

# Towns County Herald

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## Transition of temporary offices goes smoothly

By Mark Smith  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

The Towns County Courthouse move to temporary offices inside the Old Rec Gym at 900 North Main Street was completed Oct. 8-11, and according to Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw, the transition was seamless.

"We actually started about two weeks ago with our local inmates out of the Towns County Jail," said Bradshaw, "just moving stuff that people (who work in the courthouse) could do without temporarily."

"And then, we had a moving company come in Monday and Tuesday (Oct. 10-11) to help bring all the (Superior Court books and Magistrate/

Probate books), which was a major, major move. It took them two days just to move all of that down here.

"Of course, those two days, our inmates were helping to move as well. So, we got the major move done in about two days.

"The biggest challenge we had, besides preparing (the Old Rec Gym), was getting all the IT – computers, printers, phones, and all of that – working properly," he said, noting complications such as the Superior Court Office, for example, having a different phone service than the Commissioner's Office.

"But everything is up and going and running great. So, we're very, very grateful for that. And we saved a huge

amount of money (by enlisting the detainees)."

Bradshaw couldn't give an exact amount of savings, but considering the labor to move, and all the painting, cleaning and renovation work at the Old Rec Gym, he estimated \$15,000-\$20,000. He said one of the detainees even built the temporary Superior Court Bench from scratch.

"My goal was to make the move as smooth as possible and to have all the employees in the courthouse happy with the transition," Bradshaw said.

Continuing, the commissioner said he was "breathing a sigh of relief" now that the move was done, especially since he'd been lying in bed at night thinking about the layout and hoping



The new – and temporary – office space for the Towns County Superior Clerk of Court inside the Old Rec Gym. Photo by Mark Smith

## BOE talks school lunch, pay schedule for deputies

By Brittany Holbrooks  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Discussions in the October meetings of the Towns County Board of Education ranged from district finances and school lunch programs to increasing the pay schedule for deputies tasked with providing security at sporting events.

During the work session on Oct. 3, Superintendent Dr. Darren Berrong also proposed some changes to the school calendar.

"We haven't really been putting workdays throughout the year," Berrong said after mentioning that an educator requested two additional days of teacher training. "We put most (workdays) at the beginning of the year, the rest at the end of the year."

Veterans Day on Nov. 11 was proposed and accepted



School Superintendent Dr. Darren Berrong in the Oct. 3 meeting of the Towns County Board of Education. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

As one of those options. The second will be Friday, Feb. 17, giving students an extra-long weekend considering the Monday, Feb. 20, is also on the calendar as a teacher workday.

As Berrong put it, the changes on offer are a soft start to rehauling the yearly calendar to provide a better balance regarding workdays. See School Board, Page 8A

## 2022 Fall Festival wraps; Brew, Que & Stew Oct. 22

By Jeremy Foster  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

The 2022 Georgia Mountain Fall Festival finished up its nine-day-long extravaganza on Saturday, Oct. 15, with yet another successful outing for the beloved annual tradition.

As usual, thousands of spectators enjoyed arts & crafts booths, delicious foods, carnival rides, the Pioneer Village's "old ways" educational demonstrations, amazing musical performances by top-notch acts, and a host of other entertainment options and activities for people of all ages.

Brenda and Doug Wilford traveled from the small town of Gail in Meriwether County, Georgia, to attend the festival. And it wasn't their first trip to the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds, as they have made the festival a yearly routine.



County Music icon Gene Watson was one of many talented acts to perform live at the 2022 Georgia Mountain Fall Festival. Photo by Derek Storm

"My favorite part about coming here is seeing the crowds and just all the different things there are to do," Foster said, with Brenda adding, "We

have a mountain house in Dilard, so we spend a lot of time up here and have been coming for about 25 years." See GA Mtn. Fall Festival, Page 8A

## Advanced in-person voting continues thru Nov. 4

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Editor

Three weeks of advanced in-person voting for the Nov. 8 General Election started on Monday at the Towns County Board of Elections & Registration Office located in Suite A of 67 Lakeview Circle in Hiawassee.

Early voting will run weekdays between now and Friday, Nov. 4, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., even during lunchtime. There will also be two weekend early voting opportunities: Saturday, Oct. 22, and Saturday, Oct. 29, also from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Elections Office.

Upcoming construction for the major renovation and addition project at the neighbor-



A line formed outside the Towns County Elections Office Monday morning to kickstart three weeks of early in-person voting. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

## Paul Van Nus, 68, killed in single-car crash Sunday

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Editor

A Hiawassee man died around 5:30 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 16, when his Jeep Cherokee left the roadway and rolled several times, per witness accounts, before landing in the Osborn Pasture on Georgia 17 South, according to the Towns County Coroner's Office.

