

# Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

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75 Cents

Publication Number 635540 Volume 91 Number 50

Wednesday, October 14, 2020

## Team quarantined after two COVID positives; Friday's game canceled

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Editor

Two Towns County High School football players tested positive for COVID-19 last week, prompting school officials to require the entire Indians Football Team and several other students to quarantine at home.

"The nature of practices and such made it impossible to determine who exactly was a close contact, so it was decided to just quarantine the entire team," Superintendent Dr. Darren Berrong said.

Both student-athletes experienced minor symptoms last week, which was a bye week for the Indians, and

Berrong said this Friday's home conference game against Lincoln County has been canceled while the team wraps up its quarantine.

All told, more than 40 students deemed close contacts of the two COVID-positive players – including teammates and classmates – began quarantining on Thursday, Oct. 8, putting them on target to return to campus on Monday, Oct. 19.

These students will continue instruction via the district's online learning platform, which is being utilized primarily by students who have chosen not to return for face-to-face classes due to COVID-19. As of Monday, Oct. 12, 44

of 321 high school students were enrolled in online-only classes.

It's unclear at this time if the Lincoln County game will be made up, but fortunately, the football team will only be missing one game due to the quarantine. And since Oct. 15-16 is fall break for everyone, the students will only miss five days of in-person instruction.

"We expected at some point this was probably going to happen, just based on the nature of the virus and interactions that people have," High School Principal Roy Perren said. "We are remaining vigilant and watching the situation."

"The safety of our



The Indians huddle during their Sept. 25 Homecoming Game. The team will miss its Oct. 16 home matchup against Lincoln County due to COVID quarantine. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

## Council honors Ordiales' mother with moment of silence, prayer

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Editor

Hiwassee Councilwoman Anne Mitchell led the Oct. 6 regular city meeting as Mayor Liz Ordiales couldn't be there for personal reasons.

Out of continued caution against public gatherings amid COVID-19, the meeting was streamed from City Hall via Facebook Live.

"I know all of you who are here are aware of the events of this past week, but for those listening on Facebook who might not know, Mayor Liz's mother passed away on (Oct. 4)," Mitchell said. "I would like you to join me now for a moment of silence to honor her and her memory."

Following the moment of silence, Councilwoman Nancy

Noblet offered a prayer in which she asked God to "touch Liz and her family in this time of grieving."

Moving on to action items, the council held a first reading of the Millage Rate Ordinance to accept the 2020 rollback rate of 2.067 mills, which is 0.028 mills below the 2019 rate of 2.095.

Due to roughly 5% growth in the city's tax digest over the last year, accepting the lowered millage rate will result in \$190,979 at 100% collections, or about \$7,700 more in tax revenues than in 2019.

Ordiales said in the Sept. 28 work session that city property owners would be receiving two tax bills this year, one for city taxes specifically on properties located inside city limits, and the other for



Mayor Liz Ordiales county, school and fire property taxes due on all properties in the county.

Council members will meet again in a called Facebook Livestreamed meeting at 6 p.m. See Ordiales, Page 6A

## Vote early in person now, weekdays through Oct. 30



The Towns County Board of Elections welcomed a line of people at the start of early in-person voting Monday. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Editor

Advanced in-person voting for the big Nov. 3 General Election is finally here, running now through Friday, Oct. 30.

People are encouraged to vote early, as turnout is expected to be higher than ever this election, potentially translating to longer than usual precinct lines come Election Day.

Early voting is available weekdays between 8:30 a.m.

and 4:30 p.m. at the Towns County Board of Elections & Registration Office in Hiwassee next to the courthouse, and people will be able to vote there on Saturday, Oct. 24, as well.

Poll workers are following COVID-19 best practices, including social distancing enforcement, regular equipment sanitation and wearing of masks. Voters are encouraged but not required to wear facial coverings,

which will be made available alongside hand sanitizer.

Voters cannot display campaign-related materials/clothing at polling places where promoted candidates appear on ballots. For example, voters may not enter wearing hats, T-shirts, masks, etc., promoting Donald Trump or Joe Biden for president. This includes popular MAGA gear.

The ballot features

## Fall Craft Show returns to Fairgrounds this weekend

By Jarrett Whitener  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

After months of planning resulting in the 2020 postponement of the 70-year-old Fall Festival due to COVID-19, the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds decided in August to host a slimmed-down Arts & Crafts Festival instead on Oct. 9-11 and Oct. 16-18.

Returning this weekend from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. each day, admission is \$5 per person, and children 12 and under get in free. The show features more than 80 arts and crafts vendors, plus live music playing throughout the fairgrounds.

