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Hiawassee to welcome kids at Fairgrounds Oct. 31

By Jeremy Foster
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Get ready, folks, because the candy-filled, costumed tradition of Halloween at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds is almost here, with plenty of spooky activities planned for young guys and ghouls on Monday, Oct. 31, from 5-9 p.m. at 1311 Music Hall Road.

“We will be having our big ‘Fangtastic’ Halloween at the Fairgrounds with several businesses, vendor booths, arts and crafts to enjoy as usual, and they will also be passing out candy,” Fairgrounds General Manager Hilda Thomason said.

“We are happy that the City of Hiawassee has brought it back to the Fairgrounds for

the second year to do this as opposed to on the Town Square, because it is just a bigger venue for everyone to enjoy and accommodate better.

“It is free admission, so we want everybody to come out, and we are happy to assist and help make every child happy at Halloween.”

For her part, Hiawassee Mayor Liz Ordiales said that the city was thrilled to be partnering once again with the Fairgrounds and community volunteers to host the kid-friendly event that originated inside city limits.

“We used to do it on the square, and I felt it was a little dangerous (being so close to Main Street traffic), so the Fairgrounds is much safer,” Ordiales said. “We have over

35 people that have signed up already to give out candy.

“Last year, we had 1,500 kids alone come through, so we are looking forward to another great turnout this year, and we will continue to keep growing every event we put on.”

A very “spooktacular” new attraction is being added this year: a Haunted House inside the Pioneer Village, sponsored by Enhabit Home Health, formerly Encompass Home Health.

Georgia VA Medical Records Specialist Lynn Whelchel of Enhabit is also a Towns County Lion’s Club Member and she shared on the excitement last week over being involved in bringing something unique to

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The Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds will host the Hiawassee Halloween event for the second year in a row. Photo by Lowell Nicholson/2021

Brew, Que & Stew Festival brings thousands to town



The 2022 edition of the Appalachian Brew, Que & Stew Festival set a record for attendance at the annual event on Saturday. Photo by Brittany Holbrooks

By Brittany Holbrooks
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds was abuzz with activity on Saturday, Oct. 22, as the annual Appalachian Brew, Que & Stew Festival provided guests with gastric goodies and ambrosial alcohol from dozens of breweries from around the United States.

With an estimated 3,000 guests, it was a record year for the festival, with beer and mead being the primary selections on offer, though there were a few stray bottles of wine here and there for attendees to choose from as well.

In total, 75 breweries participated all throughout the fairgrounds. Georgia-based, some traveled from as far away

as Chicago or Washington, D.C. to set up shop in their little corner of the mountains for curious customers to partake of samples.

Indeed, the drinks were “free,” of a sort; guests could choose to pay \$40 at the gate or \$35 in advance online for tickets to the event, which got them a commemorative glass slightly bigger than a shot to

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Bradshaw signs courthouse contract, adopts rollback

By Jeremy Foster
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

On Tuesday, Oct. 18, Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw held his first of many monthly meetings at the Temporary Courthouse Offices erected inside the Old Rec Gym located at 900 North Main Street.

Bradshaw started by thanking everyone involved in the moving process that was completed the week before in preparation for the major SPLOST-funded courthouse renovation and addition, which he hopes will be completed within the next 18 months.

“Everything is still on target as far as income from the SPLOST tax by the county – we are doing very well,” he said during his Commissioner’s Report.

Reporting on old business, Bradshaw signed the contract with Reeves & Young Construction Company for the guaranteed maximum price to undertake the courthouse renovation and addition project.



Cliff Bradshaw
Sole Commissioner

“We are ready to sign the contract so that they can get physically started,” the commissioner said. “The guaranteed maximum price is \$10,591,847. However, that has contingencies built into it, one of them being in case of another natural disaster, adding a \$100,000 contingency. “Another for a design contingency is \$130,000 in case we need to make minor

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Early in-person voting continues this week thru November 4th

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

Advanced in-person voting got underway last week for the Nov. 8 General Election and will continue this week at the Towns County Board of Elections & Registration Office located in Suite A of 67 Lakeview Circle in Hiawassee.