Paul Van Nus, 68, was reported by witnesses to have been possibly going over the speed limit, though authorities do not have a definitive answer as to why his vehicle went off-road, Coroner Tamela Cooper said.

He was not wearing a seatbelt and while it was not immediately apparent whether Van Nus had been experiencing a medical emergency that

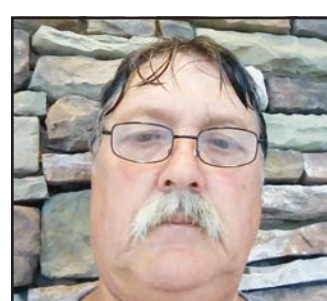
caused the accident, Cooper did say that alcohol and drugs were not suspected as contributing factors.

Cooper advises motorists to always wear their seatbelts, which are known to reduce the risk of dying in an automobile accident.

Tragically, Van Nus, a local family man and patriot, is the second Hiawassee resident to die in a single-vehicle crash in less than two weeks following the Oct. 4 accident of 23-year-old Trent Whidden on Sunnyside Road.

"We are aware, but that never takes the human element out of the tragedy," Cooper said.

In addition to the Coroner's Office, responding to the scene were personnel with Towns County EMS, Fire



Paul Van Nus

& Rescue, the Sheriff's Office, Georgia State Patrol and Mulkey's Wrecker Service, and Cooper said Sunday her office was "thankful for everyone's help in today's accident."

Banister-Cooper Funeral Home has charge of Van Nus' funeral arrangements, which were made available after press time at <https://www.banisterfuneral.com/>.

## Sons of the Pioneers benefit concert this Sunday, Oct. 23

By Mark Smith  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

BLAIRSVILLE – The legendary Sons of the Pioneers of Western-Country Music fame will perform at the Union County Schools Fine Arts Center from 2-5 p.m. this Sunday, Oct. 23, as a benefit concert for Ferst Readers of Union County.

And yes, this is the same group that was started 89 years ago by Leonard "Len" Slye, better known as Roy Rogers.

There are currently six members of the group: Tommie Nallie, Ken Lattimore, John Fullerton, Paul Elliot, Chuck Ervin, and Roy "Dusty" Rogers Jr., Roy Rogers' only natural-born son.

Counting the current members and Roy Rogers Sr., there have been 47 Sons of the Pioneers over an 89-year peri-

od, according to [www.sonsofthepioneers.org](http://www.sonsofthepioneers.org).

However, though the members of the group have changed, their sound remains the same now as it did in 1933 when Rogers Sr. first assembled the group.

Sons of the Pioneers are famous for cowboy classics such as "Tumbling Tumbleweeds," "Cool Water" and "Don't Fence Me In," with their iconic harmonies, yodeling and driving rhythm.

Local musician John Cochran, whose wife Janice is the Co-Chairwoman of the Ferst Readers of Union County Community Action Team, has wanted to bring the Sons of the Pioneers to North Georgia for years.

"John had been trying to work something out with us for quite some time for a potential concert," said John Fullerton,

who performs lead/harmony vocals and rhythm guitar for the Sons of the Pioneers, adding that he met Cochran about 10 years ago at a Roy Rogers Movie Festival.

"It took some planning and preparation, and we decided to do (the concert) as a benefit for Ferst Readers," Fullerton continued. "This is very exciting for us to get to come (to North Georgia). This is a part of the great state of Georgia that I don't think the Pioneers have ever been to."

So, what can people expect from the Sons of the Pioneers performance?

"You will be blown away by the sound," Fullerton said. "The sound will sound exactly the same if you've been a Pioneer fan all your life. The sound has not changed."

"We are still singing the



Sons of the Pioneers

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Lake Levels  
Blue Ridge 1,672.20  
Chatuge 1,919.14  
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**SPORTS**

**SOFTBALL**  
Oct. 20 @ Bowdon  
Time TBA

**FOOTBALL**  
Oct. 21 vs. Warren Co. 7:30 PM

**General Election Sample Ballot**

See page 3A

**Young Harris 2022 Millage Rate**

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**GMF Announces Christmas Events!**

See page 8A



# Early Voting...from Page 1A

ing Towns County Courthouse is not expected to interfere with operations at the Elections Board Office.

Election Day voting for the General Election will take place Tuesday, Nov. 8, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the Hiwassee

and Young Harris Precincts of Towns County.

Appearing on the ballot will be federal, state and local candidates. At the federal level, people will be deciding the following races:

U.S. Senate, Republican

Herschel Walker, Democratic Incumbent Raphael Warnock and Libertarian Chase Oliver.

