

# Towns County Herald

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## Fairgrounds hosts frightfully fun Halloween event

By **Jeremy Foster**  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

On Sunday, Oct. 31, the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds hosted the big Hiawassee Halloween for kids. It was the first time the event had been held there in its 15-plus year history, giving people more room to spread out than the usual area around the Towns County Courthouse.

Many hundreds of trick-or-treaters gathered during the three-hour candy extravaganza, as children and even parents dressed up to take part in the spooky occasion.

And with a head count of over 2,000 children of every age from all over the area, the event was a monster success, featuring costumed characters

galore and a seemingly endless supply of candy.

Making the event possible were nearly 50 local businesses and organizations that got in on the fun of passing out candy, and it was such a success, in fact, that the family-friendly party will likely take place at the fairgrounds again next year.

"This is a really great environment and location to have this (event), with plenty of parking and an open space to move freely and not feel closed in," Event Coordinator and Georgia Mountain Fair Board Member Shannon Baldwin-Nguyen said. "This is the first year I have been involved with the trick-or-treating festival."

"We are so glad we decided to do it here at the fair-

grounds, because we have had a huge spark in events here, especially since the COVID pandemic, and have a full plate of events ahead of us. And we know that people want to come here and feel connected, and they always leave happy with exceeded expectations.

"It is really heartwarming to know that here we have that small-town feel where businesses, people, and everyone want to come together and give back to the community for the children. And especially with Halloween, we all get to let our inner child come out for one night, and I think that is something that truly creates equality."

Parents Julie Laclair and Zavier Bolton with daughter Mia dressed as a werewolf. See *Halloween Fun*, Page 6A



From Brides-to-Be to Batman and Minnie Mouse, the variety of costumed characters in attendance for Halloween at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds was seemingly endless. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

## Ordiales talks COVID, election speculation in work session

By **Shawn Jarrard**  
Towns County Herald  
Editor

In the Oct. 25 Hiawassee City Council Work Session, Mayor Liz Ordiales reported that Towns County had reached a full vaccination rate of 51% against COVID-19. By press time, that number had improved to 52% - fully two percentage points better than the state average.

The local vaccination rate has risen several percentage points in just the last month, and Councilman Jay Chastain Jr., who serves as a paramedic for Towns County EMS, noted in the meeting that the rate was "a whole lot better than it was."

"Booster shots are now available at Ingles, so if you log on, make an appointment,



Hiawassee Mayor Liz Ordiales talking council business in last month's regular meeting. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

you can go get your booster shot - pretty quick and simple," Ordiales said, adding that local transmission seems to

have slowed dramatically.

Per the Georgia Department of Public Health, as of Friday, Oct. 29, only 2% of COVID tests had returned a positive result in the previous two weeks for a total of six positive cases, and Towns County hadn't logged a COVID death since Oct. 7, for three total COVID deaths in October.

Still, Ordiales advised people to continue to "wear your mask, wash your hands, walk away, and stay as safe as you possibly can."

People who own property inside city limits receive two property tax bills every year, one from the city and another from the county, and Ordiales said that 2021 city property tax bills would be mailing out in the next couple weeks with a

See *Work Session*, Page 6A

## Annual Veterans Day Service to honor local patriots Nov. 11



The Veterans Day Program at Towns County Veterans Park is always well attended. Pictured here: the 2019 ceremony.

By **Jeremy Foster**  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

On Thursday, Nov. 11, at 11 a.m. sharp, local veteran service organizations will put on the annual Veterans Day Service in honor of those

who have bravely served their country.

Held every year at the Towns County Veterans Park in front of the High School, the event has been going strong for more than 30 years.

American Legion Post #23 Cmdr. Randal Forehand

helped to organize the upcoming patriotic observance. Forehand retired from the U.S. Air Force after serving from 1974 to 1995.

"The American Legion is hosting the event with the help of what we call families. See *Veterans Day*, Page 6A

## Dale Cole discusses education in North Carolina at meeting

By **Mark Smith**  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Clay County, North Carolina, Schools Superintendent Dale Cole, known as a "school turnaround specialist," spoke at the Mountain Movers and Shakers meeting on Friday, Oct. 29.

In introducing himself, Cole spoke on his roots in hometown Chocowinity, North Carolina, where he worked as an English teacher and coach for 10 years. He was the first person in his family to go to college and went into teaching because he "wanted to make a difference."

After 10 years in the classroom, Cole was promoted to assistant principal and transferred to another school, one that had gone through five principals in six years and where he

and his team were successful in improving conditions in just two and a half years.

Cole said he was again promoted and moved to another school as principal. It was another problem school, but Cole was able to turn that school around in two and a half years, too, and got the reputation of being the "tomararound guy."

After being transferred to yet another low-performing school he was able to bring up to par. Cole said he was fortunate enough to be recognized as the North Carolina Principal of the Year.

