region championship in the 2018-19 season as well.

The Indians started the 2019-20 season off undrafted with a 3-0 record and plenty of potential to win the region that year also, but due to COVID-19, the team had to cut its season short.

Peyton's older sister Brooke is a former Lady Indian who played soccer at Georgia

See Barrett, Page 6A



Peyton posing with some of the talented young players he got to run the pitch with on his recent trip to Italy.

## Towns Senior Center reopens after yearlong COVID closure

By Chad Stack  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

With the grand re-opening of the Towns County Senior Center last week, the county's oldest, more isolated residents once again have a dedicated space to spend time together and participate in recreational activities.

The facility returned to regular hours for all congregant members on Tuesday, July 6, more than a year after closing in March 2020 due to COVID-19. This event was the first of two re-openings, with a second "welcome back" for the community scheduled for Aug. 2.

It was a joyful reunion and celebration featuring food, See Senior Center, Page 6A



Towns County seniors made a triumphant return to the Senior Center in last week's grand re-opening following COVID.

Photo by Chad Stack

## Sheriff's Office traffic stop leads to meth trafficking arrest

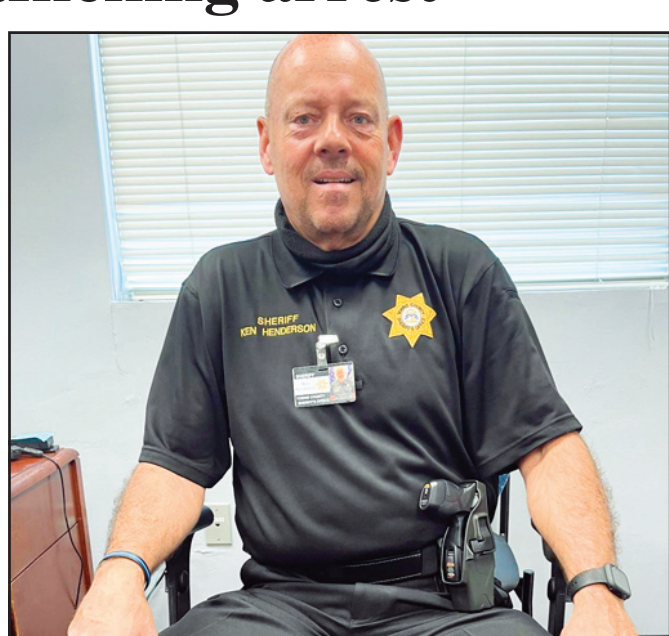
News Special  
Towns County Herald

Towns County Sheriff's Office received information recently that led to a traffic stop the evening of July 5 at US 76 and Georgia 17, aka the Junction.

The driver was identified as Dalton Alexander Massey, a subject wanted out of Hall County on an active warrant for probation violation.

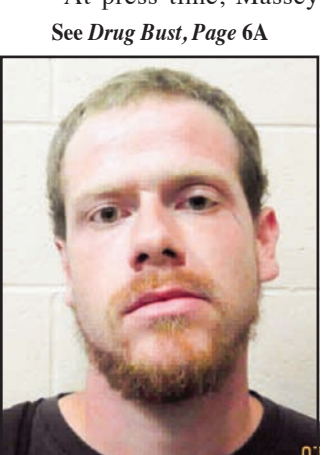
After further investigation by the Sheriff's Office, the subject was also charged with the following: possession of methamphetamine, possession and use of drug-related objects, and trafficking in methamphetamine.

At press time, Massey See Drug Bust, Page 6A



Sheriff Ken Henderson posing with his office's latest haul, including a bag of meth and scorpion-shaped drug paraphernalia.

Photo/Facebook



Dalton Alexander Massey

## McKay, Harper talk development with Mtn. Movers & Shakers

By Allison Youngblood  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

The Mountain Movers and Shakers welcomed Towns County's Joint Economic Development Director Denise McKay and Hiwassee Downtown Development Authority Chair Steven Harper to their weekly meeting July 9.