Early voting runs weekdays between now and Friday, Nov. 4, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., even during lunchtime. There will be another weekend early voting opportunity this 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 neighboring Towns County Courthouse is not expected to interfere with operations at the Elections Office.

Election Day voting for the General Election will take place Tuesday, Nov. 8, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the Hiawassee and Young Harris Precincts of Towns County.

Georgia has been experiencing record-breaking voter turnout, with strong totals being reported at the local level as well. Through Saturday, Oct. 22, 1,822 Towns Countians had voted early at the Elections Office, with 244 of 473 absentee ballots having been returned.

Voters must possess 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



The construction barrier at the Towns County Courthouse has been erected, and fortunately, work there will not impact Elections Office, and fortunately, work there will not impact Election Day. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

ballot since Aug. 22. Absentee ballot requests may be made at the Elections Office or by accessing the “My Voter Page” at <https://mvp.sos.ga.gov/>.

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

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.

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.

Council talks booster pump, Kaiser-Dean demolition

By Brittany Holbrooks
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Young Harris City Council in their October regular meeting, including the long-standing Timberline booster pump issue and the demolition of the Kaiser-Dean Property.

Councilman John Kelley revealed in the Oct. 4 meeting that he had important information on the Timberline booster pump station, sharing an estimate from contractor Penland Builders for the layout plan. The design in question is for an 11-by-14 building of concrete with a metal roof.

“(Robert Penland) said, for budget purposes, it would be wise to budget \$25,000,” See City Council, Page 3A



Towns County Fire & Rescue partnered with the owners of the Kaiser-Dean property to do some training with a demolition burn earlier this month. Photo/Facebook

Sheriff’s Office makes five more drug arrests in recent weeks

News Special
Towns County Herald

After concentrated patrols of the Bald Mountain Park area, an Oct. 14 traffic stop by a Towns County Deputy resulted in three drug arrests after the discovery of a substance that field-tested positive for methamphetamine.

The following three individuals, all of Hiawassee, were arrested and charged with felony possession of methamphetamine: Robert Edwin Jones, 52; Robert Jacob Jones, 28; and Brittany Nicole Otto, 29.

Robert Edwin Jones was also charged with felony possession of methamphetamine.

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Drugs confiscated in a bust by the Towns County Sheriff’s Office on Thursday, Oct. 20. Photo/Facebook

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City Council...from Page 1A

which was less than what I anticipated, so that's information hot off the press," Kelley said.

Addressing Mayor Andrea Gibby's concerns over windows busting in the compound due to water pressure, Kelley and Councilman Steve Clark reassured her that the windows would be small, placed high up, and likely reinforced with glass thicker than the standard used in residential projects.

"On water meters, we thought we were going to get them a little quicker than we were going to, but apparently, that's not the case," Clark said, switching gears to discuss the purchase of new meters and noting that the city will still have to wait until the end of the year for those.

Clark had unread meter reports for the last three months, with 12 in July, 32 in August and nine in September. He also revealed that 102 meters had to be read by hand in September, and the acquisition of new meters should alleviate these issues.

After extensive talks regarding its fate, the Kaiser-Dean Property was demolished Oct. 8. Kelley, who purchased the property with Alvin Gibson last year, confirmed in the Oct. 4 meeting that a demolition permit had been submitted, which City Attorney Marvin Harkins said was not necessary.

"For a single family, the ordinance says there's no re-

quirement," Harkins said before explaining that "there are still some (Environmental Protection Division) requirements that have to be met."

Specifically, one problem that remained was the handling of hazardous materials at the home. Given the risk of encountering asbestos, EPD requirements lay out a plan for disposing of potentially toxic material.

"No. 1, the shingles on the side of the house will be removed according to EPD guidelines, which I thoroughly studied and printed," Kelley explained, having already formulated a plan for safety.

The team that took the shingles off wore hazmat material as prescribed by EPD guidelines, and the shingles were bagged in three 3-mil bags for 9mils of total thickness before being hauled away. Plans for the future of the old Kaiser-Dean Property will be covered at a later date.

Fortunately, the home was able to give back to the community one final time, as Kelley spoke with the Towns County Fire Department about burning the remains of the building after the removal of potentially dangerous materials.

