

Towns County Herald

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BOE to roll back millage rate; TOTY announced

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Towns County Board of Education voted in the September monthly meeting to approve the advertisement of the school system's 2016 millage rate, which will be rolling back from 7.964 mills to 7.957 mills.

This reduction will bring in roughly \$13,000 less in property taxes compared to last year, and the rate will be officially approved in the October meeting.

Teacher of the Year (TOTY) presentations also

highlighted the Sept. 12 meeting.

"This is one of the best meetings we have every year," said Superintendent Dr. Darren Berrong. "This is the time when we get to recognize the best and the greatest teachers in our school system. Every year there is an elementary, middle and high school Teacher of the Year who is nominated by their peers.

"There is also a System Teacher of the Year that is chosen between those three teachers."

Julie Harkins was the lucky recipient for the

elementary school. Harkins has shared the gift of teaching for the past 14 years, beginning her career at Towns County High School before moving to White County for two years.

From there, Harkins moved her career back to Towns County Middle School until finally finding her home at Towns County Elementary School.

"She was nominated by her peers for her leadership skills, her ability to work with colleagues and just how much she cares about the students," said TCES Principal Dr. Sandy

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Pictured left to right: TCHS Principal Connie Hobbs, Christa Houser, Julie Harkins, TCES Principal Sandy Page, Gina Chambers and TCMS Principal Erica Chastain. These teachers were recognized by their respective principals for being their school's Teacher of the Year. Houser was named System Teacher of the Year

Gas shortages lead to lines, price hikes at the pump

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Damage to a major fuel pipeline in Alabama has had motorists feeling pain at the pumps throughout the southeast, as whole areas have come close to running dry and gas prices have skyrocketed in places.

The cause of the pipeline damage that ended up leaking more than 8,000 barrels of fuel had yet to be released as of press time Monday.

Area supply has been hard to predict, and prices have fluctuated between \$2 and \$2.50 locally, with some outliers reaching as high as \$4.69 reportedly in Hiawassee.

In Blairsville, for See Gas, Page 6A



This Valero gas station in Hiawassee had drivers lining up to fuel their cars on Saturday. Shortages have been rampant around the county and surrounding areas following a massive leak from a major pipeline supplying the East Coast and the South. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Hiawassee lowering millage; council hears from guests

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

In the September meeting of Hiawassee Mayor Barbara Mathis and city council, the council voted 3-1 to hold the first reading of the 2016 Millage Ordinance.

The ordinance follows the recommendation of Mayor Mathis to lower the millage rate from last year's rate of 2.260 to a new rate of 2.257.

Due to an increase in property values around the city, the lower millage rate will still account for a slight increase in property tax collection over last year, in the amount of \$573.

Councilwoman Liz Ordiales was the only member of the council to vote no, instead favoring a discussion about how much money the city would collect if they were to keep the millage rate the same at 2.260 rate this year instead of lowering



Lynn and Leslie McPeak of TATA On Main were welcomed by Mayor Barbara Mathis as a business to the City of Hiawassee in the September meeting of Mayor Mathis and city council

the rate to 2.257. Ordiales said she wanted to know because, though the amount would surely be small, it could be used toward beautifying the city.

City Manager Rick Stancil said that the cost to legally advertise keeping the rate the same would likely outweigh any potential benefit to the city.

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Commissioner to give Old Rock Jail to Historical Society

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Preservation of history and historical relics is an important aspect of any local government, and Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall addressed such importance in length at the county's monthly meeting on Thursday, Sept. 15.

The Towns County Historical Society presented a proposal to Commissioner Kendall to use the Old Rock Jail as a museum of local history as well as a research center for those wishing to delve into genealogy.

According to the proposal, the Historical Society would open the jail to the public, as well as the Presley Post Office, on a weekly basis for tours, free of charge. Inside the jail, the society wishes to convert one room solely to

old records, files and other documented information pertaining to local families.