McKay discussed the state-mandated 10-year Joint Comprehensive Plan, which

must be updated every five years. That process is currently ongoing and is being undertaken with assistance from the public, local governments and the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission.

The plan is meant to be a blueprint for the future arrived at jointly by the people of Towns County and her two cities, Hiwassee and Young Harris.

Residents can read the 2016 version of the plan to

see how well that blueprint has been executed to date by clicking on the "Planning" tab at <http://www.townscountyga.org/>.

One public meeting has already taken place to introduce the effort, and there will be at least three more meetings for direct input, on July 20 at the Foster Park Recreation Center, Aug. 12 at Hiwassee City Hall, and Aug. 24 inside Young Harris City Hall, all at 7 p.m.

See Movers & Shakers, Page 6A



Hiwassee DDA Chair Steven Harper, center, had a good time speaking with the Mountain Movers and Shakers on Friday, pictured here with group members William "Scotty" McCall and Michael Borkman.

Photo by Allison Youngblood

## July Term 2021 Towns County Grand Jury Indictments

The following individuals were indicted during the July Term 2021 of the Towns County Grand Jury, which met last week:

Joseph Leo Price II, cruelty to children in the first degree; battery.

Stephanie Ann Jackson, making a false statement; driving under the influence (per se); driving under the influence (less safe) (alcohol); driving while license suspended; failure to maintain lane.

Barry Brock Harper, four counts aggravated assault; false imprisonment; criminal trespass.

Joshua Clarke Nelson, burglary in the first degree; two counts aggravated assault; two counts criminal attempt to commit a felony; criminal damage to property in the second degree.

Richard Wayne White, making a false statement; driving under the influence (less safe) (alcohol); obstruction of

an officer; criminal trespass.

Jeffrey Ryan Burke, driving under the influence (per se); driving under the influence (less safe) (alcohol); driving without headlights; open container.

Terra Michelle Silvers, crossing the guard lines with drugs; possession of a Schedule II controlled substance; entering an automobile; theft by taking.

Donna Elizabeth Wise, terroristic threats; disorderly conduct.

Dwight Herman Swanson, simple battery, Family Violence; hindering an emergency telephone call.

Marcus Anthony Eidson, aka Christopher Lattuses Dorsey, forgery in the first degree; driving while license suspended; giving false information to a law enforcement officer; failure to maintain signal lights in good working condition.

Timothy Dale Wood, false imprisonment; battery, Family Violence; three counts

cruelty to children in the third degree.

Samuel Elton Moss, trafficking methamphetamine or amphetamine; possession of a Schedule I controlled substance; possession of a Schedule IV controlled substance; possession of a controlled substance; possession of drug-related objects; driving under the influence; failure to maintain lane; improper display of license plates; distracted driving; operation of unregistered vehicle; driving without a license.

Pamela Denise Bryans, possession of methamphetamine; possession of drug-related objects.

Nathaniel Jack Saunders, possession of methamphetamine; possession of drug-related objects; theft by taking; two counts criminal damage to property in the second degree.

Tony Curtis Ledford, aggravated stalking.

See Grand Jury, Page 6A

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# Senior Center...from Page 1A