Fire Chief Harold Copeland, who was present at the meeting, agreed that the opportunity was perfect for training local firefighters.

"One thing that I like is the second story to it," Cope-

land said, reiterating that more experience with multi-story houses would provide an invaluable learning opportunity for firefighters. In turn, that education may one day save lives.

"It will allow us to help in the collapse zone up there when we're training on the second story to weaken the trusses with a collapse on the back side," he said ahead of the burn, which went off without a hitch earlier this month.

Copeland was quick to voice his thanks as well, saying, "We appreciate the opportunity (to train) anytime we can. It does exactly what you say - enhances our abilities."

Also in the meeting, the council voted to advertise the 2022 millage rate when the numbers were finalized, resulting in the rate being published in the Oct. 19 edition of the Towns County Herald. The city will be accepting the rollback rate of 2.335 mills in the Nov. 1 regular meeting.

Council members and the mayor have been working to finalize the Fiscal Year 2023 budget as well, having met Oct. 11 to officially discuss the figures.

Barring holiday rescheduling, the City Council typically meets the first Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m. inside Young Harris City Hall, located at 50 Irene Berry Drive. These meetings are open to the public, and the community is encouraged to attend.

Help Cleanup our Beautiful Lake Chatuge Shoreline



On Saturday, November 5, MountainTrue welcomes lake-loving volunteers to participate in the 12th Annual Lake Chatuge Shoreline Cleanup. The event is part of Rivers Alive, Georgia's Annual Waterway Cleanup; however, teams will be picking up trash on both sides of the state line.

Other partner agencies who offer valuable support for the event are: Tennessee Valley Authority, US Forest Service Blue Ridge Ranger District, and Towns County Govern-

ment.

The cleanup event will kick off at 9 AM at the Towns County Swim Beach Pavilion across from the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds where volunteers will get their assigned cleanup locations and be given bags, gloves, and safety information. Coffee and grab-n-go breakfast snacks will be available, along with free t-shirts for the first 50 volunteers. After two hours of shoreline cleaning at the assigned site, volunteers who want to compete for prizes will meet back at the pavilion at 11:30.

Last year 40 volunteers picked up 1,520 pounds of trash from public land lake-shores on both sides of the state

line, bringing our 11-year total to just over 14 tons.

Participants should register by noon on the Friday before the cleanup to make the site assignments easier for event organizers. When registering it is important to include the number of people in your group, so that we can properly assign people to clean up areas. Those who would like to participate via boat should email Callie Moore to register and receive an assigned trash drop-off location: callie@mountaintrue.org.

To register for the cleanup, visit <https://mountaintrue.org/event/2022-lake-chatuge-shoreline-cleanup/> or call 828-837-5414. T/Oct26.F1/JH



Lake Chatuge Shoreline clean-up volunteers

November Garden Chores from your Master Gardener Extension Volunteers

Trees and Shrubs - Fall is an excellent time to plant trees, shrubs, and perennials. Be sure to remove any wire that may be wrapped around the trunk and roots when you plant a tree.

Do not prune trees and shrubs now because the pruning will stimulate new growth that may be killed by freezes. Wait until January or February when they are dormant.

Add a fresh layer of mulch to trees and shrubs to help insulate the roots as temperatures drop. Shredded leaves and pine straw are two choices.

Deciduous trees and shrubs can help with energy efficiency in your home. They provide shade in the summer and let sun shine in during the winter. To help prevent damage to evergreen shrubs and small trees from low temperatures, make sure they receive adequate moisture as we enter the winter season. Scale insects on trees and shrubs can be controlled with dormant oils.

Fruit Trees - Set out fruiting plants from October to March.

Vegetables - Make a list of vegetable and plant varieties that performed well in your garden this season so you will be ready to order seeds for your spring plantings.

Consider planting unused areas of your vegetable garden with a cover crop like clover or put a layer of leaves on your garden. Plow it under about three weeks before spring planting and this will improve your soil by adding nutrients and organic matter.

To prepare your garden soil for planting next spring, turn

your soil 8 to 12 inches deep with a spade or shovel to provide aeration and add composted organic matter. Clean your tomato cages before storing them to prevent insects and diseases when you plant next spring.

