

# LandFest...from Page 1A

do not plan to retire anytime soon. As long as the Good Lord above continues to allow the four Oak Ridge Boys to enjoy good health, we're going to keep doing this."

Sterban said the Oak Ridge Boys' favorite part of being on tour is performing onstage.

"Even after all these years, our hardcore fans are still very, very nice to us," Sterban said. "They're very loyal to us, and when we walk onstage, they still go crazy out there. They respond in a big-time way to everything that we do."

The Oak Ridge Boys

are members of the Grand Ole Opry and were inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame four years ago.

Their newest album is called "17th Avenue Revival" and was released in March of 2018.

Sterban said their latest project will be their eighth Christmas album titled "Oak Ridge Boys Down Home Christmas." It will be produced by Dave Cobb and released on or about Oct. 25 this year, with "Amazing Grace" serving as one of the tracks on the album.

Sterban said he and

his fellow Oak Ridge Boys couldn't wait to play Anderson Music Hall on Friday.

"They know us there at Hiawassee," Sterban said. "We've played there for years. Speaking for all of the Oak Ridge Boys, we are all looking forward to coming back to Hiawassee. We're going to do our best to make it a great night."

For more information on this year's Dailey & Vincent LandFest, including concert scheduling and ticket prices, visit [www.daileyvincentfest.com](http://www.daileyvincentfest.com).

# Grizzle...from Page 1A



**Carl Grizzle and friends during the unveiling of Carl Grizzle Way on Sept. 6.** Photo by Chad Stack

resource is their employees, and Carl is dedicated, committed and always available at any time of the day, anywhere," Ordiales said. "He is on call 24/7, and he has done a fantastic job with the city and our customers, our service, and he is just really a great asset to the city. We really appreciate him and all that he does for us."



**Hiawassee City Council Members Amy Barrett and Kris Berrong react to a funny moment in the Sept. 3 regular city meeting.** Photo by Chad Stack

In other city news, the mayor and City Council met for their regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 3, at City Hall.

Mayor Ordiales said in the meeting that she was excited for the 9/11 memorial ceremony to be hosted on the Hiawassee Town Square on Wednesday, Sept. 11, starting at 9:45 a.m.

The event will serve as "a tribute to all the fallen of 9/11," Ordiales said.

Also in the meeting, council members approved a fluoride resolution allowing all Towns County residents to decide in an upcoming vote whether they want fluoride added to their drinking water.

Based on a past referendum to exclude it in 1983, fluoride has never been included as an additive in city water.

During the annual inspection by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division earlier this year, the EPD discovered that the city was not adding fluoride to its water and determined that the city would need to start doing so.

State law mandates the fluoridation of public drinking water unless a referendum is called to exclude it, after which an ordinance would need to be enacted, which was not done previously.

In the March work session, it was announced that resident Corbin McLain would be starting a petition to obtain the signatures needed to have a referendum on the issue.

"The petition signatures to not introduce fluoride into our water system have been obtained," Ordiales said. "This effort will need to be put to a vote of all county residents that are registered to vote."

Added Ordiales, "What this approval does is puts that referendum to a vote on the May 19, 2020, ballot. It will read, 'Should the city of Hiawassee add fluoride to the city's water system? Yes or no.'"

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta and other health organizations promote

fluoridated drinking water for the prevention of tooth decay.

As of 2012, an estimated 75% of Americans had access to fluoridated drinking water, and the CDC has said that, "because it is so beneficial, the United States has a national goal for 80% of Americans to have water with enough fluoride to prevent tooth decay by 2020."

"Community water fluoridation is the process of adjusting the amount of fluoride found in water to achieve optimal prevention of tooth decay," the CDC said. "Although other fluoride-containing products, such as toothpaste, mouth rinses and dietary supplements, are available and contribute to the prevention and control of tooth decay, community water fluoridation has been identified as the most cost-effective method of delivering fluoride to all, reducing tooth decay by 25% in children and adults."

Opponents of adding fluoride to drinking water, however, contend that water fluoridation, "in addition to other sources of daily fluoride exposure, can cause or contribute to a range of serious effects, including arthritis, damage to the developing brain, reduced thyroid function, and possibly osteosarcoma (bone cancer) in adolescent males," according to [fluoridealert.org](http://fluoridealert.org).

Council members also discussed the adoption of the rollback millage rate of 2.095 mills, which is expected to occur in a meeting to be held on Monday, Sept. 23, at 6 p.m. at City Hall.

The millage rate is going down from the 2018 rate of 2.17 mills.

At 100% collections, the 2019 rollback rate will generate \$183,213 in total property tax revenues for the city, which is still \$8,608 in additional tax revenues over 2018 – a 4.93%

increase from last year due to growth in the tax digest.

The council held the first reading of two ordinances in its Sept. 3 meeting, one for Small Cell Equipment and the other for Telecommunication Rights of Way.

Both ordinances are designed to strengthen a new state law that regulates small cellular network transmitters.

Back in April, Gov. Brian Kemp signed into law the Streamlining Wireless Facilities and Antennas Act to better facilitate "the deployment of wireless broadband in the public rights of way," and it will go into effect on Oct. 1.

The new law will allow smaller cell companies to install broadband antennas on utility poles along public rights of way, which will expand internet access for rural areas lacking fast internet and increase cell service, Ordiales said.

Second readings and subsequent enactments of the municipal ordinances will take place during the council's next regular meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 1, at 6 p.m. inside City Hall.

Also during the regular meeting, the council approved the three members Ordiales had selected to represent Hiawassee on the Joint Development Authority between the county and its two cities.