U.S. House of Representatives for District 9, Republican Incumbent Andrew Clyde and Democrat Michael "Mike" Ford.

At the state level, voters will be deciding the following:

Governor, Republican Incumbent Brian Kemp, Democrat Stacey Abrams and Libertarian Shane Hazel.

Lt. Governor, Republican Burt Jones, Democrat Charlie Bailey and Libertarian Ryan Graham.

Secretary of State, Republican Incumbent Brad Raffensperger, Democrat Bee Nguyen and Libertarian Ted Metz.

Attorney General, Republican Incumbent Chris Carr, Democrat Jennifer "Jen" Jordan and Libertarian Martin Cowen.

Commissioner of Agriculture, Republican Tyler Harper, Democrat Nakita Hemingway and Libertarian David Raudabaugh.

Commissioner of Insurance, Republican Incumbent John King and Democrat Janice Laws Robinson.

State School Superintendent, Republican Incumbent Richard Woods and Democrat Alisha Thomas Searcy.

Commissioner of Labor, Republican Bruce Thompson, Democrat William "Will" Boddie Jr. and Libertarian Emily Anderson.

State Senate for District 50, Republican Incumbent Bo Hatchett and Democrat Paulette Williams.

State House of Representatives for District 8, Republican Incumbent Stan Gunter and Democrat June Krise.

Enotah Judicial Circuit District Attorney Jeff Langley, the Republican incumbent, is running unopposed in the Nov. 8 election.

There are no county level races up for grabs during the 2022 Midterm Elections, though Incumbent Jennifer Logan is running unopposed for Blue Ridge Mountain Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor in Towns County.

Also appearing on the ballot will be two proposed amendments to the Georgia Constitution, including one calling for pay suspension for elected state officers and Georgia General Assembly members if such individuals become "suspended from office following indictment for a felony."

If approved by voters, the other proposed amendment would authorize local govern-

ments and school boards to provide temporary tax relief to local properties that are "severely damaged or destroyed as a result of a disaster and located within a nationally declared disaster area."

Additionally, voters will be approving or rejecting two statewide referendums to authorize acts passed recently by the Georgia General Assembly.

The first act would grant certain statewide ad valorem tax exemptions benefiting the timber industry, while the second act would expand ad valorem tax exemptions for family-owned farms.

All voters will need to have an acceptable form of identification to cast ballots, such as a government-issued driver's license or identification card.

Residents have been able to apply for a mailed absentee ballot since Aug. 22. Absentee ballot requests may be made at the local Elections Office or by accessing the "My Voter Page" at <https://mvp.sos.ga.gov/>.

The deadline to request an absentee ballot is Oct. 28. Ballot applications can be returned by mail, fax, email as an attachment, or in-person to the Elections Office.

Due to the Columbus Day holiday last week, the earliest day for absentee ballots to be mailed to voters was Tuesday, Oct. 11.

People who have voted absentee-by-mail in a past election cycle will need to submit a new application for this cycle if they want to receive an absentee ballot in the mail.

Folks can mail their completed ballots back or utilize the official drop box inside the Elections Office during early in-person voting hours. Voters may also drop completed absentee ballots off at the Elections Office through 7 p.m. on Election Day.

Voters are encouraged to request and return their absentee ballots early to give their ballot "enough time to travel through the mail and resolve any issues that may arise when voting by absentee ballot," per [georgia.gov](http://georgia.gov).

Mentioned above, the "My Voter Page" website contains much valuable information, such as registration status, precinct information, sample ballots, mailed absentee ballot status and voter participation history.

People may also contact the local Elections Office at 706-896-4353 if they have any questions.

The last day to register to vote in the General Election and any subsequent runoff election was Oct. 11.

## Rummage Sale at Hiwassee Garden Clubhouse

Mark your calendars for the upcoming Rummage Sale on Friday and Saturday, October 21-22, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at the Hiwassee Garden Clubhouse at 34 River Street, directly behind the Hiwassee Courthouse. So many good items, so come at 9 a.m. when doors open.

This will benefit both the Garden Club and Operation PUP (Prevent Unwanted Pets). PUP helps people financially to spay and neuter their own pets or any strays they feed. If you need help with spay or neuter, call 1-203-788-2038.

## Towns County Board of Health October meeting

The Towns County Board of Health will hold its quarterly meeting on Thursday, October 20th, 2022 at 9:30 a.m. in the 911 Conference Room located at 1104 Jack Dayton Circle, Young Harris, GA 30582.

## Calling all Patriots

Concerned Citizens of Union County will be meeting Friday, October 21 at 6 PM at Compass Point, located at 298 School Circle, Blairsville. We support family values, faith in God and the United States Constitution. Please join us and bring your friends.