Flowerbeds - Clean up your perennial borders by removing dry stems and dead leaves to help prevent a buildup of insects and diseases and add composted organic matter. Dig up bulbs that need to be stored for the winter like calladiums, elephant's ears and dahlias. Plant spring flowering bulbs now, and through the end of November.

There is still time to plant pansies. Fertilize them every two weeks with a water-soluble plant food and to encourage more bloom, remove faded flowers regularly. Switch to a fertilizer containing "nitrate nitrogen" and follow label directions as the weather gets colder.

Plant Lenten rose (*Heliborus orientalis*) now and it may bloom for you next February. After your chrysanthemums and asters have quit blooming, cut them back to about five inches. Remove any remaining foliage left on peonies. Pot up your Mandevilla vine and bring it indoors for the winter. Cut it back to 2 feet high and place it in bright light until spring. Keep pansies and other seasonal flowers watered regularly.

Lawns - To keep your lawn healthy, rake fallen leaves regularly from your lawn. Use them in your compost pile or shred them and use them for mulch.

Soil Test - Have your garden soil tested if you have

not already done so. Stop by your local Extension office for a soil test bag and instructions. If you need to add lime, add it now so it will have time to work into the soil. Wait until next spring to apply any fertilizer that is needed so the nutrients will not leach from the soil before spring planting.

Houseplants - Do not be alarmed if your houseplants drop a few leaves when you bring them indoors after they have enjoyed the summer on your patio. This is normal as they adjust to less light and drier air inside your home. Force bulbs to bloom indoors; a good choice is paperwhites. Cut back on fertilizing your indoor plants and do not water them unless the soil feels dry. Do not place your houseplants too close to a window because the draft can turn the leaves brown.

Miscellaneous - Collect okra seedpods, rose hips, gourds, and other material from your garden for dried flower arrangements and craft projects. Inventory and clean up your garden tools. If you need a tool, you may drop a hint to friends and family since the Christmas season is near.

Add a rain barrel to your gutter down spout to conserve rainwater for your garden.

If you do not have a compost pile, start one. Keep your bird feeders filled with black oil sunflower seeds. Leave hardy water lilies and fish in ponds deep enough not to freeze solid. Compost tropical water lilies.

Jo Anne Allen
Master Gardener
Extension Volunteer
706-400-8139

TCSO Drug Bust...from Page 1A

session of a firearm by a convicted felon.

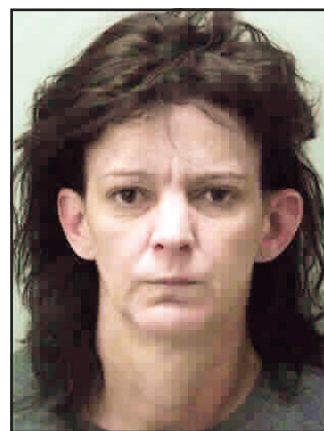
Towns County Sheriff Ken Henderson said he commends the deputy for the great job in combating drugs in the community.

In a separate incident, Sheriff's Office deputies conducted a traffic stop on Thursday, Oct. 20, with further investigation leading to the search of a Hiwassee residence. During the search, additional controlled substances were found packaged for sale, resulting in two arrests.

Heather Lynn Segars, 46, of Hiwassee, was arrested and charged with felony possession of a controlled substance (Xanax); felony possession with intent to distribute a controlled substance (Xanax); felony possession of methamphetamine; felony possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine laced with fentanyl; misde-



Brittany Nicole Otto



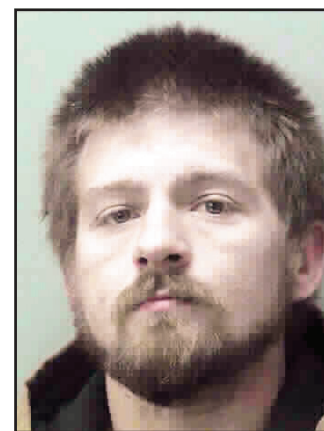
Heather Lynn Segars



Peggy Elaine Roddy



Robert Edwin Jones



Robert Jacob Jones

meanor possession of marijuana; and misdemeanor possession of drug-related objects.