"That opened up all kinds of opportunities for me to learn how things work at the state level," Cole said, adding that the recognition coincided with the responsibility of representing



Neighboring North Carolina Superintendent from Clay County Schools Dale Cole visited with the Mountain Movers and Shakers Oct. 29. Photo by Mark Smith

## Stakeholders attend constructive CTAE joint planning meeting

By **Brittany Holbrooks**  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

BLAIRSVILLE - The goal of the Career, Technical and Agricultural Education programs of Union and Towns counties is to expand post-graduation opportunities for students, and the school systems moved closer toward realizing that goal on Oct. 21 with additional planning for the College and Career Academy at Union County High.

During initial academy development two years ago, school and industrial partners from Union, Fannin and Towns counties in Georgia, as well as Cherokee and Clay counties in North Carolina, set out to find a way to better prepare students for readily available jobs in their hometowns.

Union County CTAE Director Josh Davis said there



Union County CTAE Director Josh Davis and Towns County CTAE Director Melissa McConnell joined forces last month to plan for the upcoming College and Career Academy that is currently under construction at Union County High.

Photo by Brittany Holbrooks was a particular moment in those early talks where "a lightbulb went off" as to how all the local stakeholders could move forward to ensure that the now-under construction College and Career Academy provided

See *CTAE Planning*, Page 3A

## Brew, Stew & Que Festival a 'mega hit' at Fairgrounds



The Appalachian Brew, Stew & Que Festival grows in popularity each passing year, to return in 2022. Photo by Jeremy Foster

By **Jeremy Foster**  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Fun was had by all during the Fourth Annual Appalachian Brew, Stew & Que Festival on Saturday, Oct. 23, inside the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds.

Visitors from far and wide attended the festival, joining in with the many locals to enjoy camaraderie, great food, live music, and even better beer thanks to the more than 60 craft breweries that traveled from all over the Southeast to provide beverages for the event.

"The festival continues to grow each and every year since its induction," Event Coordinator Shannon Baldwin-Nguyen said. "I have been involved with this particular event for two years now, and it amazes me that it keeps becoming more successful by leaps and bounds."

"Word of mouth and marketing have been a huge part of its growth, and it certainly has that Appalachian appeal because of the scenery and amazing weather, and people love this venue and always have a great time."

Baldwin-Nguyen said that organizers faced chal-

lenges trying to put the event on with all that's been happening with COVID-19, "but everyone was not too concerned about hosting a public gathering because we were outdoors and not closed in."

"So, everyone had plenty of space, and I think people just wanted to have a good time, and we are certainly going to be coming back every year," she said.

Ticket purchases earned entrants a miniature glass sample mug provided by Bacchus Beer & Growlers of Hiawassee to take around to the over 65 breweries from Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama and a few from more Northern climes.

Thirty crafters, 12 food vendors and area musicians also got in on the festival action to bring people together for a good time outdoors.

One notable booth was Akademics, Georgia, the lines for which would not stay empty as the brewery constantly refilled its kegs. Steven Castow, a relative newcomer to the company, said this was his first time coming to the festival.

"I love this beautiful mountain area, and I already know I will be coming back

next year simply because of the people," Castow said. "I love my job, and getting to talk and have fun with so many new and different people is more than anything I could ask for."

"Our company specializes in IMBAs, and it is sought after so much because of the different flavor profiles and varieties, and that is why I can tell this craft festival is a mega hit."

Couple Tommy and Doris Davis from Ringgold traveled to the festival for the second year in a row, saying that, after last year, they knew the Appalachian Brew, Stew & Que Festival would become a tradition they observe every year.

"We have been going to other beer festivals nationwide over the years, and after only coming to this one twice, it is already in our Top 5 favorite places to visit," Tommy said. "(We) feel that things like this are good for the community because there is nothing better than bringing people together not just in your hometown, but from all walks of life."

Visit [www.gramountainfairgrounds.com](http://www.gramountainfairgrounds.com) for more information on upcoming events, including Travis-Thritt on Nov. 5 and the holiday-themed Mountain Country Christmas in Lights Nov. 25-Dec. 23.

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Inside

### SPORTS

#### FOOTBALL

11/5

VS. WASHINGTON

WILKES 7:30 PM

### Hiawassee Election Results

Available Wednesday, Nov. 3 Online at [townscountyherald.net](http://townscountyherald.net) and our Towns County Herald Facebook Page

### Salute to Veterans Car Show

Nov. 6

See page 5A



## Christmas wreaths for sale at Hiawassee Garden Club

Mark your calendars for Friday and Saturday, November 12-13, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. to come to the Hiawassee Garden Clubhouse to buy a beautiful Christmas Wreath for your door, fireplace mantle, or to give as a gift. Different sizes, different prices, so come early to have a good choice as each one is unique.

The Clubhouse is the building on the corner of Bertrong and River Streets, directly behind the Courthouse in Hiawassee. Turn at the traffic light at the Towns Square, go two blocks and it is on the corner at 34 River Street.