For more information, contact: [conservativesofunioncounty@protonmail.com](mailto:conservativesofunioncounty@protonmail.com) or call 706-258-7191.

## New Workshop at Moss Memorial

New workshop at our local library, Moss Memorial Library.

"Starting From Scratch," monthly workshop on the third Thursday each month at Moss Memorial Library in Hayesville, NC. For beginning and experienced writers, poets and storytellers hosted by Kanute Rarey 502-525-7272 [kanute-tells@gmail.com](mailto:kanute-tells@gmail.com).

Dates in 2022: August 8, September 15, October 20, November 17, December 15.

# Arrest and Fire Reports

Local law enforcement provides the following information for publication. Names are spelled as they were when received from the law enforcement agencies. It is important to remember that the following individuals have been charged only and are presumed innocent until such time as they are found guilty by a court or enter a guilty plea. Addresses of persons under arrest are no longer available from Sheriff's Office.



## ARREST REPORT

Towns County Jail  
Sheriff Ken Henderson

- 10/12/22 Leonel Constantino Renteria, age 51, Hayesville, NC Failure to appear for fingerprintable charge-misdemeanor
- 10/11/22 Chase Thomas Simpson, age 25, Hiwassee, GA Driving while license suspended or revoked (misdemeanor), tail light requirement
- 10/12/22 Joel Cecil Totherow, age 36, Blue Ridge, GA Acquiring license plate for purpose of concealing identification of motor vehicle, driving while license suspended or revoked (misdemeanor), expired vehicle tag or decal, no insurance
- 10/14/22 Jazmine Danelle Whitaker, age 21, Hiwassee, GA Court order 2 days
- 10/14/22 Roger Dale Aubbery, age 62, Young Harris, GA Battery-family violence (1st offense) misdemeanor
- 10/10/22 William Roy Chastain, age 56, Hiwassee, GA Probation violation (when probation terms are altered) for fingerprintable charge (3 counts), willful obstruction of law enforcement officers by use of threats or violence
- 10/11/22 Jaron Hunter Eric Crisp, age 19, Murphy, NC Failure to appear for fingerprintable charge-misdemeanor
- 10/14/22 Robert Edwin Jones, age 52, Hiwassee, GA Probation violation (when probation terms are altered) for fingerprintable charge, possession of methamphetamine, receipt, possession or transport of fire arm by convicted felon or felony first
- 10/14/22 Robert Jacob Jones, age 28, Hiwassee, GA Possession of methamphetamine
- 10/15/22 Samuel Abraham Toineeta, age 43, Marble, NC Serve weekend



## TCHS Student of the Week



Allison Judd and Bella Rose Childs

The TCHS PBIS student of the week is freshmen Bella Rose Childs. Band teacher Allison Judd states, "Bella Rose has been a very dedicated band member. She follows the values of TRIBE, very responsible and has a great work ethic. She is active within the school and community. She joined our drumline last minute when returning to Towns Co. Schools and didn't hold back! Always helping others and motivated towards excellence and teamwork."

Bella Rose enjoys math class the most as it comes easy to her. She is not sure of her plans after graduation, but she knows she wants to attend college and possibly pursue a degree in education. Outside of academics, she participates in marching band and is a member of FBLA. She also has played basketball for years in both rec and school teams. She also has been out of the country, and she has lived with her "amazing" grandparents since she was five years old. Out of all the TRIBE values, Bella Rose exemplifies excellence the most as she tries her best in all things, which is noted by several of her teachers.

# Towns County Community Calendar

School Board	First Monday of each month:	HS/MS Media Center	6:45 pm
Hiaw. City Council	First Tuesday of each month:	City Hall	6 pm
Young Harris City Council		YH City Hall	7 pm
Conventions & Visitors Board	Second Tuesday of each month:	Civic Center	8 am
Board of Elections	Second Wednesday every other month:	Elections Office	4 pm
Planning Commission	Third Monday of each month:	Civic Center	6 pm
Water Board		Water Office	6 pm
Commissioner's Mtg.	Third Tuesday of each month:	Courthouse	5:30 pm

## Shredding Event

Go Green! All shredded material will be recycled.

**TOWNS COUNTY SHRED DAY**  
SATURDAY NOVEMBER 5<sup>TH</sup>  
9AM-11AM

**GEORGIA MOUNTAIN FAIRGROUNDS**  
**PARKING LOT**

*Brought to you by:*

# Art Quilts by Kay Donges at October Guild Meeting

If you look closely, you'll see that the beautiful art shown here is all made from fabric.

