

Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

www.townscountyherald.net

Your Hometown Newspaper Since 1928

50 Cents

Publication Number 635540 Volume 90 Number 01

Wednesday, November 7, 2018

Moore: Chatuge healthy overall; problems at Bell Creek watershed

By Mark Smith
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

HAYESVILLE, NC – Great news for folks who like to fish and swim in Lake Chatuge – the Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition has declared that the lake is safe for both activities.

Even more good news, it appears that all sites being monitored along the Hiwassee River are meeting recreational water quality standards as well.

The coalition made these announcements in the annual State of the Water Address on Tuesday, Oct. 30, at the Hinton Rural Life Center in North Carolina.

This year's annual meeting occurred in Clay County, North Carolina, though each year, the location of the meeting rotates between the member counties of the coalition: Cherokee and Clay counties in North Carolina, and Union and Towns counties in Georgia.

About 50 people, including Hiwassee Mayor Liz Ordiales, attended the 2018 State of the Water, which was led by HRWC Executive Director Callie Moore with assistance from staffers Raleigh Keagan and Tony Ward.

And while Lake Chatuge has shown significant overall improvement in the last year,

Moore said that a certain part of the lake is experiencing troubled waters.

"The bad news is that there is a major problem in the Bell Creek watershed," said Moore. "There was an algae bloom in that cove of the lake in late September, and our volunteer monitoring data shows very high levels of E. coli."

Added Moore: "Investigating this problem is our top priority for 2019."

A watershed can become polluted in several ways, said Moore, adding that best management practices have been developed in recent years to eradicate that pollution.

Enforcement of those best practices in rural areas, however, is sometimes difficult.

According to Moore, common sources of E. coli are as follows:

Leaking or failing septic systems; livestock with access to streams; livestock feedlots without the appropriate practices to protect water quality; RV resorts and campgrounds without appropriate waste disposal systems; and leaking sewer lines and domesticated populations of Canada geese.

"The geese are a huge source of phosphorus and pathogens," said Moore. "These are not the wild geese

See Moore, Page 6A



Callie Moore is the executive director of the Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition. Photo by Mark Smith

City welcomes PlanFirst designation, talks sign permit moratorium



Ebony Simpson of the Department of Community Affairs joined Hiwassee Mayor Liz Ordiales and City Council for their Oct. 29 work session. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Hiwassee City Council and Mayor Liz Ordiales welcomed Ebony Simpson of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs to their monthly council work session on Monday, Oct. 29, at City Hall.

Simpson serves as grant project coordinator with DCA, and she commended Hiwassee for becoming a PlanFirst

Community.

"The designation of the program will begin in 2019 and last until 2021," said Simpson. "The purpose of the PlanFirst Program is to reward and offer opportunities or incentives to communities who consistently implement their comprehensive plan."

"The program has other incentives, such as the GEFA loan program, which gives a half percent reduction, and if any of you know, water costs a lot of money, and you can

save hundreds of thousands of dollars with that.

"You also get the opportunity to apply annually for the Community Development Block Grant Program."

Simpson presented councilmembers with a certificate to verify the city's entry into the PlanFirst Program.

Also in the meeting, Ordiales asked the council to consider a moratorium on the issuance of sign permits.

See PlanFirst, Page 6A

Pietz of Towns County Schools earns Doctor of Education

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

Congratulations to Towns County High School Special Education teacher Dr. Rachel Pietz, who recently achieved her Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership with a Specialization in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Phoenix.

She completed the requirements for her degree program back in the springtime, and she was awarded her degree in a special commencement ceremony at the Infinite Energy Center in Duluth on Oct. 21.

"I've always strived to be the best I could be at anything I try to do," said Dr. Pietz. "So, this is a way to prove to myself that I can reach the top. That was something that was important to me, for me to prove to myself that I had the capability to go as far as I could go."

"I feel like I've climbed that mountain, and I'm going to stand up there in the sunshine for a while."

Dr. Pietz has been a teacher for 15 years, having spent all of that time at Towns County Schools. She taught middle school students in social studies during the first seven years of her teaching career,



Dr. Rachel Pietz

before switching over to special education eight years ago.

Prior to teaching, Dr. Pietz worked as a case manager for the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services and also as a legal assistant for a local attorney.

"Education was my first love," said Dr. Pietz. "Things just didn't work out when I started college, so I ended up going into public administration, which is how I got the job with DFCS instead of doing education."

"So, it was kind of like I had to come full circle to get back to education where I wanted to be. I always knew I

wanted to work with kids, and that's one of the reasons why I went to DFCS. But I wanted to be an educator."

