

Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

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75 Cents

Publication Number 635540 Volume 91 Number 52

Wednesday, October 28, 2020

Wilkinson says farewell as legislator, will remain friend to area

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

Friends of District 50 State Sen. John Wilkinson gathered to wish him farewell on Tuesday, Oct. 20, as the senator is leaving politics for

the time being. Wilkinson, of Toccoa, has served District 50 since 2011, though he decided not to seek re-election to the General Assembly in 2020 so he could run for Georgia's 9th Congressional District. He did not ad-

vance past the General Primary Election in June.

His presence was requested that Tuesday in both the regular Commission Meeting and at a congenial gathering afterward at the Towns County GOP Headquarters.

In the Commission Meeting, both Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw and Hiawassee Mayor Liz Ordiales thanked Wilkinson for his many contributions to the area, as well as his willingness to always lend a helping hand at a moment's notice.

"Any time I have called him, if he doesn't answer, he will call me right back within just a few minutes," Bradshaw said. "(No matter what he's doing, he'll call me right back: 'Cliff, what do you need? Are you OK?'"

"He didn't do that just for me. He did that because he loves this state, he loves this district - he's doing it for the people - he's a service-minded heart, and that's what he does, it's very obvious."

Continuing, Bradshaw

highlighted Wilkinson's ability to help the county secure state funding, and he thanked him especially for working with the Department of Public Health to establish a COVID-19 test collection site in Towns County.

For his part, Wilkinson said he had not had two better friends than Bradshaw and Ordiales to work with in his district over the years, and that he appreciated the people of this county and believed everyone was fortunate to live here.

Looking back on his time in the legislature, Wilkinson recalled a letter-writing campaign by over 400 residents that resulted in his bringing two \$1 million renovation projects to the county's libraries, the Towns County Public Library in Hiawassee and the Mountain Regional Library in Young Harris.

Going back even further, he noted that one of the reasons for his affinity for Towns County was that his agriculture teacher, Future Farmers of America adviser and personal mentor at Stephens County



District 50 State Sen. John Wilkinson delivered warm remarks during a gathering among friends at the Towns County GOP Headquarters last week. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

High was Hiawassee native Ferman Gregory.

"In my ag classes, I always hear stories about Hiawassee, Towns County and the people up here ... (and) he had a big impact on my life," Wilkinson said. "Towns County is a special place. I've been in office nine years ... (and)

I want to thank all of you for giving me the honor to serve in this capacity for nine years. It's been a very high honor of my life."

After the Commission Meeting, Wilkinson and Bradshaw drove over to the Towns County GOP Headquarters at See Sen. Wilkinson, Page 8A



Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw presented the Oct. 20 regular commission meeting, thanking him for his dedication and service to the area. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

More than 50% of voters cast ballots early; last day Friday

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

This is it, folks - early in-person voting for the 2020 General Election ends at the close of business day Friday, Oct. 30, with the actual last opportunity to vote being Tuesday, Nov. 3, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Election Day.

Towns County voters continued to turn out in tremendous numbers last week, with a record-breaking 50% of active registered voters having cast their ballots by the end of Early Voting Week 2, including 1,590 mail-in ballots and 3,489 in-person votes by 4:30 p.m. Friday.

See Early Voting, Page 6A



Towns County poll workers are directing voters to fill out a small form upon arrival for early in-person voting at the Elections Board Office. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

Halloween events for kids Oct. 31

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

With the ever-popular annual Halloween in Hiawassee event being canceled due to COVID-19, the community have been looking to provide alternatives to keep the tradition going.

The Lake Chatuge Chamber of Commerce is hosting a drive-thru trick or treat event on Halloween day at the Towns County Recreation and Conference Center.

A drive-thru style trick or treat with kids staying in vehicles will allow for a safer event and eliminate people running around and being bunched together, Chamber President Candace Lee said.

"It will be from 3-5 p.m., and we have invited businesses that wanted to participate like they normally do at the city square," Lee said. "They can set up a table, and we can have everybody socially distanced and safe."