The three Hiawassee members are Vicki Constantinides, Josh Alexander and Manny Carrion.

They will serve on a joint committee with six other members to include three people selected by Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw and three people approved by the city of Young Harris.

Hiawassee will hold its monthly council work session at City Hall the evening of Monday, Sept. 23, following the 6 p.m. meeting to set the millage rate.

# VFW...from Page 1A

can carry these (care packages) around, and that's home.

"They don't have anything there, it's all just desert and that's it. So, when they get these boxes, these guys are lined up, and they are excited to get something."

Operation Care Package also looks out for service members who may not have anyone back home to send them packages.

"A lot of these soldiers don't have extended families or anything," John Whalen said. "They don't have that support group, so we are trying to target people like that also. We are looking for names of overseas deployed. As many people we can send to, we want to send to."

The group has already sent out 25 packages since beginning the initiative in June of this year, with more packages to come.

"There are so many people that have sons, daughters and grandchildren in the military that we don't know about," said Susanna White, patriotic instructor for the VFW Auxiliary. "We heard that there were over 100 troops in the 505th Airborne, and each and every one of them should be getting a care package."

Community members wanting to get involved in supporting this group and its efforts to continually provide troops with memories from home can best do so through monetary donations made to

the VFW Auxiliary.

"The biggest problem we have is getting funds to ship this, because it costs about \$17 to \$19 just to ship one box over to them," White said. "We are trying to find a way to get these boxes to a place in Athens that will send them down to Fort Benning."

"From Fort Benning, they can take them over there, but right now, it is getting costly to do. We need to cover the postage of sending these things off."

Donation checks can be mailed to VFW Auxiliary, P.O. Box 624, Hiawassee, GA 30546, Attn: Operation Care Package.

For more information on the program or how to donate, call Rosemary Whalen at 762-525-0515.

# Firefighters...from Page 1A



**The big red fire engine was a smash hit with all the kids at Towns County Daycare last week.** Photo by Chad Stack

classroom presentation dealt with fire prevention and what the kids should do if one of them should ever see a fire or sense smoke.

One of the most important steps in fire prevention was to never touch a lighter or matches, Copeland said to the children, and if the students were to ever find either lying about, he instructed them to tell an adult immediately.

"This is something we do yearly with the daycares, schools and the retirement centers as a part of our education and fire prevention programs," Copeland said. "This is one of the most gratifying parts of our job."

The visit last week also included a look inside a fire

engine and all the tools and equipment that firefighters use on different types of calls.

Firefighters Tyler Keyes and Justin Ledford helped Copeland with educating the kids on fire safety, bringing the firetruck and a utility truck to the school for the kids to check out firsthand.

The firefighters even opened all the compartments on the firetruck to talk about the different things they use and to allow the children to see inside.

After a tour around the truck and a look in all the compartments, each of the kids took turns climbing into the truck.

Several kids piled into the backseat of the firetruck, while

others took turns pretending to drive the truck.

After a thorough tour of the big firetruck, Keyes led the children over to his utility truck to allow them to turn on the lights and sirens.

"We love doing stuff like this with the youth in the community," Keyes said. "It's not all about fighting fires and saving lives. We also enjoy spending time with the youth and educating the kids."

On Wednesday, Sept. 11, Towns County Emergency Medical Services will visit the daycare to talk about what they do, and the following Wednesday, Sept. 18, the Towns County Sheriff's Office will visit with the kids.



**Firefighters Tyler Keyes and Justin Ledford visited the Towns County Daycare during Community Day on Wednesday, Sept. 4.** Photo by Chad Stack

# Capt. Loyd...from Page 1A

high mileage and in need of repair, I'm telling you I have never seen anything like it," said Loyd, who leads Uniformed Patrol in Union County. "So, from the get-go, we had a mission that we needed to accomplish."

"Between the time we took office to now, we have been very fortunate and blessed to clean house. Our town is growing, and we have been able to update the patrol cars. We have nice SUVs and some trucks now, and as you know, in our mountainous range, you need vehicles like that."

"We have since updated our cars with computers, and that's a good asset, because they don't have to come back to the office immediately after a call. They are able to do reports and everything right there in the field."

Loyd said the Sheriff's Office in neighboring Union County strives every day to keep good relations with residents and encourage folks to support local law enforcement efforts.

"It is very important to be open, because y'all elected the sheriff," Loyd said. "That's very important to have that open mindset that the door is open all the time and you can come talk to us if there is a problem."

Added Loyd, "We answer all calls for service, and that can range from any level of call. We serve domestics, burglaries, wrecks, and we are a full-service Sheriff's Office. In these rural counties, it is very important to work together with your other local law enforcement, like the city police department and all that."

Over the past year, the Union County Sheriff's Office received 13,779 calls for service.

"That number ranges from everything we do," Loyd said. "For our Animal Control officers, they are wide open sideways. Between the two of them, they answer several hundred calls a month with just Animal Control."

To help with response

times, the Sheriff's Office puts its deputies in zones according to fire precincts.

"By placing those deputies in those zones, they are quicker to get there when you call," Loyd said. "They also know the area and they become familiar with the people going to work each morning and the people out walking."

"We highly encourage the deputies to talk to the people they see out cutting grass or whatever. That one-on-one is good, because the bottom line is that everyone is the eyes and ears when we're not around. So, if we build that relationship with the community, then y'all are an asset to us, and we are an asset to you."

The meeting concluded with attendees asking questions and talking with Loyd about the services the Sheriff's Office provides and how it benefits the community.

Every Friday morning at 8 a.m., the Mountain Movers and Shakers welcome a guest from the area to speak in their breakfast meeting at the Sundance Grill in Hiawassee.