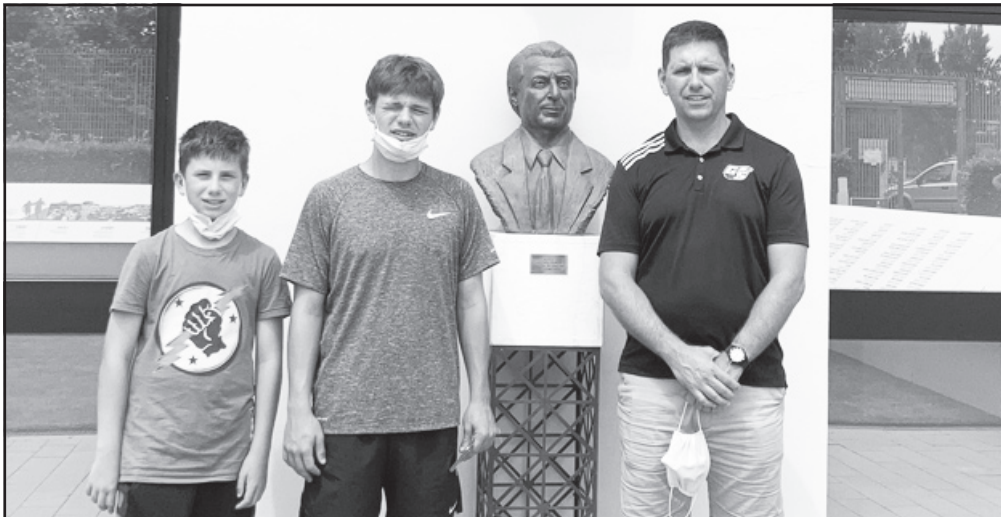
**Grammy-nominated pianist Enoch Fernando performed for seniors during their grand re-opening celebration July 6, pictured here with wife Rebecca.**  
Photo by Chad Stack

friendship, activities, door prizes and live music performed by Grammy-nominated pianist Enoch Fernando, who lives here part of the year. Senior Center Director Gale Bradley-Parker said she was excited to reopen and to see so many familiar smiling faces back at the center having fun and enjoying local fellowship. As such a large percentage of residents are seniors, Parker said it is important to have a place like the Senior Center for people in their golden years to go, to remain both active and a part of the community. "It's our job to offer as many programs as possible for our senior members to be stimulated physically, mentally and spiritually," Parker said. "For over a year, our center has been closed to the public, forcing our members to stay

at home. "With COVID restrictions being lifted and with things slowly going back to normal, we are excited to be back open, giving our senior members a safe, fun and exciting place to spend their time." It has been important amid COVID-19 for seniors to be cautious, as severe illness from the disease is most likely to occur in the elderly. And even though the center was closed to members and the public, employees like Parker came to work every day to prepare for the daily Meals on Wheels deliveries. Many of the county's homebound residents rely on Meals on Wheels to get their food, Parker said, and fortunately, the program was able to operate normally during the pandemic to deliver more than 300 meals each week.

Senior Center members like Linn Gonsalves, Ron Krasneck and Jean Hendrick, who were used to attending the facility before the pandemic, had to find other ways to spend their time over the last year. Without the center to visit, Gonsalves said she and her recently departed husband stayed mostly indoors and made very few trips, mainly to Walmart and church with masks on. Gonsalves said the global pandemic sent her a message from God to always be mindful of who is in charge. Much like Gonsalves, Krasneck remained home a lot initially, but when things started to ease up, he said they took care to wear masks and ventured out to eat and gather in small groups near the lake. Having the Senior Center back is important, as the facility provides a safe place for the community's often forgotten members to connect with one another and participate in activities together, Krasneck said. Senior Center regular visitor Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw stopped in to say hello to the returning members. While there, he sat down to a piece of cake and music with several members and thanked Director Parker for all she does, saying the county is "so blessed to have her." The Senior Center is open to members Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., with a hot lunch being served at 11:30 a.m. each day. The Silver Sneakers Program will resume Aug. 9 at 2 p.m. and will take place every Monday and Wednesday at 2 p.m. moving forward. Currently, the center has no mask requirement, though masks are optional for anyone wanting to wear one.