Local quilter and retired high school art teacher Kay Donges will present a trunk show of some of these award-winning quilts at the Tuesday, October 25 meeting of the Misty Mountain Quilters Guild.

After determining that she did not really enjoy the precision piecing involved in traditional patchwork quilting, she applied her artistic skills to fabric and has been creating award-winning Art Quilts ever since.

Kay's quilts have been exhibited in numerous regional shows and several international shows including, several American Quilt Society shows, the Pacific International Quilt Show, the Houston International Quilt Festival, the Russian International Quilt Festival and Road to Califor-



Kay Donges, Self Portrait



A friend's Corgi

nia quilt show.

Kay has had the pleasure of receiving many ribbons and awards for her amazingly creative and beautiful works. She is a nationally and internationally known art quilter.

The Guild's Social Hour begins at 12:30 p.m., with the business meeting and program starting at 1 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church, 938 GA-515 W, Blairsville. All are welcome!

The Misty Mountain Quilters Guild has over 150 members from Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee and Florida, and their mission is to educate, share, promote and keep alive the art and traditions of quilt making.

New members are always welcome! For more information, please visit the Guild website at <https://www.mistymountainquiltguild.org>, or email [mmqinfo@gmail.com](mailto:mmqinfo@gmail.com).

By Kathleen Traylor

# Food Pantry

## Food Distribution

The Food Pantry hours are Monday - Thursday 9 AM- 12 PM with the exception of distribution day. The Distribution is every other Wednesday 11 AM - 2 PM.

Any questions or concerns, please contact Richard Thomas at [towns.pantry@ndocsbg.org](mailto:towns.pantry@ndocsbg.org) or (706) 896-4783.

## Volunteer Feline Feeder Needed

A volunteer is greatly needed to feed homeless cats in Towns county on Tuesday mornings. These friendly felines are in six cat colonies, all off a 2-mile stretch of Route 76. The colonies are easy to get to, and feeding takes about 35-45 minutes. Training is provided, but feeding felines is not difficult.

If you have a heart for disadvantaged cats and would like to join our team of "Feline Feeders," please contact Sue at [slaraines@zoho.com](mailto:slaraines@zoho.com).

# Annual Shred Day Event Postponed

The Annual Shred Day event had to be postponed due to the bad weather from the hurricane.

New plans are to have the shred truck at the fairgrounds on November 5th, from 9-11 AM.

Mark your calendars.

# Sons of the Pioneers...from Page 1A

"We are still singing the same arrangements that we've done for all these years, and it will be the familiar cowboy classics that were popular in so many of the Western movies," said Fullerton, noting that people will hear those signature three-part harmony vocals and instrumentation.

By every measure, the concert promises to be a memorable event for everyone, held at a state-of-the-art venue.

Adding to the memorable quality of the show, the Pioneers will hold their usual "Shake and Howdy" session afterward where people can meet the members, have their pictures taken with the group, and get autographs. CDs and memorabilia will be available

as well.

This concert is the main fundraiser for the Ferst Readers of Union County, a childhood literacy program that is free to participants, and all proceeds will go toward books for children ages 0 to 5 years old in Union County.

"All books are age-appropriate and of high quality," said Janice Cochran. The books are morally appropriate, as well, and help to build a solid foundation of literacy for the successful advancement of the next generation.

"Today, 326 children in Union County are registered and receiving books," she said. "Union County has had over 40,000 books mailed to 1,100 children in Union County since

we began in 2014."

The cost to send one book per month to one child for one year is \$36, and that is the price of a ticket to see Sons of the Pioneers this Sunday. Of course, children aged 12 and under will be admitted to the concert for free.

For additional concert information and to purchase tickets, visit [sonsofthepioneers.eventbrite.com](http://sonsofthepioneers.eventbrite.com).

The Ferst Readers organization was started in Georgia in 2000 and is named for its founder, Robin Ferst. The Union County Ferst Readers Community Action Team formed in 2013. There are 87 participating counties in Georgia today, per [www.ferstreaders.org](http://www.ferstreaders.org).

**SAMPLE BALLOT**  
November General Election  
November 08, 2022  
Hiawassee (002)  
This is not your official ballot. Any marks on this ballot will not count.