"The Old Rock Jail was built in 1936," said Jason Edwards, member of the Towns County Historical Society. "Most of the money used to build the jail was from the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, predecessor to the WPA (Works Progress Administration)."

"The Grand Jury described what they wanted as a jail as a two-story stone jail, similar to the one in Union County with quarters for the jailer and family, which is exactly what they got."

Prior to the construction of the rock jail was an older jail behind it, built in 1915, that was used as parts for the jail cells and ironwork. That jail was removed shortly after the then New Rock Jail was opened.

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In the September county meeting, Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall held the first reading of a proposal to give full custody of the Old Rock Jail to the county's Historical Society.

PUP sponsors rabies clinic



A couple dozen residents attended the Fall Rabies Clinic with their pets on Saturday, Sept. 17. The clinic was sponsored by local pet organization PUP, for Prevent Unwanted Pets.

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

In an effort to prevent further rabies outbreaks in the area, the Prevent Unwanted

Pets organization joined forces with Lake Chatuge Animal Hospital to host a fall rabies clinic on the Hiawassee Square on Saturday, Sept. 17.

While there are other

opportunities throughout the year for residents to have their pets vaccinated, local veterinarians and animal advocates felt the county

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Charlie Daniels is heading down to GA



The Charlie Daniels Band will be performing at the Anderson Music Hall inside the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds this Saturday, Sept. 24

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Charlie Daniels is no stranger to the art of Country Music, as he's been touching the hearts of fans for decades, beginning with his best-known hit, "The Devil Went Down to Georgia."

Daniels, of Nashville, will be performing in the

Anderson Music Hall at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds on Saturday, Sept. 24. The 7 p.m. show will also feature the talents of the Thomas Fountain Band, a Modern Country act.

While this is not Daniels' first trip to Hiawassee, it is something he looks forward to every time. Growing up in a small southern town himself, Daniels equates connections

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Residents relive Battle of Chickamauga

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

American history is full of stories never told, both big and small.

The Towns County Historical Society caught a glimpse into the lives of such stories in its Sept. 12 meeting - stories of four area Confederate soldiers.

Over 150 years ago, the United States was torn in two during the Civil War. Brothers fought alongside and against one another, and many were lost to the countless battles that took place during the span of the war.

Most Americans have ancestors who took part in fighting for what they felt was the greater good, but one Towns County resident, Buzz Tatham, had not one but four brave relatives who fought side by side in the infamous Battle of Chickamauga.

"The one thing I've learned about history over the



Four of Buzz Tatham's ancestors fought in the Battle of Chickamauga. He talked about these ancestors at the September meeting of the Towns County Historical Society.

years is there is no absolute," said Tatham. "History is written by the winners. History is written by the losers. History is written by truth tellers. History is written by liars."

"If you just look at history superficially, and only take into

account the primary sources, then you'll never get the full story. You have to decide what is true and what isn't true."

The Battle of Chickamauga, fought between Sept. 18 and Sept. 20 of 1863, took place in what is now

known as Catoosa County and Walker County. This battle would mark the end of a Union Army offensive in Tennessee and Georgia, known as the Chickamauga Campaign.

"For the Union side, the Army of the Cumberland, there were 60,000 plus engaged," said Tatham. "For the Confederacy, the Army of the Tennessee, there were 65,000 involved in the battle."

During the war, the Confederate Army suffered the loss of more than 18,000 casualties while the Union Army lost 16,000 soldiers, making this battle the second highest loss of any battle fought.

All four of Tatham's great-great grandfathers fought in various units for the Confederacy, within yards of one another, on the day that many never returned.

"Thomas Nathaniel Tatham, born in North Carolina, enlisted with his brother, John Tatham, on the 27th of April in

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Fall Festival at Brasstown Manor October 1st

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Family Hiking Day Sept. 24th

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Puttin' On The Dog October 1st Towns County Recreation Center

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Football Fri Sept 23 @ Athens Academy 7:30 PM Youth Football Sat Sept 24 @ Swain Co NC