The October 28, 2021 meeting of the Hiawassee Garden Club (HGC) was so much fun for members. The many tables in the clubhouse were filled with empty wreaths of all kinds with a bountiful array of decorations. What a challenge to each one's creativity.

After enjoying lunch fixed by hostesses Marlene Arndt, Nancy McCranie, Shawn Nixon, and Dianne Price, members got to work and by later that afternoon 30 wreaths were on display and there were more wreath forms to go for another day.

This will be a needed fund-raiser for the HGC. It will help replace funds for the new H/A/C unit needed when the close to 40-year-old unit died a few months ago.



L-R: Marlene Arndt admires wreath made by Debbie Nicholson as Joan Crothers works on hers. Three finished wreaths are on the wall in background.



Picking out their decorating items from one table are (l-r) Elaine Williams, Cheryl Gehring, and Sharon Payne.

The next meeting of the Hiawassee Garden Club will be on Thursday, November 18th at 12:45 p.m. (one week early because of Thanksgiving). Bruce Hendrix will be talking about his honey business, The Honey Hustle. He

and his wife, Jolene, came to the Towns County Farmers Market this summer with their wonderful array of honey products they make from their hives in Hiawassee and Bonaire, GA. Don't miss this one! T(Nov3,F4)SH

## Resources available for local Veterans at The Union County Farmers Market event Saturday

The National Veteran Resources Organization will be a huge part of the Blairsville Cruisers "Salute to Veterans" Event on Saturday, November 6th at the Union County Farmer Market. The event includes 12 booths for local veteran organizations and The National Veteran Resources Organization "Hero Mobile" RV. More information on this resource at web site "nationalveteranresources.com."

All Veterans, First Responders and Law Enforcement who may be facing PTSD or other challenges are invited to visit the RV set up at the event to access resources that are designed to help the folks who serve our Country and our communities. The car club welcomes this great National Organization and appreciates their participation in this patriotic event. Many members of the car club are veterans.

National Veteran Resources is a non-profit 501C3 (EIN#84-2203745) traveling tribute to America's heroes.



"Hero Mobile" RV will be at the Blairsville Cruisers Car Show

We travel the country with the Hero Mobile, an American flag wrapped RV with portraits of heroes and words of thanks to them. Our service is to find the resources to save our heroes.

There are more than 22 Veterans that die by suicide every day and there have been too many Police Officers and Firefighters that have died by suicide. We want to get that number to zero.

Our mission: To raise awareness and to provide resources for Active Duty

Military, Veterans and First Responders who suffer with PTSD, Suicidal Thoughts, Addiction and Mental Health.

Our Programs include: Free Mental Health Counseling; Transportation for long distance Mental Health appointments; Peer to Peer Support; Stress is Gone; Not This Day; and Mothers of Veteran Suicide Outreach Program.

National Veteran Resources has helped hundreds of men and women throughout our travels and we hope to help hundreds more. NT(Oct3,Z10)CA

## CTAE Planning...from Page 1A

"Success for ALL."

"It was very important for us to look at it as a regional model instead of just sitting here in Union County," Davis said, referring to a map presented by the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC in the Oct. 21 Towns/Union CTAE Advisory Board meeting.

"Our entire region is surrounded by mountains, and it makes this almost perfect bowl or circle," he continued. "When you're applying for that College and Career Academy Grant, they want you to pick a model. Is it going to look like a multi-district model or is it going to be a single district?"

With the surrounding counties being confined to a shared geographic bowl, Davis and others involved in the effort believed it would be most beneficial to use the grant to build a facility that would serve all the nearby school districts to expand the options of as many students as possible.

For instance, Union County already has an expansive vocational building for kids wishing to learn metalworking, engineering, agriculture and other hands-on careers, and Towns County, in turn, offers classes in certain areas of expertise that Union students may not have access to, so why not share in that knowledge?

The largest remaining issue thus far has been sorting out the logistics of trading on that expertise, so the meeting last month focused on discussions of troubleshooting problems like moving students between schools in a timely manner akin to dual enrollment in a college.

"How do we get our schedules similar enough so that students will have time to travel from Union County and Towns County to take accounting classes, or from Towns County to

Union County to take our manufacturing course?" Davis said, illustrating the issue.

The outcome of the planning meeting was a positive one. With a huge turnout of not just business owners and teachers but also parents and students interested in the cause, multiple rooms were needed in the C-Wing of Union County High to house the participants.

Navigating between different groups based on areas of study, Davis and Towns County CTAE Director Melissa McConnell moved from room to room to gather possible solutions.

And though there was no single answer by the end of the meeting, a second assembly was planned for February to discuss further plans and the layout of the College and Career Academy

building itself, which is scheduled to be completed for the start of the 2022 school year.

Part of the College and Career Academy construction will include major renovations to the vocational building, but in the words of Davis, the CTAE programs are concentrating on more than just brick-and-mortar solutions.

"I talk to people all the time that have no idea that all this industry exists in this area," Davis said. "It's not necessarily about buildings and facilities; it's more about programs and opportunities for students that match those industries."