<p><b>For United States Senate</b> (Vote for One)</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Herschel Junior Walker Republican</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Raphael Warnock (Incumbent) Democrat</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Chase Oliver Libertarian</p> <p><input type="radio"/> <input type="text"/> Write-in</p>	<p><b>For Secretary of State</b> (Vote for One)</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Brad Raffensperger (Incumbent) Republican</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Bee Nguyen Democrat</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Ted Metz Libertarian</p> <p><input type="radio"/> <input type="text"/> Write-in</p>	<p><b>For Commissioner of Insurance</b> (Vote for One)</p> <p><input type="radio"/> John King (Incumbent) Republican</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Janice Laws Robinson Democrat</p> <p><input type="radio"/> <input type="text"/> Write-in</p>
<p><b>For Governor</b> (Vote for One)</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Brian Kemp (Incumbent) Republican</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Stacey Abrams Democrat</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Shane Hazel Libertarian</p> <p><input type="radio"/> <input type="text"/> Write-in</p>	<p><b>For Attorney General</b> (Vote for One)</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Chris Carr (Incumbent) Republican</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Jennifer "Jen" Jordan Democrat</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Martin Cowen Libertarian</p> <p><input type="radio"/> <input type="text"/> Write-in</p>	<p><b>For State School Superintendent</b> (Vote for One)</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Richard Woods (Incumbent) Republican</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Alisha Thomas Searcy Democrat</p> <p><input type="radio"/> <input type="text"/> Write-in</p>
<p><b>For Lieutenant Governor</b> (Vote for One)</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Burt Jones Republican</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Charlie Bailey Democrat</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Ryan Graham Libertarian</p> <p><input type="radio"/> <input type="text"/> Write-in</p>	<p><b>For Commissioner of Agriculture</b> (Vote for One)</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Tyler Harper Republican</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Nakita Hemingway Democrat</p> <p><input type="radio"/> David Raudabaugh Libertarian</p> <p><input type="radio"/> <input type="text"/> Write-in</p>	<p><b>For Commissioner of Labor</b> (Vote for One)</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Bruce Thompson Republican</p> <p><input type="radio"/> William "Will" Boddie, Jr Democrat</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Emily Anderson Libertarian</p> <p><input type="radio"/> <input type="text"/> Write-in</p>
<p><b>For United States House of Representatives - District 9</b> (Vote for One)</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Andrew Clyde (Incumbent) Republican</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Michael "Mike" Ford Democrat</p> <p><input type="radio"/> <input type="text"/> Write-in</p>	<p><b>For Blue Ridge Mountain Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor</b> (Vote for One)</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Virginia Dyer Palmer (Incumbent)</p>	<p><b>- A -</b></p> <p>Provides for ad valorem tax exemption for certain timber production, reforestation, and harvesting equipment.</p> <p>House Bill No. 997 Act No. 859</p> <p>"Shall the Act be approved which grants a state-wide exemption from all ad valorem taxes for certain equipment used by timber producers in the production or harvest of timber?"</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="radio"/> No</p>
<p><b>For State Senate District 50</b> (Vote for One)</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Bo Hatchett (Incumbent) Republican</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Paulette Williams Democrat</p> <p><input type="radio"/> <input type="text"/> Write-in</p>	<p><b>- 1 -</b></p> <p>Provides for suspension of compensation of certain State officers and members of the General Assembly.</p> <p>Senate Resolution No. 134 Resolution Act No. 304</p> <p>"Shall the Constitution of Georgia be amended so as to suspend the compensation of the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General, State School Superintendent, Commissioner of Insurance, Commissioner of Agriculture, Commissioner of Labor, or any member of the General Assembly while such individual is suspended from office following indictment for a felony?"</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="radio"/> No</p>	<p><b>- B -</b></p> <p>Expands ad valorem tax exemption for family-owned farms and adds qualified products to the exemption.</p> <p>House Bill No. 498 Act No. 260</p> <p>"Shall the Act be approved which expands a state-wide exemption from ad valorem taxes for agricultural equipment and certain farm products held by certain entities to include entities comprising two or more family owned farm entities, and which adds dairy products and unfertilized eggs of poultry as qualified farm products with respect to such exemption?"</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="radio"/> No</p>
<p><b>For State House of Representatives - District 8</b> (Vote for One)</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Stan Gunter (Incumbent) Republican</p> <p><input type="radio"/> June Krise Democrat</p> <p><input type="radio"/> <input type="text"/> Write-in</p>	<p><b>- 2 -</b></p> <p>Provides for temporary local tax relief after disasters.</p> <p>House Resolution No. 594 Resolution Act No. 803</p> <p>"Shall the Constitution of Georgia be amended so as to provide that the governing authority of each county, municipality, and consolidated government and the board of education of each independent and county school system in this state shall be authorized to grant temporary tax relief to properties within its jurisdiction which are severely damaged or destroyed as a result of a disaster and located within a nationally declared disaster area?"</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="radio"/> No</p>	
<p><b>For District Attorney Enotah Judicial Circuit</b> (Vote for One)</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Jeff Langley (Incumbent) Republican</p> <p><input type="radio"/> <input type="text"/> Write-in</p>		

# Administrative Offices...from Page 1A



The Towns County Commissioner, Clerk of Court, Probate/Magistrate Judge, District Attorney and Sheriff are all happy with their new temporary digs at the Old Rec Gym.

it would all work out. Now that the move to the temporary offices is done, when will the SPLOST-funded renovation/addition at the Towns County Courthouse, which was originally completed in 1964, begin?