Peggy Elaine Roddy, 45, of Hiwassee, was arrested and charged with felony possession of methamphetamine; felony possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine laced with fentanyl; and misdemeanor pos-

session of drug-related objects.

Once again, Sheriff Ken Henderson commended his deputies for their hard work and dedication to preventing dangerous drugs from being distributed.

The above individuals are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Brew, Que & Stew...from Page 1A

use in tastings.

Some breweries, like 20-year-strong Terrapin Brewing out of Athens, had workers from their own company help man their booths, like Olive Overmoyer, who offered information about the business and her experience there.

"It's been really fun," Overmoyer said of the festival, adding that she enjoys talking about beer with others who share her interests. "I can't say enough good things about this festival. It's my first year doing it ... There's a lot of options and new things to try."

There was also Ben Coffee of Viking Alchemist Meadery and Mandatory Fun Beerworks based out of Smyrna. The business has been open since 2016, but Coffee was "brought on when the business was growing" because of his outgoing nature.

"It is the best job I've ever had," Coffee said. "I used to be a high school physics teacher, and then I decided that I couldn't deal with the stresses of being a teacher anymore - especially teenagers. Now, getting into the alcohol industry, I'm legally not allowed to deal with teenagers, and it's fantastic."

Food played a huge role in the festival, but it had to be bought separately, and there was a lot to choose from.

Guests could divide their attention between purchasing something to eat on-site from a variety of different barbecue and beef experts, or they could head toward the historical section of the Fairgrounds to look into something to spice up their own kitchens.

For example, Chris Warren was selling surprisingly tasty cantaloupe pie. With the

consistency and appearance of pumpkin pie, the dessert won guests over with its mild flavor and unassuming nature. After all, how many other places offer melon pie?

The unique recipe originated with Warren's grandmother, who passed away in 1988. He modified it enough to make it distributable and says the method can be used on nearly any kind of fruit, as evidenced by the watermelon pie photos on his phone that he shows to disbelievers.

It's worth noting that, by closing time at 5 p.m., absolutely every cantaloupe pie had been sold and all of the samples taken.

"Your grandma would be proud," said one impressed guest, who went home with the last two tins of pie.

Some may have been surprised to notice that there were crafts at a festival focused so heavily on food and drink, but there were plenty of vendors set up to help folks with Christmas shopping, interior decorating and fashion.

And there were others who marketed a different kind of mercantile.

Ashley Weatherford heard about the fascinating phenomenon of permanent jewelry three months ago and decided to start her own business when she noticed that there were no other practitioners in western Georgia. She, too, had a booth to showcase her wares of chains and charms.

"A lot of people haven't heard of it yet. They think I'm piercing, and I'm not piercing anybody - I don't do needles," Weatherford explained, saying that permanent jewelry bracelets and anklets are just like regular accessories, but with a

twist.

For those who can't or would rather not deal with clasps, permanent jewelry provides an option of an O-ring that's welded shut, effectively sealing the piece of jewelry on the wearer.

The minuscule chains don't activate metal detectors, so are not a hassle to remove and replace in airports. And in cases of emergency or with MRI scans and surgery, the links are delicate enough to be cut with scissors or fingernail clips, after which the wearer can simply return the band for Weatherford to weld back into place.

As for guests, most seemed to travel in groups. Having been friends since their high school and college years, four couples in a group of eight arrived from Atlanta to celebrate Sid Jessup's 61st birthday by attending the sold-out 38 Special concert in Anderson Music Hall that same evening.

When they arrived in Hiwassee and heard about the festival, they decided to give it a try. The fun group posted up on a bench beside one of the breweries, commending the company for its excellent drinks and sharing jokes between each other.

"This is the second time this group has come back up here just to enjoy (this town) and (its) beautiful stuff," said Mandy Jessup, with all friends agreeing they'd certainly be back again.

Keep an eye out for the 2023 Appalachian Brew, Que & Stew Festival, which will return next fall. For information on upcoming holiday events, visit georgiamountainfairgrounds.com.

County Meeting...from Page 1A

changes to the design structure. Also, there is a construction contingency of \$173,000 in case there is to be extra work done. So, at this time, we are going to sign it so we can get to work."