"Each school district has different programs, each of our post-secondary institutions has different programs, and every one of them can benefit all of our students."

## CVB Grant applications now available

The Towns County Conventions & Visitors Bureau, Grant Guidelines and Application for 2022 advertising support for 501C3 & C6 organizations in Towns County are ready. The request for the forms can be e-mailed to Jane

Holland at [janehholland@windstream.net](mailto:janehholland@windstream.net).

As a reminder, all grant requests are due back to Jane Holland by November 9, 2021. If you have questions or need our assistance, please call 404-219-3461. T(Nov3,F1)SH

## CASA supervisor Lonano to speak to Movers and Shakers

Imagine you are 10 years old, and you've just been told you can't go home because the court says it is unsafe. You are now in The System. Where do you go now? Where will you sleep? What will you eat? Who is on your side? Thanks to a Superior Court Judge in 1977, CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) has the answers. A CASA volunteer is involved in every decision about that underage child. A CASA volunteer is there to protect and support that child throughout the process until that child finds a safe home, whether that is with parents, relatives, or foster care.

We are honored to be joined this Friday, November 5 by Ms. Nicole Lonano, Lead Advocate Supervisor for Enotah CASA. As you know, Enotah District comprises Towns, Union, Lumpkin and White Counties. Find out how you can get involved with this community-based non-profit organization. Is there anything more important than our children's well-being?

Everyone is invited to join the Mountain Movers &



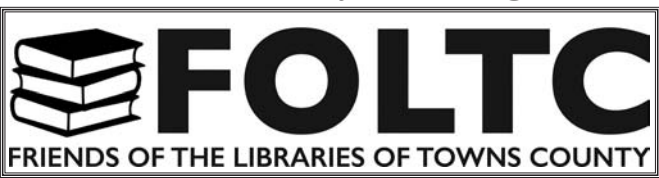
Nicole Lonano

Shakers, a grass-roots, non-partisan civic organization, dedicated to serving the North Georgia/Western Carolina Mountain Region.

Come join us for information, conversation, and breakfast every Friday at 8 a.m. at the Sundance Grill, as we welcome civic leaders, elected officials, safety and forest officials all coming to share information of vital importance to all.

Like us on Facebook: Mountain Movers & Shakers. T(Nov3,F5)SH

## Book Sale at library in Young Harris



Friends of the Libraries of Towns County (FOLTC) is holding an "Honor System" sale during the month of November in the FOLTC bookstore at Mountain Regional Library, 698 Miller St., Young Harris, GA. This sale will include the following items ONLY: Paperbacks - \$.50 each or 3/\$1. This includes trade, mass market, and large print paperback books. CDs - \$.50 each or 3/\$1. Jigsaw puzzles - \$.50 each.

The sale tables are located along the back wall of the bookstore. Paperbacks on the shelving to the right inside the door are also included in the sale.

The "Honor System." There is a red money box near the entrance to the bookstore for payment. Books will be replenished on a regular basis as space becomes available. MRL and the FOLTC bookstore are open Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. though closed for Thanksgiving on November 24-28. All proceeds will benefit the Towns County libraries. Funds are used to purchase books and other library materials, provide funding for children's and adult programming, and assist in other ways as requested by staff of Mountain Regional Library and Towns County Public Library. Good libraries need good friends! T(Nov3,F1)SH



# Young Harris College upcoming Fine Arts Events

Young Harris College invites the community to attend upcoming Fine Arts events. All events will take place on the YHC campus, which is located at 1 College Street, Young Harris, Georgia 30582. You are invited to enjoy the following events:

On Tuesday, November 9 at 7 p.m., the YHC Jazz Band will perform in Glenn-McGinnis Hall. The show will be free and open to the public.

From Wednesday, November 10 – Saturday, November 13, “Ordinary Days” will be held in Dobbs Theatre. The “Pay What You Can Preview” will be Wednesday, November 10 at 7 p.m. Donations will be accepted at the door. Shows on Thursday, November 11 and Friday, November 12 will be at 7 p.m. The matinee show will be Saturday, November 13 at 2 p.m. Admission for shows November 11 – 13 is \$10 per adult, \$5 per student with YHC ID, and \$5 per senior 65+ with photo ID. Tickets can be purchased online at [yhc.edu/boxoffice](http://yhc.edu/boxoffice).

On Tuesday, November 16 at 7 p.m. and Wednesday November 17 at 7 p.m., “Grue-



The YHC Jazz Band performs in Glenn-McGinnis Hall.

some Playground Injuries” will be held in Dobbs Theatre. Donations will be accepted at the door.

On Tuesday, November 30, the YHC Percussion Ensemble will perform at 7 p.m. in Glenn-McGinnis Hall. The show will be free and open to the public.

On Saturday, December 4 at 7 p.m. and Sunday, December 5 at 3 p.m., “Christmas at YHC” will be held in Glenn-McGinnis Hall. Admission will be \$10 per adult and free for YHC students.

