

# Towns County Herald

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## 'Hometown Pride' on display with GMF Parade

By Todd Forrest  
Towns County Herald  
Sports Editor

While the 68th edition of the Georgia Mountain Fair may have officially opened its gates on Friday, July 20, the unofficial start took place on Saturday, after the GMF Parade rolled through Hiwassee shortly after 11 a.m.

The parade departed that morning from South State Bank, next door to McConnell Memorial Baptist Church, and began the 1.6-mile journey to the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds.

Throughout their journey, parade participants peppered the sidewalks with candy, much to the delight of the anxious children who were waiting for the floats to pass by.

"I don't know about letting (my kids) eat all of this

candy, but I can always take them to the Fair and let them burn off the extra energy," said Amy Allen, who was attending her first Georgia Mountain Fair and GMF Parade. "We're looking forward to the fire trucks and the horses. That's our favorite part, but hopefully the sirens won't be too loud and scare them."

Many people attended the parade, some simply as spectators, while others were on hand to support friends or family members taking part in the parade, which was the case for Ashley Rosser.

"My husband (James) and daughter (Katelynn) are both riding on a float with the Appalachian Shrine Club," Rosser said. "My husband used to ride with the fire department in the parade, but this is his first time back in the parade in about

five or six years, so they're excited to be in the parade together this year."

This year's GMF parade saw World War II veterans serving collectively as Parade Grand Marshals and riding in a covered trailer.

As the veterans waved to the crowds, they were met with shouts of "Thank you for your service" and "Thank you for fighting for our freedom."

Following our nation's heroes were floats representing the City of Hiwassee, Towns County Lions Club, and the Towns County Historical Society.

"Hometown Pride" was the theme of the 2018 GMF Parade, as the floats focused on historical mountain culture, with overalls and straw hats the

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The Hiwassee Antique Mall won First Place in the 68th Annual Georgia Mountain Fair Parade on Saturday, July 21.  
Photo by Todd Forrest

## BOE approves second School Resource Officer for Towns County Schools

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Editor

Members of the Towns County Board of Education voted unanimously in their July 19 called meeting to bring a second school resource officer into Towns County Schools.

"We've been discussing this for about four months now," said Superintendent Dr. Darren Berrong. "To add that extra position, like we said before, it would probably cost us roughly \$35,000."

The new SRO will be located inside Towns County Elementary School to supplement the capabilities of SRO Donnie Jarrard, who will primarily patrol the middle/high school building.

"So, we'll have one SRO in both buildings," said Berrong. "That would ... give us a little bit more freedom when Donnie's going on field trips or baseball trips, then we would still have someone on campus."

Berrong is hopeful that Towns County Sheriff Chris Clinton will be able to select a deputy to serve as the second



Towns County Schools Superintendent Dr. Darren Berrong at the July 19 called BOE meeting.  
Photo by Shawn Jarrard

SRO by the time school lets in from summer break, with the first day back for students being Aug. 16.

The board's decision to approve a second SRO at Towns County Schools will be welcome news to many parents, including the half a dozen who showed up to the

July 2 board work session to voice their support for adding such a role.

Also in the July 19 called meeting, Berrong discussed with the board his desire to carefully weigh all the options when it comes to school safety,

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## EMC General Manager Nelms talks elections and more in meeting

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Editor

Blue Ridge Mountain EMC General Manager Jeremy Nelms touched on a variety of subjects during his visit with the Mountain Movers and Shakers on Friday, July 20, at the Sundance Grill.

Nelms started off by noting that the Sept. 8 EMC Annual Meeting at the Union County Schools Fine Arts Center will mark the 80th anniversary of the BRMEMC.

"Just think what the people did 80 years ago when they gathered up there at that church in Young Harris and said, 'We need some lights,' and what they were able to accomplish with the support of the federal government with FDR and the New Deal, and the TVA," said Nelms.

Speaking of the annual meeting, Nelms said the runup to the election will see a return of paper ballots alongside online and in-person voting, as last year, members could only



BRMEMC General Manager Jeremy Nelms at the Mountain Movers and Shakers meeting in Hiwassee on Friday, July 20.  
Photo by Shawn Jarrard

vote either online or in-person at the big meeting.

The Credentials and Elections Committee was scheduled to meet on Tuesday, July 24, and the names of upcoming EMC board candidates will soon be made public.

Election packets will be mailed to members this year,

each containing a ballot and election notice, and elections are expected to open the week of Aug. 6 ahead of the big Sept. 8 annual meeting.

"On that ballot, along with the candidates, we'll also have two bylaw amendments," said Nelms. "The one bylaw amendment ... the 'member in

See BRMEMC, Page 6A

## Commissioner Bradshaw establishes 90-day sign moratorium

By Mark Smith  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Effective July 17, there is now a 90-day moratorium on off-premises billboard signs.

Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw signed a resolution establishing the moratorium in his July 17 regular county meeting.

Bradshaw said he and members of the Towns County Planning Commission had noticed a significant increase in applications for off-premises signs in the last few weeks, and the moratorium is meant to keep roadside signage from "getting out of hand."

According to Bradshaw, the people of Towns County

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Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw appointing Sylvia Chassner on July 17 to represent Towns County on the Avita Community Partners Board of Directors.  
Photo by Mark Smith

## Local agencies team up to locate missing public safety officers



A search and rescue chopper and a DNR truck near a landing zone off Georgia 180. The helicopter was used in a law enforcement search and rescue operation that took place on Saturday, July 21, and Sunday, July 22, near Brasstown Bald.  
Photo by Lowell Nicholson

News Special  
Towns County Herald

BRASSTOWN BALD – On Saturday, July 21, a group of law enforcement officers and a subject in custody were in the area of Brasstown Bald on U.S. Forest Service land when they failed to make it back to their vehicles before dark, according

to the Towns County Sheriff's Office.

The group of law enforcement officers were following up on a previous criminal investigation, according to the sheriff's office.

This group consisted of an agent with the Region 8 Office of the Georgia Bureau of

Investigation, a representative of the Enotah Judicial Circuit District Attorney's Office, an investigator from the Towns County Sheriff's Office, and an EMT from Towns County Emergency Medical Services, according to the sheriff's

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## The Georgia Mountain Fair celebrates 68 years in Hiwassee, Georgia



This young man is having the time of his life on the merry-go-round at the Georgia Mountain Fair.  
Photo by Lowell Nicholson  
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## Fugitive from justice, Cook, captured in Hidalgo, Texas

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Editor

BLAIRSVILLE – A Union County man wanted locally on several counts of burglary in the first degree has been apprehended in Hidalgo, Texas, near the U.S.-Mexico border, according to the Union County Sheriff's Office.

Tracy Lynn Cook, 49, had been on the run since allegedly committing a string

of burglaries in Union County on Jan. 11, according to the sheriff's office.

Authorities in Hidalgo, Texas, arrested Cook last week on drug-related charges, and they notified the sheriff's office after discovering that he'd been entered into the National Crime Information Center, according to the sheriff's office.

Cook has several connections to Towns County,  
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Tracy Lynn Cook

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Lake Levels  
Blue Ridge 1,686.76  
Chatuge 1,925.29  
Nottely 1,776.57

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Class of the Season  
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Board of Health  
Meeting  
Thursday, July 26th  
9:30 AM  
Conference Room  
1104 Jack Dayton Circle  
See page 7A

Run Off Election  
Results can be found  
at www.townscountyherald.net  
and in next week's paper