"There are some things that have to happen first," he said. "We met with (Blue Ridge Mountain) EMC and Reeves & Young a few days ago about moving the power (pedestal), which is located behind the courthouse where the addition will be built.

"So, the engineers are working on that with (the pow-

er company). And then there is asbestos abatement that has to be done."

Any asbestos in the building must be located and professionally removed according to state and federal standards, same with any lead-based paint anywhere in the building.

As the general contractor hired to oversee construction, Reeves & Young will need to install a fence around the job site as well, possibly in the coming week.

"There are still some odds and ends left to do in the courthouse," Bradshaw said, "like clearing out broken furniture

and things that can be recycled or have historical value."

It is hoped that Reeves & Young can begin the demolition phase of the renovation project in three to four weeks, once any toxic materials have been removed from the building.

"I'm just happy. We are very happy. I'm happy that everyone is happy (with the move)," said the commissioner, adding that he does not dread the move back, which he estimates will be in about 18 months.

"I look forward to it, because the move back is going to be much easier than the move here," he said.

Photo by Mark Smith

# GA Mtn. Fall Festival...from Page 1A

Continuing, she said, "I do a lot of my early Christmas present shopping here, so I really like looking at the beautiful decorations and crafts from the vendors so I can buy here and support the local people and their businesses.

"This year I am looking forward the most to seeing the Tiger Show; we have never seen anything like that, and it will be very exciting. We just really enjoy being here."

Speaking of the tiger show – the first of its kind for the Fall Festival – one of the more popular attractions this year was Brunon Blaszk's Royal Bengal Tiger Show.

Blaszk is a third-generation animal trainer with family origins of Polish-German descent, and he has been caring for and working with Sumatran, Siberian and Bengal Tigers his entire life. His show is about having fun with the majestic creatures, but importantly, also providing education.

"My goal is to keep the species alive and well for future generations," Blaszk said. "I was raised and grew up with tigers in my backyard, so they are surely my favorite animal and very special to me."

Blaszk shared his thoughts on common misconceptions about the treatment of tigers and what the purpose of this act is.

"There are more children being mistreated in the world than tigers are, so that problem should be stopped first," he said. "Obviously, tigers who are raised in captivity are likely to be less dangerous than those who run wild in the jungle. But even dogs can attack and kill people, so they are not going to exactly lick you to death, but all of our training is on positive reinforcement, voice and hand commands.

"There are over 150 tigers being slaughtered and poached each year, and the last count for tigers in the wild was under 3,500 for the total combined species. That is nothing; that is a small town and not even a blip on the radar.

"If it is not going to be



Aaron Tippin gave a heckuva performance last week as part of the Fall Festival's star-studded music lineup inside Anderson Music Hall.

Photo by Lowell Nicholson

for people like me, zoos or sanctuaries, they are going to be extinct sooner or later, so we try to give the tigers long and full lives, whereas in the wild they would be lucky to make it to full-grown age because they are being hunted for their pelts."

Added Blaszk, "I have been in many fairs all over the United States, and these are some of the nicest grounds I have seen, with the changing of the colors and all that, it is just spectacular. I really love this part of Georgia; it is just amazing."

Switching gears, Gabi Nguyen is the Administrative Manager of the Towns County Convention and Visitors Bureau, and she shared her impressions last week on the Fall Festival's growth and the exciting things to come that are just around the corner at the Fairgrounds.

"This year has turned out very good," Nguyen said. "Especially with the (carnival) and Tiger Show being here, it has brought in a lot of people who have been bragging about that, and they love the crafters and vendors as well.

"It is always great to meet so many new people, and it is also interesting to find out that some travel from pretty far to get here. We had visitors come from Wyoming, Ohio

and several other distant states, so it certainly gets more and more popular each year, and next year's will be expanded even more.

"We are excited and hope to see everyone come back out again for the upcoming Brew, Que, and Stew Beer Festival with over 75 breweries being represented; the 'Fangtastic' Halloween celebration; and the Christmas in Lights, as everyone is already talking about those," she said.

The Appalachian Brew, Que, and Stew Festival will be happening this Saturday, Oct. 22, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., with ticket prices being \$35 in advance or \$40 at the gate. Also on Saturday, 38 Special will be performing live in concert at Anderson Music Hall.

