

SAR Award...from Page 1A

trust. "This is an office of the people, an office of public trust. It doesn't belong to me or to anyone who works here, it belongs to we the people. For us to fulfill our mission, we have to be involved with the people. And that is what government is about; to have the people involved is everything."

Both deputies and jailers of the Towns County Sheriff's Office were thankful alongside Sheriff Clinton for the recognition they received last week in honor of the work they do every day.

Capt. Jim Couch said he finds community connections such as these important for maintaining the positive attitude of officers and boosting morale department wide.

"One of the things that I appreciate is that they are taking note of our personnel," Couch said. "Of course, it is not only the sworn officers like the patrol, but also the detention officers, because they have had it hard, too."



Towns County Sheriff Chris Clinton was glad to accept an appreciation award for his office from local SAR President Jared Ogdan on Aug. 5.

Photo by Jarrett Whitener

"I appreciate the Sons of the American Revolution and the patriots because the Constitution means a lot to us. We make sure the Constitution is adhered to, and that is what makes this so special."

"We have a great group of people here, and I appreciate everything they do. It means a lot to us and the officers as well to have others appreciate the job they are doing."

Night Market...from Page 1A

"The more vibrant it is, the more people that you have, and the community will seem more alive and vibrant."

"This will bring more economic investment back into the community when people see activities like this and get excited about the town. Downtown is the heart of the community, and we want people to enjoy it."

The Night Market welcomed 13 vendors from around the area, with each vendor offering his or her own unique crafts and products, like Cathy Mozley and her products made from beeswax.

"These are beeswax food wraps that replace using plastic wraps and bags in your home," Mozley said. "I take 100 percent cotton fabric, prewash it, and then infuse it with beeswax, jojoba oil and pine resin."

"Beeswax and pine resin are naturally anti-microbial, so your food lasts longer. Bread won't mold as fast, and if you use it for cut fruits and vegetables, you won't believe how long half an avocado will last."

Hiawassee Healing Owner Jacilyn Ledford promoted her business and special healing techniques at



The Night Market runs from 5-10 p.m. the first Friday of each month between now and December on the Hiawassee Town Square.

Photo by Jarrett Whitener

the event. "I help others with their own healing path through reiki, yoga, meditation and other workshops that we offer," Ledford said. "My job is to help people on their journey of feeling good and helping them live their best life possible."

Like many residents attending that evening, Jeanne Harper said she felt that the Hiawassee Night Market was a great addition to the downtown,

even if it is only one Friday a month for the time being.

"I think it is awesome, just terrific," Harper said. "More power to Liz Ordiales and the Downtown Development Authority for what they have done. What a great way of bringing the community to the city."

The Friday Night Market will return the first Friday of every month through December from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Young Harris Meeting...from Page 1A

close those down a little."

The council held a first reading of the ordinance in the July regular meeting, and members decided Aug. 4 to table everything for the Rural Enterprise Zone to review and reimagine the zone map before moving forward with the creation of the zone.

Also last week, Mayor Andrea Gibby presented the council with a \$3,045.15 invoice for industrial chemicals used to help with unpleasant smells emanating from the sewer plant.

"We have been having a major issue with odor," Gibby said. "We have had a lot of complaints, so we have ordered a new chemical to try this. I considered it an emergency."

"They have been using it for about two weeks and it has helped the smell. They dump about 5 pounds two different times of the day, one in the morning and one a little later. We are hoping that helps."

Councilman Dr. John Kelley gave an update on COVID-19, pointing out the apparent rise in area positive cases.

"We have more cases now than we had this time last month," Kelley said. "It does not look like the numbers are going to go down anytime soon."

Because of the increase in numbers, City Hall will remain locked and available by appointment, and the September City Council Meeting will be held via Zoom.

Council members also approved a contract with a company to pressure wash and paint City Hall for a price of no more than \$9,000.

Mayor Gibby encouraged city residents to finish submitting their census information, noting that only 54 percent of city residents had completed the census to date.

As previously reported, the city decided earlier this summer to purchase the old Bank of Hiawassee building at 693 Main Street, which has been vacant for several years. The city plans to turn the building into a new City Hall, with the current City Hall building to be used as a public venue.

Following a June 23 public hearing and called meeting on the acquisition, the sale closed on July 1, resulting in the city taking out a loan for



Joint Economic Development Director Denise McKay discussed rural enterprise zone creation in the Aug. 4 city meeting in Young Harris.

Photo by Jarrett Whitener

\$435,000 at an interest rate of 2.81 percent with installments for 20 years at \$2,383.20 per month.

Since cities are not allowed to mortgage property, the property has been purchased by the Georgia Municipal Association, which will lease it back to Young Harris until it is paid off completely, at which point the city will own the building.

A couple of objections to the purchase included the inappropriateness of taking on debt due to COVID-19 and long-term potential economic struggles, and also the sense in taking existing property out of the tax base following recent property losses due to impending bypass construction.

Councilman Clark explained in a June 23 called meeting how the city receives money for the General Fund, which is the fund from which

the loan payments will draw. "I don't mean to say this in this way, but if every business in this town closed, if every house in this town burned down, our tax digest would decrease by 3 percent," Clark said. "We don't make our money off property taxes. We make most of our money off Local Options Sales Tax."

"The point I am trying to make is, I don't think we are devaluing the city. The tax base may have suffered because we lost a couple of properties, but that is property tax, and property tax only accounts for 3 percent of our General Fund."

"My point being you are probably looking at something that is a fraction of 1 percent by looking at two or three properties here. Our money comes from sales tax that you pay when you go to a store or go into a business."