On Friday, December 10 at 6 p.m. and Saturday, Decem-

ber 11 at 3 p.m., the Mountain Community Chorus Christmas Concert will be held at Sharp Memorial United Methodist Church. Donations will be accepted at the door.

Now through Thursday, December 2, the Campus Gate Art Gallery is hosting an art exhibit titled, “She tries to be perfect, she fails. It is okay.” by Madeleine Peck Wagner. The exhibit is open weekdays from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. and is free and open to the public.

For more information about the above events, please contact YHC Fine Arts at (706) 379-5182. NT(Nov3,21)CA

# Georgia Firefighters Pension Fund - The Reward

Here is something that is near and dear to me, because today I sent off my request for the Firefighter pension. After 22 ½ years of being a member of Towns County Fire Rescue, Station 5, I finally realized that firefighting is a young person’s game, and it is time to let the young guns take over and for us old-timers to move over and not be in the way of all that young exuberance. I can still do it, just not as fast as I once could! My mind thinks that I am 40 years old and my body screams “what are you thinking?”

The young guns see themselves as Mighty Mouse “here I come to save the day!” and us Old Timers are cautious, but I have accomplished exactly what I set out to do when I moved here 23 years ago, and that is to not just be a part of the herd but to do what I could to give back to the community any way I could. The Fire department was a good way to give back and help our neighbors in their time of need. A Volunteer firefighter spends a lot of nights and weekends training and practicing so they know what to do when the tone drops and the rush in on to an emergency.

Volunteers are trained at the same level as professionals because in an emergency firefighters are all the same. Most calls here are medical helping EMS with all kinds of emergencies and many volunteers are trained as First Responders since they are usually the first on the scene of an emergency and this takes a lot of dedication to be ready and willing to go out any time of the day or night in all kinds of weather because emergencies do not always happen when it is convenient.

The reward for all this time and training is to finally qualify for the pension as a reward for all the challenging work and time spent protecting the community. In the late 1930s, a group of fire chiefs, led primarily by Howard

Schaefer of Marietta and Joe Whitley of Atlanta, began an effort to start a pension fund for the firefighters of Georgia. They approached the Georgia Firemen’s Association at their annual convention and garnered their support for the initial legislation.

The first draft of the Fireman’s Relief Act introduced in 1939 failed as did many versions thereafter. But each successive bill brought a better benefit, improving and refining the plan, until in 1954, a bill was put forth that passed both houses, and in 1955, was signed into law by Governor Marvin Griffin.

The success of this effort was in no small part due to the support of the Firemen’s Association, which in 1952 formalized its organization and lobbying efforts by incorporating. Initially, the Association was charged with responsibility for oversight of the pension fund and held the Trustee positions until the statutes were revised to provide for at-large appointments by the Governor. Knowing that they would be seeking and needing some form of public funding to have a meaningful benefit over the long term, the originators of the pension fund, the fire chiefs, and the legislators, had the foresight to prescribe that the fund should be open to all firefighters in the State of Georgia, paid and volunteer. Early on, the General Assembly also wanted to encourage departments to upgrade and improve their firefighting proficiency. Thus, for membership, an applicant had only to be affiliated with a Fire Department in a Class 1 through 8 ISO rated fire district in the State of Georgia. In 1997, the Fund was renamed the Georgia Firefighters’ Pension Fund.

On July 1, 2000, the Georgia Class Nine Fire Department Pension Fund was created by an Act of the Georgia General Assembly. This Pension Fund was established to pay retirement benefits to

paid and volunteer firefighters affiliated with Fire Departments in Class 9 ISO rated fire districts.

On July 1, 2006, the Georgia Class Nine Fire Department Fund was merged with the Georgia Firefighters’ Pension Fund. This created a single fund with equal and uniform benefits available to qualified and participating firefighters serving in Fire Departments in Class 1-9 ISO rated Fire Districts. When the “Firemen’s Pension Fund” opened for business in July of 1955, dues were \$5 per month. The monthly benefit was \$50. Retirement was based on years of “fire service,” rather than “pension creditable service,” but one had to participate in the pension fund for at least one year. There were no “addon’s” for extended service or provisions for early retirement or survivor beneficiaries.

On July 1, 1956, 25 members with 12 months in the pension fund retired and began receiving a pension of \$50 a month. Today, more than fifty years later, dues are only \$25 a month and full benefits are \$963 per month. Retirement is based on “pension creditable service,” and they offer early retirement, extended service benefits, cost of living allowances (COLA) and survivor benefits. Over the years this has become one of the premier supplemental benefit plans for firefighters in the United States.

I am proud to have been a part of this service to the community. You may not think about firefighters until you need them, and they then become your angel!

Support your local Fire Department because the life they save might be yours!



RC&D  
Frank Riley  
Executive Director

# Cole...from Page 1A

ing all the principals in North Carolina on everything the government wanted to address.