# Barrett...from Page 1A



**L-R: Brody, Peyton and Timothy Barrett outside the Museo del Calcio, a sports museum that is dedicated to the history of the Italian National Football Team.**  
Photo/Submitted

Southern University prior to graduating in May, and she, too, traveled to Italy before college to take advantage of similar experiences. Following in her soccer footsteps, Peyton has signed to play with Young Harris College starting in August 2021. As a Mountain Lion, the talented young man will be pursuing a bachelor's degree in piano. His family has a strong passion for the game of soccer, Peyton said, noting how he and his sister ended up playing for many of the same travel league coaches. One such coach was Gavino Asteghene, who is also a coach for the Italian National League Men's Soccer Team. Asteghene was so impressed with Peyton that he invited him to travel to Italy and practice with Italian National Team players at their top-notch facilities. The invite was initially extended for spring break of his junior year but got postponed for more than a year due to COVID. Excited for the opportunity, the Barretts – parents Timothy and Amy with Peyton and his younger brother Brody, who also plays the sport – decided to turn the delayed trip into a family vacation, heading to Italy last month. Peyton said he did not

get to train with the National Team players after all because of some ongoing COVID restrictions, but he still had a blast on his trip and scored some quality soccer time. "Even though I wasn't able to train with the players, I was still able to train and learn from some amazing coaches," Peyton said. "I was just happy to be able to practice in their facilities and to learn some new things from professional level coaches." During his 10 days in Italy, Peyton trained for a few hours each day and spoke with coaches and players, asking for advice and pointers on how best to achieve his goal of going pro after graduating from college. "This is a once in a lifetime opportunity – not many kids in any sport have the chance to get coaching from professional level coaches," Peyton said. "I love the game, and my goal is to play soccer at the professional level." With hopes of one day joining a Major League Soccer team here in the U.S., he said if the opportunity to play professionally outside America ever presents itself, he would strongly consider it, as he knows that many U.S.-based players began their careers playing overseas.

Speaking on behalf of the family, Peyton's mother Amy said everyone is incredibly proud of his soccer accomplishments to date. "He practices six days a week for about three hours a day," she said. "He even focuses a lot on his nutrition. For him, soccer isn't a sport or an opportunity, it's his passion." Following his 10 days of training, Peyton said Coach Asteghene asked him if he would be willing to return to Italy to train with the Italian National Team players once COVID restrictions are lifted. "I think we are going to go soon," Peyton said. "I start practice with Young Harris College Aug. 10, so we are trying to plan our trip before I start practice." The Young Harris College Men's Soccer Team will host a home scrimmage game on Saturday, Aug. 21, at 5:30 p.m. against Newberry. For the season home opener, the Mountain Lions will welcome Lenoir-Rhyne on Thursday, Sept. 2, at 7 p.m. Peyton will be playing the right forward position for the Mountain Lions during the 2021-22 season, and the community is invited to watch him play right here at home.

# City of Hiwassee...from Page 1A

Osborn as the newest member on the Hiwassee Downtown Development Authority Board. Osborn is replacing former DDA Board Member Alec Therrel. He will serve as the only member residing outside the city. At just 25 years old, Osborn is a relatively young member of the community, though he has already shown a willingness to be involved in local affairs, serving most recently as a board member on the Towns County Historical Society. Economic Development Director Denise McKay said that when the time came to fill Therrel's position, she reached out to Osborn after hearing about his passion and interest in Towns County and the City of Hiwassee. Osborn will be a great asset to the DDA, McKay

said, noting that his youth and extensive ties to the community will undoubtedly provide the organization with new and exciting ideas of what people his age would like to see in the city. "I know that Towns County, and Hiwassee, is mostly a retirement community, but there are many of us who are not (retirees), and it would be nice to see some things to attract the younger people." Osborn said, highlighting a need also for jobs to support younger working-class folks. As a lifelong resident, Osborn said he wants to make sure the area keeps its small-town feel. He is looking forward to working with the rest of the DDA Board to help not only with fresh ideas but also with preserving Hiwassee's small-town aesthetic. The Hiwassee DDA

Board was scheduled to meet after press time on Tuesday, July 13, at 3 p.m. inside City Hall. According to hiwassee.ga.gov, the purpose of the DDA is to "revitalize and redevelop the commercial corridor of the city, particularly the Hiwassee Enterprise Zone Area; develop and promote for the public good and general welfare, trade, commerce, industry, and employment opportunities; finance projects within the city limits that will develop and promote the public good and general welfare; and issue bonds to finance projects." A major project on the horizon for the DDA is the Paris Center in Downtown Hiwassee, to feature a Business Incubator, a restaurant and several retail spaces available for local business owners.