Added Dr. Pietz: "I had substituted in Towns County off and on between jobs, when my kids were little. Before I ever went back to work full-time, I had done the substitute thing, and it was really the teachers here at Towns County saying, 'You need to get your certification,' that kind of pushed me to know that that was really what I wanted to do."

Earning this advanced degree has been a long road for

See Pietz, Page 6A

Towns County athletics show appreciation for first responders



Towns County student-athletes mingling with county first responders at the first ever Towns County Athletic Department First Responder Appreciation Luncheon on Nov. 1. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

The Towns County High School Athletic Department held a First Responder Appreciation Lunch at the Towns County Civic Center on Thursday, Nov. 1.

Coach Jeff Stowers and upperclassmen students representing every sport at the high school welcomed first responders that Thursday, treating them to a delicious barbecue meal with sides, drinks and desserts.

The idea for the appreciation luncheon grew out of a recent conversation

between Stowers and fellow coach Clay Livingston during a bus ride to an away football game.

"We talked about how much the SROs at school do for us, and how much the EMS and all the people do to take care of us at athletic functions," said Stowers. "I sent an email to all the coaches, and everybody was on board."

Added Stowers, "From every department, whether it's the police force, the paramedics, the fire department, and even the road department, those guys give so freely of their time to make sure that we're safe and taken care of. This is just a

chance for us to say thanks and give back to them a little bit."

Once the idea was in place, Stowers reached out to Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw, who disseminated the information to the first responders of the county.

Commissioner Bradshaw's son, senior Indian quarterback Trent Bradshaw, assisted at the luncheon that day, as did senior Erika Spano, who plays soccer and basketball as a Lady Indian.

"I'm happy to be serving our first responders because they've helped us and our

See Lunch, Page 6A

Sheriff's Office arrests alleged burglary and theft suspects

News Special
Towns County Herald

Investigators with the Towns County Sheriff's Office arrested four suspects on Friday, Nov. 2, and charged them in reference to two burglaries and a theft alleged to have occurred in the Young Harris area.

The two burglaries reportedly happened during the month of September at residences on Timberline Drive and Laurel Hill Road, and the theft was reported to have occurred during the month of June at Brasstown Valley Resort's Equani Spa.

Upon investigating the burglaries and theft, investigators and deputies executed two search warrants at a residence on Meadow Lane in Young Harris.

During the execution of the search warrants, investigators recovered property identified as being stolen in the burglaries and theft.

The following suspects were arrested and charged with the listed offenses:

Jeffery Dale Plott, 47, of Young Harris, two counts burglary in the first degree, one count burglary in the second degree, and one count theft by taking.

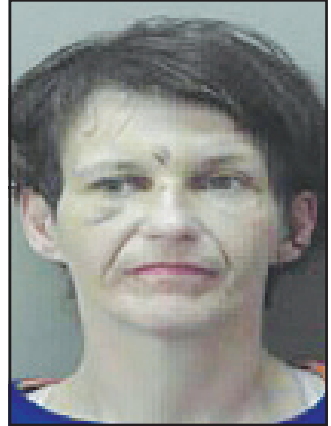
Carl Wallace Merritt, 47, of Young Harris, two counts burglary in the first degree, one count burglary in the second degree, and two counts theft by receiving stolen property.



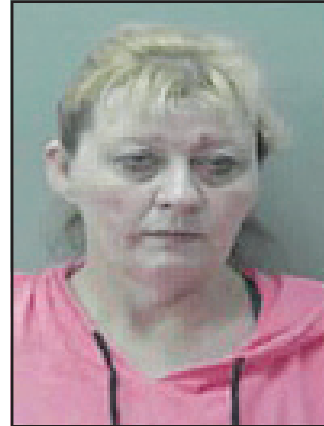
Jeffery Plott



Carl Merritt



Susan Spears



Candie Merritt

Susan Kimberly Spears, 44, of Young Harris, one count burglary and one count theft by receiving stolen property.

Candie Sue Merritt, 44, of Young Harris, two counts theft by receiving stolen property.

The investigation is active and ongoing, and additional arrests and charges are possible. The cases will be forwarded to the Enotah Judicial Circuit District Attorney's Office for prosecution.

2 Sections 16 Pages
Lake Levels
Blue Ridge 1,672-54
Chatuge 1,919-10
Nottely 1,763-70

Inside

Arrests	2A
Chamber	3B
Church	4B
Classifieds	6B
Opinion	4A
Legals	7B
Obits	5B
Sports	2B

BASKETBALL
Tues. Nov. 13
vs. Hiwassee Dam, NC
Girls 6 PM * Boys 7:30 PM

American Red Cross
FREE Smoke Alarms

S.A.F.E. Dinner & Show

Veterans Day Events

See page 7A

See page 7A

See page 4A