For one-year, Cole was required to attend the monthly meetings of the North Carolina Board of Education, where he said he learned a great deal.

Additionally, the Chocowinity native got the opportunity to serve on the North Carolina State Superintendent’s Principal Advisory Council, the North Carolina House Study Committees on Education Quality and Compensation, and Governor Pat McCrory’s Task Force on Safe Schools in North Carolina.

“God bless my assistant principal that year, because she rarely saw me,” Cole said. “I wasn’t there, so she got her own accelerated learning plan that year.”

“But it was a wonderful opportunity for me to advocate for teachers and principals with the people that make the decisions. Because, typically, those people had not been in a real school in 40 years. They had no idea how things had changed.”

Cole said he frequently suggested to state level bureaucrats and elected officials that they visit schools and tour them, and he noted that he himself was lucky to go on a state-paid trip with 49 other Principals of the Year for a three-city tour in China to see schools there.

“That was in 2013; that doesn’t happen now,” he said.

After 10 years as a teacher, then another 10 years as a site-based administrator, Cole said he was offered an opportunity with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction to be a school transformation coach.

“(I was) assigned to principals and school improvement teams at low-performing schools,” Cole said. “It was

# Sons of Confederate Veterans meeting

David W. Payne Camp #1633, Sons of Confederate Veterans, continues to meet the second Thursday of each month at 7 PM.

Our new meeting location is the Davenport Veterans Building, across the 4-lane from Longhorn. NT(Nov3,22)CA

# Free GED Classes

Are you ready to earn your high school equivalency diploma? North GA Technical College’s Adult Education program is offering free day and evening courses. Classes are held in Blairsville at the Shirley Miller Building (behind the public library).

Call 706-439-6342 to schedule your registration appointment. Our next enrollment dates are November 1st and November 15th. NT(Nov3,22)CA

# Hospice Volunteer opportunities

Regency Hospice, located in Hiawassee, GA has Hospice Volunteer opportunities available in Towns and surrounding counties. Please Call our office at 706-896-1251 if you are interested. NT(Nov3,21)CA

## 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Salute to Veterans Car Show

And fund raising AUCTION

The Blairsville Cruisers Car Club invites you to participate in honoring our veterans

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### UNION COUNTY FARMERS MARKET

148 Old Smokey Road in Blairsville, Ga.

## Saturday, November 6, 2021

### 11 am – 4 pm

Registration Starts 10 am  
National Anthem at Noon

Auction at 2pm ★ Awards at 3:30

**Registration Fee is DONATION\***

\*All show proceeds go to local veterans and local veterans organizations

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Participation by area Vietnam Veterans of America Chapters, VFW posts, American Legion posts and other Veterans Organizations in North Georgia & Western North Carolina

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All vehicles Welcome!

Please fly the Flag on your vehicle!

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TOP 30 Award Plaques plus

Best Ford, Best GM, Best Mopar, Best Military Vehicle & Best of Show

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DOOR PRIZES \* FOOD \* MUSIC \* 50/50



# Halloween Fun...from Page 1A

imagined Addams Family, and together, they had many soaring thoughts to share about the festival.

"It is a very awesome thing to have this here for the kids and grown kids alike," Bolton said, "because people feel much safer coming here as opposed to a few years ago, when people were still trick-or-treating by going house to house."

"I think people do not feel comfortable too much these days by either knocking on a stranger's door and even the opposite of getting your door knocked on by a stranger."

Laclair concurred, saying she felt "much better coming here because of the outdoor environment and stable buildings to walk up to and not just the trunk of a car."

"I have been to and been aware of many specials here, and I have never come across a dud of an event, so I knew this was the most happening place to come compared to others statewide," Laclair said.

When asked what her favorite part of Halloween was between dressing up or the candy, daughter Mia replied, "I love both, but probably the candy more!" As of course any child would say.

One notable booth from the festival saw the Towns County Sheriff's Office in attendance to hand out candy and treats instead of handcuffs and warrants.

"We have worked all this past week to get ready for this event, and we think it is great for our people, the kids, the community, and we love it," Sheriff Ken Henderson said. "I worked at Young Harris College for 38 years with young folk, and it always makes you feel good and hopeful when we can do something for our youth."

"It really makes you feel humble to get to know the students and parents of the community and be able to serve them and hold this position with such honor and pride. And us at the Sheriff's Office decided we wanted to be a part



**Towns County Sheriff Ken Henderson "apprehending" a couple of robbers at the 2021 Halloween at the Fairgrounds.**  
Photo by Lowell Nicholson



**A very creative Addams Family — complete with Morticia (Julie Laclair) and Wednesday Addams (Mia), Cousin Itt, and of course, Thing (Zavier Bolton) — scared up some candy at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds for Halloween.**  
Photo by Jeremy Foster

of this event because we just want to be for our community and not against it.

"We want to be involved and help out any way we can and make sure people's lives are happy no matter how big

or small. I love this place and the people, and we are filled with joy to be able to see people smile."