# Grand Jury...from Page 1A

Carl Loren Palmer, possession of methamphetamine; possession of methamphetamine with intent to distribute; possession of a Schedule I controlled substance; possession of cocaine; possession of a Schedule IV controlled substance; possession of drug-related objects. Carlos Dwaine Palmer, possession of methamphetamine; possession of methamphetamine with intent to distribute; possession of a Schedule I controlled substance; possession of cocaine; possession of a Schedule IV controlled substance; possession of drug-related objects. Christa Lee Patterson, possession of methamphetamine; possession of methamphetamine with intent to distribute; possession of a Schedule I controlled substance; possession of cocaine; possession of a Schedule IV controlled substance; possession of drug-related objects. Elizabeth Maria Logan, possession of a Schedule I

controlled substance; possession of methamphetamine; possession of a Schedule II controlled substance; possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony; possession of drug-related objects; drugs not in original container; giving false information to a law enforcement officer. Kyle Mitchell Odom, possession of a Schedule I controlled substance; possession of methamphetamine; possession of a Schedule II controlled substance; possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony; possession of drug-related objects; drugs not in original container. Ryan Ian Rogers, possession of a Schedule I controlled substance; possession of methamphetamine; possession of a Schedule II controlled substance; possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony; possession of drug-related objects; drugs not in original container. Jennifer Lynn Williams, trafficking methamphetamine

or amphetamine; possession of a Schedule II controlled substance; possession of methamphetamine; possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony; possession of a firearm by a convicted felon; interference with government property; obstruction of an officer; giving false information to a law enforcement officer; possession of drug-related objects; driving under the influence; distracted driving; driving under the influence (less safe) (drugs); driving under the influence (less safe) (combined influence). Alex Michael Robinson, trafficking methamphetamine or amphetamine; possession of marijuana with intent to distribute; possession of a Schedule IV controlled substance; theft by receiving stolen property; possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony. The above individuals have been charged only and are presumed innocent until found guilty in a court of law.

# 22nd Annual Butternut Creek Festival July 17th & 18th



**Butternut Creek Festival at Meeks Park in 2018.**

The Annual Butternut Creek Festival is going to be held at Meeks Park on July 17th and 18th, and the High Country Artisans are excited to be bringing this event back to Blairsville. The Covid Virus caused many shows, including ours to be cancelled last year because we felt we could not provide a safe environment for both our attendees and artists. We are working hard to make sure this year's festival will be one that everyone will enjoy. The group will be bringing back a number of favorites that have always exhibited their excellent creativity in a variety of arts and crafts. In addition to those vendors, we have a number of new artists that will offer products to enjoy and purchase. This event was chosen as a Top 20 Event in the Southeast in 2020 and we want to continue that tradition of quality workmanship this year. The hours for this year's festival are from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, July 17 and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday, July 18. Admission and parking are free and there is shuttle service from the parking area to the artists and vendors lining the shaded walkway along

the Butternut Creek. A variety of food vendors will provide a great selection to tempt your pallet as you enjoy the entertainment and crafts. Come out, bring your family and friends and enjoy the fun. The High Country Artisans, Inc. a non-profit group of local artists and craftsmen volunteering their time and efforts, work all year long to make this show a continued favorite in the Southeast. Eighty-three artists, demonstrators, non-profit organizations and musicians will make your day. There is something for everyone. The wide sample of art categories you will see include furniture, pottery, jewelry, fabric art, candles, hand-carved old world Santas, lathe turned wood, oil and water color paintings, glass, metal art, gourds, yard art, hand-crafted leather, pillows and brooms, musical instruments, bird houses and feeders, scarves, quilts, photography, sculpture and clothing. The Blairsville Cruisers and American Legion Post 121 will be on hand to provide you with information about their activities and will also be selling tickets for their raffles. Demonstrators are always a pleasure to watch and a long-