Halloween at the Fairgrounds will be on Monday, Oct. 31, from 5-9 p.m., with admission being free.

And the Mountain Country Christmas in Lights festive walkthrough experience will take place every Thursday, Friday and Saturday Nov. 24 thru Dec. 17 from 4-9 p.m., with a Craft Show early on Saturdays. The lights will also be open every night Dec. 18-23.

More information for these rain-or-shine events can be found at [www.georgiamountainfairgrounds.com](http://www.georgiamountainfairgrounds.com).

# School Board...from Page 1A

forward, to include better accommodation of, for example, "Professional Learning Community" days required for staff certifications.

"Right now, what we do is we pull days, and they meet, and we literally put subs in their classrooms all day (for PLC days)," Berrong said. "It gets a little tedious getting subs, so next year, when we create the calendar, we'll try to build in a few of those days just as work-days so we can take care of those things without having to pull subs in.

"We just need more training days throughout the school year; it's impossible to get everything in at the beginning and at the end."

In other business, the High School Senior Body requested that graduation be moved to the night of Friday, May 19 – originally, it was set to occur on the following Saturday morning – and the change was approved.

Up for discussion next was a pay adjustment for deputies who provide security during ball games. These typically only include "major sporting events" like basketball, baseball, football and softball.

"If it's a home game, regardless of how long that home game lasts . . . we pay right now \$75," Berrong stated. "If it's an away game, you get \$15 an hour up to \$125."

The costs were revisited after Berrong was asked how much deputies earned for each game, and he decided to research how much surrounding school systems paid for security. Towns County was "the lowest by far," with the whole list averaging about \$30-\$35 hourly for away games.

"I don't know the last time this pay scale was changed, but we definitely need to look at changing what we're paying officers who go to our games," Berrong said.

Ultimately, the vote on a continued flat rate at home games was accepted unanimously.

As for away games, School Board Vice Chair Stephanie McConnell suggested upping the hourly pay and adding in two meal allowances per trip, saying she would suggest "a bump" in the current rate.

By the end of discussions, the tentative decision was \$25 hourly for away games and two meal allowances worth

about \$15. On shorter trips, like to neighboring Union County, deputies may not even opt to use their meal allowance, allowing for reimbursements when needed.

Largely, final decisions regarding both home and away game payment plans are still due for confirmation.

Financial Director Myra Underwood reviewed the financial report for FY22, revealing that the final balance of the general fund was \$7.7 million.

"Thankfully, we've been blessed with people coming in and visiting our county," Underwood said. "We budgeted \$1.9 (million in sales tax revenues) and actually received \$3 (million), so we were over a million in collections.

"Our budget was (\$158,000 in monthly collections), and we averaged over \$200,000 every month. So, that has been a blessing; we hope that people continue to come see us and help out with the sales tax."

Continuing, "Overall, our revenue was more than what we had expected, which is good. Our expenditures, we came in under budget. We had budgeted right at \$14.8 (million) and came in at \$14.3 (million).

"So, between our expenditures being under and our revenue over, we were able to increase in the fund equity," Underwood said, which will come in particularly handy if the economy experiences a lengthy recession in the years ahead.

One thing she also wanted to highlight was the need for families to turn in reduced- and free-lunch forms, as federal assistance for those

programs has ended after being extended during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"So, that's something that we are watching closely going into this next year," Underwood said.

If fewer than 40% of students in any given school turn in reduced- and free-lunch applications, the system will receive fewer funds from its Title I classification, which ensures extra financial aid for regions with a high concentration of low-income families.

As it stands, 56% of students from the Elementary School, 55% from the Middle School and 46% from the High School have turned in forms, so this year, students are receiving adequate funding, but many families may believe they don't qualify.

"Try it anyway," she urged regarding families considering filling out the forms. "That helps us. Don't just assume you don't qualify; you may, you know?"

For her part, McConnell said, "You have to be careful . . . That's one of the things I have gotten complaints about, is the push for filling out the free applications. A lot of parents are either embarrassed or just annoyed, and they don't understand the financial impact it has on the school."

Underwood pointed out that completing the forms for financial assistance doesn't make a student "less than," and Berrong added that if he could put his own child on the free or reduced lunch program, he would, showing that there's no shame in filling out the forms.

The School Board holds work session and regular business meetings on the first Monday of each month starting at 6 p.m. inside the Middle/High School Media Center.



Brunon Blaszk posing with one of the members of his traveling Royal Bengal Tiger Show that performed over a dozen shows during this year's Fall Festival.

Photo by Jeremy Foster