For information on upcoming events, visit [www.georgiamountainfairgrounds.com](http://www.georgiamountainfairgrounds.com).

## Commissioner names Nov. 8 Retired Educators Day



**On Monday, October 18, 2021, Towns County Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw signs a proclamation naming Sunday, November 8, 2021, as Georgia Retired Educators Day in Towns County. This day is set aside to recognize and honor the many retired educators in Towns County and the many hours of service they provided during their teaching careers to the students of their respective schools. Also, as retired educators they continue to serve their communities by volunteering their time in schools, churches, and community agencies. The Towns County Retired Educators Association is an active group of educators. Pictured with Commissioner Bradshaw is the president of TCREA, MJ Wilson (seated), and from left to right, Betty Phillips, Judy Slaton, Debbie Burnette, Grace Oakley, and Margie Winkler.** T(Nov3,H)SH

## Veterans Day...from Page 1A

such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Sons of the American Legion, (Legion) Riders, auxiliaries of the Legion and VFW, and the Marine Corps League as well," Forehand said. "Everyone really jumps on board to help us put this service on."

The keynote speaker this year will be retired U.S. Army 1st Sgt. Vicky Healy, who enlisted in 1972 and left the Army following 20 years of honorable service to her country.

Forehand will also be speaking and making introductions, as will others, and he is "excited for what the program looks like this year."

After Forehand calls the proceedings to order that Thursday, VFW Post 7807 Chaplain Dwight Moss will offer the invocation, followed by a posting of the colors and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Performance of the National Anthem will be led by Pam Leslie, known for her many years leading the music ministry at Sharp Memorial United Methodist Church, and the Towns County High School Band.

Coast Guard veteran Scott Drummond, the chairman of the Towns County Memorial Wall Committee, will offer a special presentation featuring the Towns County veterans added to the wall inside the park in 2021.

The annual "laying of wreaths" will be conducted by American Legion Post 23 and Auxiliary, American Legion Riders, Sons of the American Legion Squadron 23, Marine

Corps League Unicoi Detachment 783, and VFW Post 7807 and Auxiliary.

"We will then commence with patriotic hymns, the infamous Taps musical piece, retiring the colors and a dismissal blessing," Forehand said. "And after that, we all go back to the (VFW) post and feed everybody, which is probably the best part."

Concerning the current state of the military and veterans' affairs, Forehand said things are a lot different than they were when he served, especially following the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

"When I joined, I enlisted with hopes that other people's children would not have to, and I believe they should be paid double or triple than what their base is," he said. "The main problem that veterans see these days obviously has to do with our government not thinking that wounded veterans should get hospitalization benefits anymore."

"All of the programs that we are involved with are designed to keep the veteran healthy. So, in short, the state of affairs for veterans these days is very tentative. All of our projects are volunteer, and we do not get paid for any of it."

"We do it for sheer love of our fellow veterans and loved ones, and for all the hardships and impacts it may have caused during or after service."

As to why people ought to care about Veterans Day and showing their appreciation for America's service men and

women, both past and present, Forehand said observance of the holiday is incredibly important.

"The very fact that I can be asked these questions, or be interviewed, or any of us to travel freely without fear, persecution or retaliation is why we should honor veterans," Forehand said, "because in other countries you can be punished for telling the truth or simply putting on your socks the wrong way."

North Georgia — and especially Towns County — is filled with veterans and patriotic members of the community, so Forehand said he expects "a great turnout this year," with annual numbers that "keep getting bigger and better."

"And if people are wanting to help, there are several ways," he said. "They can make donations to our VFW Thrift Store (in Hiwassee), which all proceeds go back into our projects to help others."

"If you are a veteran, then please join one of our (local veteran organization) memberships, as there is a place for everyone. And, basically, just get involved any way you can; you could always buy a veteran a lunch (for instance)."

"But I will say the No. 1 thing that has and always will help us veterans that does not cost a penny is, when you see one, just simply say 'thank you for your service.'"

"Those words let us know that what we were and what we did mattered, and (provide) recognition of all of America having the freedoms we all enjoy today."

# Work Session...from Page 1A

Jan. 14 due date. "Very good news — all but half of one tax bill has been collected for 2020," she said, noting that the remaining portion of the outstanding bill is just \$60.

Touching on the recent legislative session of the Georgia General Assembly, Ordiales said that a new piece of legislation passed this year allows the city to collect hotel/motel tax on short-term vacation rentals like Airbnbs and VRBOs.

Since the law went into effect, the city has collected \$2,093.54 for July and \$4,218.02 for August, which the mayor described as "game changing" for hotel/motel tax collections.

Ordiales announced that the University of Georgia College of Public Health had asked the city to participate in a program by its Office of Outreach, Engagement & Equity.

"What they do is, they select five students, and they provide them a little stipend — \$1,000 or so — to get involved in a community and come give us a plan for what our health care should be," Ordiales said. "I love, love, love that, because they're young, they're smart, and they've got great ideas."