time favorite, Mal McEwen will entertain visitors with his chainsaw carving. Other vendors will also provide demonstrations and information about their crafts. There is an exciting line-up of live entertainment. On Saturday Zach Haines will perform from 10:30 a.m. to noon, the then Rocky Creek Band will be playing from 12:30 p.m. until 2 p.m. The Country River Band, a local favorite will play from 2:30 p.m. until 4:30 p.m. On Sunday we will have Southern Gospel Music from 10:30 a.m. to noon. Hunter Flanagan will be singing for us from 12:30 p.m. until 2 p.m. The Country River Band will be back at 2:30 p.m. playing a great selection of traditional country music for the remainder of the afternoon. For more information go to www.butternutcreekfestival.com, butternutcreekfestival@gmail, or leave a message at 706-781-1221. You can also like us on Facebook at ButternutCreekArtFestival. One other reminder, although we all love our pets, the Recreation Department does not allow animals in this section of the park.

# Drug Bust...from Page 1A

was being held without bond at the Towns County Jail. Once he bonds out here, he will be transported to Hall County to face his charge there. Sheriff Ken Henderson commended the Patrol Deputy for his training and a job well done. The investigation has been turned over to the Sheriff's Office Drug Investigation

Unit. In a separate incident last week, the Sheriff's Office contacted the Georgia Bureau of Investigation July 8 to respond to a property on Upper Hightower Road suspected of containing "a large amount of explosive devices." Upon arrival, the GBI Bomb Squad collected all explosive devices, with the

state agency now serving as the lead investigator in the case. "The explosives were located by a homeowner while cleaning out a shed on his property," the Sheriff's Office posted on Facebook. "Sheriff Ken Henderson states the residence and area have been cleared and is safe. There is no risk to the public at this time."

# Movers & Shakers...from Page 1A

The 2021 Comprehensive Plan Survey can be found on the county website under the "Planning Survey" tab. To make sure as many voices as possible are heard, McKay encourages everyone to fill it out, including those who are unable to attend the meetings. Lack of affordable housing for young, working-class families was another topic of discussion broached by McKay on Friday. According to the 2016 plan and people providing input at the time, affordable family housing was a big concern. To better understand the situation on the ground, McKay will be submitting an application to the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing, which offers a three-year program to identify local housing needs and how to attract builders to the area to fulfill those needs. The program is highly competitive, McKay said, noting that only five applications are accepted

per year, with already 30 applicants having submitted in 2021. Anyone wanting to help write the application, due by the end of August, may contact McKay at dmckay@hiwassee.ga.gov. For his part, Steven Harper said the DDA had just finalized the 2021-22 work plans for Downtown Hiwassee, to include four major strategies: business acquisition and development, storytelling, community serving, and ecotourism and recreation. Harper discussed the city's Rural Zone Designation, which is a space in downtown designated as a special enterprise development area providing tax incentives for investing in buildings within the zone. One of these incentives is the Job Tax Credit, which requires the creation of two new full-time jobs or their equivalent and is worth \$2,000 per new full-time equivalent job per year for up to five years, with other stipulations, according to georgiamainstreet.

Another Rural Zone incentive is the Investment Tax Credit that equals 25% of the purchase price of a building inside the zone, worth up to a \$125,000 credit off taxes over three years. Then there is the Rehabilitation Tax Credit for jobs creators who invest in properties that are at least 50 years old, qualifying each investor for a 30% tax credit of up to \$150,000 over three years. Harper also explained that in roughly two years' time, the Paris Business Center in Downtown Hiwassee will be up and running as a small business incubator. The center will provide support for new businesses to help them through their first two years and into stability. The Mountain Movers and Shakers meet every Friday at 8 a.m. inside the Sundance Grill in Hiwassee. This week, the group will welcome Tax Commissioner Michael Anderson and Coroner Tamela Cooper.