Many vendors traveled from far off to attend the show, including Louis Ochello from Louisiana, who hasn't been



Be sure to check out the second weekend of the Georgia Mountain Fall Arts & Crafts Festival Friday. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

## Ninth District Opportunity to offer heating assistance starting Nov. 2

By Jarrett Whitener  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Each year, Ninth District Opportunity offers heating assistance to low-income households, and residents in need can begin to take advantage of this annual program as soon as next month.

Starting Nov. 2, households over the age of 65 or those considered medically homebound can apply for the

program, with Dec. 1 being the wider rollout to the public, said Resource Coordinator Amber McCoy of Ninth District Opportunity.

"The program assists low-income families, and it will give a \$350-\$400 credit based on income," McCoy said. "It is a free credit, and the money goes straight to the heating source, so we can do their electric bill if that is what they heat with or we can do

Freeman, Heritage and things like that.

"This program is a one-time assistance. The income limit is different for every group. If they are over 65, it is automatically a \$400 credit as long as they make less than \$25,025 for a one-person household.

"The income limits are the same for both (program dates)

## Tractor Supply hitches business amid Grand Opening celebration

By Todd Forrest  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

BLAIRSVILLE—Tractor Supply Company, the largest rural lifestyle retailer in the United States, hosted a Grand Opening celebration for its new Blairsville location on Saturday, Oct. 10.

Located near Panther Circle at 614 Young Harris Hwy between Wendy's and Sears, Tractor Supply officially opened for business earlier than expected on Thursday, Oct. 1, and the decision proved a tremendous success.

"We were ahead (of schedule), so we were stocked and staffed, so we went ahead and held a soft opening last Thursday," Assistant Manager Johnny Jones said Saturday. "Word got out (that we were open), and we ended up doing a ridiculous amount of sales."

With the nearest Tractor



Tractor Supply held a multiday Grand Opening celebration over the weekend, which was well attended despite the rainy weather. Photo by Todd Forrest

Supply stores located in Blue Ridge and Murphy, North Carolina, the new store is a welcome addition to the community, especially for those living in eastern Union County, Young Harris and Towns County.

"I love it, and I'm so

## TCSO traffic stops continue to produce local drug arrests

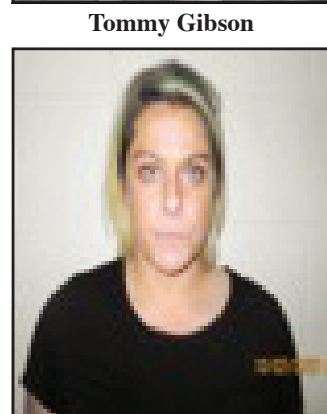
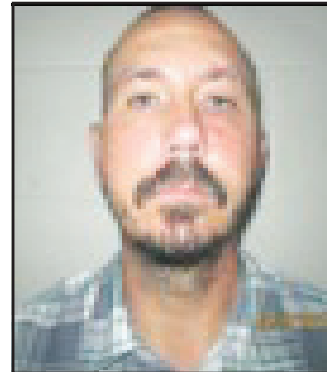
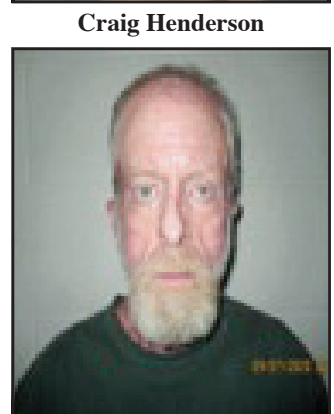
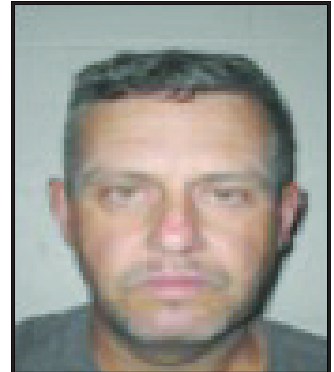
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Deputies and investigators with the Towns County Sheriff's Office have continued their pursuit of drug suspects within the community, with traffic stops continuing to produce drug arrests in recent weeks.

On Saturday Aug. 22, a deputy made a traffic stop on a Harley-Davidson motorcycle on US 76 in Young Harris.

Upon further investigation, the driver, Craig Henderson, 46, of Young Harris, was arrested and charged with possession of methamphetamine, possession of drug-related objects, driving under the influence, and failure to maintain lane. The motorcycle was seized as part of the drug arrest.

On Friday, Aug. 28, a deputy made a traffic stop on a Dodge Dakota pickup on Cedar Cliff Road in Young Harris.



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