Construction costs are higher than initial pre-pandemic estimates of roughly \$8 million, reflecting the heightened inflationary environment that has set in since the onset of COVID-19.

Bradshaw also adopted the 2022 county and fire millage rates to determine property tax bills, which Tax Commissioner Michael Anderson said previously should be mailed out by Nov. 10, to be due by Jan. 10, 2023.

"The tax digest has grown, so we are not going to raise that and accept the rollback," he said. "The Fire Department's rate is set at 0.440 ... (and) I am going to sign and set the Towns County millage rate for the 2022 tax digest at 4.729."

Noted Bradshaw, "For us to levy these taxes, we also have to have a letter from the Board of Education, so we are going to do a called meeting this Thursday, (Oct. 20), at 2 p.m. to adopt their letter and their millage so that we can levy."

The Towns County School Board adopted its 2022 millage rate of 6.550 on Oct.

20, a rate that is actually lower than the calculated rollback rate of 6.829.

"It's what we feel we need to operate successfully after years of fiscal management while still reducing the tax burden on the local taxpayer," School Superintendent Dr. Darren Berrong said Thursday.

Also in his Oct. 18 meeting, Bradshaw stated that the county had received a \$4,000 employee safety grant from the Association County Commissioners of Georgia "for purchases of specific safety equipment or safety training."

"I am going to get with several different departments," he said, "but we will probably use a lot of that on the Road Department, and we are very grateful to have that."

Bradshaw approved the application for the Towns County Transit Service for FY2024.

"We are asking for \$125,148, with the state paying 50% of that and the county paying the other 50%," he said. "The revenue that we collect from that from people riding the transit is roughly around \$11,000."

"So, we are signing the application to request that now. We have one bus coming that has been ordered since 2020, and now waiting on a second one."

In other business, Bradshaw welcomed Towns County Parks & Rec Director Stuart Nichols, who was excited to offer an overview of what his department has accomplished in his first year on the job.

"We are in the middle of flag football season, as Towns County Rec Department did not have football for about six years," Nichols said. "This year has grown to 67 players from kindergarten to fifth grade, as well as bringing back cheerleading, and we have 43 cheerleaders, on top of beginning a 7-on-7 camp earlier this year in the summer that had a great turnout."

"We are right in the middle of basketball registration. As of now we have 132 kids registered and one more week to register. My favorite part about all of this is being hands-on and working with the kids, so we hope more come out."

"We have also implemented (National Alliance for Youth Sports) training into our program that provides foundational-type training from anywhere to coaches, referees and administrators."

"We added some mulch to the playground by the beach this year, along with two new swing sets, and this year we will be redoing some of the infields at the Fairgrounds that have some drainage issues."

"I am most excited about putting in a half-mile trail at Foster Park, in which we have already installed some cameras down there for any safety matters. A new trophy case will also be installed at the park," he concluded.

The meeting wrapped up with a brief Q&A session before being adjourned. The next county meeting will take place on Tuesday, Nov. 15, at 5:30 p.m. inside the Temporary Courthouse Offices at the Old Rec Gym.

Halloween Fun...from Page 1A

the venture in 2022.

"We have done this in the past before, so we are excited for this to be our first year doing the Haunted House at the Fairgrounds," Welchel said. "We hope everybody is going to enjoy and like it and want us to come back and do it again."

"The Haunted House will have several components to it, including an insane asylum, zombies, an autopsy room, a swamp and a graveyard. It is

going to be very intense. There will be some scary things, gross-looking things and a lot of screaming going on.

"Of course, there will be a non-scary area for smaller children so they won't be traumatized, with games and bowling with candy-corn-looking pins, pick-up-a-duck, pumpkin decorating, a station where they reach in and touch things like witches' teeth and eyeballs, a fortune teller, and many other activities with prizes and treats,

so I believe the whole community will be happy."

And the local Enhabit, an affiliate of one of the nation's largest home health and hospice providers, will be utilizing a \$2,500 intracompany grant to provide trick-or-treating gift bags to children in area safe-

houses. To see all that the Fairgrounds has to offer over the coming holiday months, visit georgiamountainfairgrounds.com.

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