"As people drive through with kids in the car, they can just hold their bags out and we



The Towns County Historical Society decorated these Halloween scarecrows on Town Square highlighting "Sheriff S.B. Green and his innatee," with Sheriff Green remaining "diligent in protecting our county's history!" Photo/Facebook

will drop candy in. It looks like it is going to be a good turnout. We have gotten a lot of candy donations; we could still use more, but we also have several

businesses that are planning on showing up.

"If people want to donate, they can just bring it by the See Halloween, Page 6A

Appalachian craft beer festival attracts 2,000 guests to Fairgrounds

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

About 2,000 people attended the Fifth Annual Appalachian Brew, Stew & Que Festival at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds on Saturday, Oct. 24.

The event featured 45 breweries from around the area and other parts of the country, enabling attendees to sample a variety of beers, all while enjoying terrific stew and barbecue.

Fairgrounds Manager Hilda Thomason was happy to see such a large turnout, especially since it was the last festival of the year and the largest single-day event so far due to everything else being canceled due to COVID-19.

"I feel that this is the See Beer Festival, Page 8A



Georgiana Munt Hickory Brewery pourer beer for guests of the Fifth Annual Appalachian Brew, Stew & Que Festival Saturday. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

VFW Garrett-Owenby Post 7807 to celebrate 50th Anniversary

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

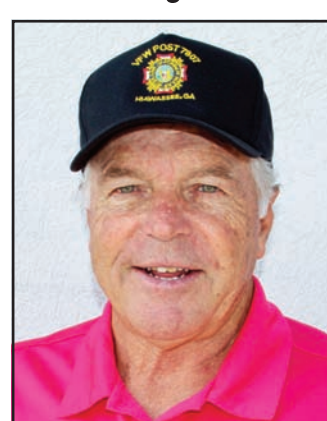
The members of Veterans of Foreign Wars Garrett-Owenby Post No. 7807 in Hiawassee will be celebrating 50 years of serving area veterans on Thursday, Oct. 29.

Known as a Golden Anniversary, the celebration will take place at 5 p.m. at the VFW Building off Sunnyside Road and will feature the awarding of a special certificate of recognition from VFW National Headquarters.

"It is an honor to

congratulate you upon the occasion of the 50th anniversary of your post," VFW National Cmdr. Harold "Hal" Roesch II said in a letter accompanying the award. "I send my sincere thanks and gratitude to all members of VFW Post 7807 for your outstanding record of service to the community, to veterans, service members and their families, and to our nation for so many years."

"The members of VFW Post 7807 are a pillar of support for Hiawassee, Georgia. Year after year, you have provided See VFW Anniversary, Page 6A



Mel Halfon
VFW Post 7807

Fire Station 2 welcomes patriots for inaugural flag raising

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

YOUNG HARRIS - Local patriots gathered Oct. 22 for the inaugural raising of the flag at the new Towns County Fire Station No. 2 off Georgia 66, which opened for business Tuesday.

Towns County Fire Chief Harold Copeland and Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw welcomed everyone last Thursday, as Billy "The Flag Guy" Toups and Wendell Caver of Mountain Flagpoles attached and raised Old Glory for the first time at the station.

Everyone joined in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, and Bradshaw offered a few words to mark the occasion, saying the new station was "a team effort," and he thanked former

commissioner Bill Kendall for buying the property for its express purpose.

"I thank everybody who was involved," Bradshaw said, "(our Road Superintendent Clyde Shook and Road Department), and our detainee crews that did a lot of work here to save the taxpayers money."

"This job has taken quite a while, and it's been intentional, to be honest with you, because we have done so much ourselves. We didn't hire a contractor to do a turnkey build on this. Actually, I did it with the help of Marty (Roberts), Harold and the Fire Board."

"We contracted everything out ourselves. The detainees did all the framing, drywall, painting, trim work inside the building - they did a See Fire Station Flag, Page 8A



Robbie Rich, Michael Courey, Wendell Caver, Marty Roberts, George "Bud" Dyer, Harold Copeland, Cliff Bradshaw, Tyler Keyes, Scott Shattles and Billy "The Flag Guy" Toups following the inaugural flag raising at Towns County Fire Rescue Station 2. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

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Towns County Election Results Newspaper will be available on Wednesday, Nov. 4, after 10 a.m. See our Special Insert next week for details and results from the General Election. Also see www.townscountyherald.net.