In other news, the mayor said the city had won its bid for the Kubota utility vehicle being sold by the Hamilton Gardens at Lake Chatuge, Inc. The vehicle cost the city \$9,000 and will be used at the Water/Sewer Plant.

Ordiales took time in her Mayor's Report to address online speculation that, had the city waited until countywide elections began next year, instead of having to pay for it, Hiwassee could have had a free election for its Nov. 2 referendum to allow package liquor stores inside city limits.

"On June 1, this council voted unanimously for a referendum to put the alcohol package store licensing on the ballot," Ordiales said. "We initiated a contract with the county (to run the election), and we are extremely thankful that they do this service for us."

"We do not have the equipment, we do not have the training, we do not have the experience, nor do we have the personnel or the desire to do this. It becomes neutral and stays over there — it's great."

"That all happened on June 1, it went straight into contracts, (City Attorney Thomas Mitchell) helped us with that. Aug. 20 was the end of qualifying, two and a half months later; luckily for us, (the incumbents) did not have to have an election, because no one ran against (Amy Barrett, Patsy Owens) or myself."

"That does not mean that we could cancel the election, and, the county has always charged the city for an election — always. We have never had a free election in the city. Depending on what type of election it is gives what kind of cost it is."

"I don't know where the \$11,000 figure came from; we don't know what (the cost) is. When we get the invoice, we will gladly pay for it, because it's a service that is a great ser-



**Hiwassee City Councilwomen Patsy Owens and Anne Mitchell in the Oct. 5 city meeting.**  
Photo by Shawn Jarrard

vice to us in the city — we don't want to (run elections). So, that is what's going on with that."

"Many comments on Facebook and other reporting venues, I am not going to engage the city or myself to any banter going back and forth on things that are irresponsible and untruthful. That is my stand on it, and that's how we're going to proceed going forward with the city."

"I don't drink, I don't care if this passes, but I can tell you this is a huge, huge income for the city (in terms of tax revenue). So, it matters not to me, but I am not going to engage in banter on stuff that is wrong and irresponsible."

The mayor welcomed local graphic artist Sarah Faneuff of Young Harris. Faneuff showed off a project funded by local Rotarian Bonny Herman called Cultural Connection highlighting "off-the-beaten-path places" of artistic, cultural and historical significance in the region.

Printing for the project, which took the form of a brochure that can be utilized by visitors to the area, was paid for by the city, and Ordiales said it was "a great investment for the city."

Results were in for the city's "If I Were Mayor" essay contest recognizing "Georgia Cities Week" by the Georgia Municipal Association, and sixth-grader Dillon Pirkle won the contest.

Councilwoman Anne Mitchell read aloud the winning essay, in which Pirkle said he would "ensure the health and safety of others by having free health care for those who cannot afford it," while also adding "more parks and tourist attractions to find more jobs and to expand our city."

As future mayor, in addition to improving the local economy, he would fund wildlife conservation, promote recycling, lower taxes, build another veterans memorial, boost rural internet, add sidewalks, streetlamps and park benches to encourage exercise, and more.

Other winners were Mary Lee Durham in the seventh grade, Jaden Crooks in the eighth grade and Gabriella Rowling in the ninth grade. Each winning entrant received a special certificate.

On the agenda for the Nov. 9 regular city meeting will be the appointment of Sheryl Branson as the offi-

cial Chief Court Clerk helping Judge Robert Sneed in the Hiwassee Municipal Court.

Ordiales said Branson has attended all mandatory trainings and has been with Judge Sneed for about two months. City Clerk Bonnie Kendrick is the Deputy Court Clerk.

A discussion on the Hiwassee Downtown Development Authority support position ensued, wherein it was reiterated that, should the council decide to create the position in an upcoming meeting, the job would be a standalone dedicated position for city economic development.

Police Chief Paul Smith reported that more than 300,000 vehicles had driven through the city in October alone, which is "actually less than it was this time last year."

He also announced the hire of a new part-time officer named Jose Carvajal, a veteran who lives in town and works full time at the Union County Sheriff's Office.

Smith reminded folks to remain vigilant during the seasonal uptick in scam phone calls, recounting the story of a local woman who called 911 to say she had been told by someone pretending to be her daughter that she had been kidnapped and needed money to be released.

Thankfully, this was not true, and the police got to the woman before she withdrew her life savings to free her "daughter."

The police chief advised people, when someone calls, emails or texts asking about account information or providing a fishy story for money, to end communications immediately and contact the institution in question via known contact information for that institution.

Joint Economic Development Director Denise McKay updated the council on several projects, including the Paris Business Center, which has a request for proposal out regarding building restoration.

Due to the Nov. 2 municipal election that concluded after press time, the next regular city meeting will be held Nov. 9 at 6 p.m. inside Hiwassee City Hall.

As with all city meetings in the time of COVID, people may catch a livestream of the proceedings on the City of Hiwassee Facebook page.