

Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

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50 Cents

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Publication Number 635540 Volume 90 Number 06

Wednesday, December 12, 2018

People can prepare for nasty winter weather with Ready.gov

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

Residents of the North Georgia Mountains just experienced their first taste of winter weather for the season, getting plenty of rain over the weekend followed by a light mix of sleet and snow early Monday.

In an attempt to get ahead of the large storm front that began moving through the region on Friday, the National Weather Service issued a Winter Storm Warning and held a series of special weather briefings late last week.

Heading into Saturday evening, some weather models predicted between 2.5 to 3 inches of snow and significant ice accumulations across much of Northeast Georgia.

Fortunately, by Sunday morning, the weather service had declared that “the threat for heavy mixed precipitation has ended,” though the Winter Storm Warning remained in effect, at that point calling for the possibility of light accumulations of sleet and/or snow.

As always, residents were better prepared thanks to the winter weather warnings, and even though the storm was nowhere near as severe as it could have been, all county first responders were prepared to take on the winter weather.

From the Road Department, from law enforcement and 911 dispatch to crews with the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC, first responders knew their jobs and remained at the ready to be called on for

help in a wintry crisis.

Of course, bad – and worse – weather will strike again, likely in the coming months, and depending on the size of the damage and the extent of the damage, first responders may have a delayed response reaching people’s homes.

That’s why it is important for the person who will prepare themselves for storms when the weather is fine or at the onset of a storm alert.

The website www.Ready.gov is an excellent resource for emergency disaster preparedness, as it takes into account all kinds of disasters, including extreme winter weather.

“Winter storms create a higher risk of car accidents, hypothermia, frostbite, carbon monoxide poisoning and heart attacks from overexertion,”

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A Blue Ridge Mountain EMC crew working downed powerlines on Georgia 75 in Hiawassee on Sunday, Dec. 9. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Local anonymous donor gifts \$5,000 to Towns County



L-R: Malinda Gray, Linda D'Angelo, Liz Ruf, Cliff Bradshaw, Lynn Buck and Rosemarie Karr gathered to celebrate an anonymous donation. Photo by Mark Smith

By Mark Smith
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

A local business person and resident of Towns County has donated \$5,000 to the county, and Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw was excited to announce the donation in a Dec.

3 called meeting. “We had a local business person call me about a month ago – he’s a very successful person – and said that it’s the time of year of thanks, to be thankful for all that he has and the success that he has,” said Bradshaw. “He wanted to

donate \$5,000 to the county for us to use in whatever way we thought best.

“So, three things that came to my mind, naturally, was CASA, because of the children; the second thing that came to my mind is Almost

See *Donor*, Page 8A

Light Up Hiawassee dazzles Town Square in second year of event

By Samantha Laratta
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Second Annual Light Up Hiawassee took place on Thursday, Dec. 6, in Town Square.

Music, laughter and holiday cheer from throughout the community mingled with visitors on the square. Tables were set up with a variety of snacks, crafts and activities for everyone to enjoy.

Hiawassee Mayor Liz Ordiales was on hand to ensure the festivities went off without a hitch, greeting patrons and thanking volunteers with her signature smile and hug.

“The lighting of the square is so cool,” said Ordiales. “When all those lights come on at one time, it’s pretty spectacular.”

While the crowd waited for that namesake moment, they were invited to take part in holiday games and enjoy some good food. Volunteers with the local Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7807 grilled up hot dogs while Red Cross members



Santa Claus taking requests from two youngsters in the gazebo on the Hiawassee Town Square during Light Up Hiawassee on Thursday, Dec. 6. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

provided hot chocolate and coffee.

Visitors young and old danced to holiday classics like “Rockin’ Around the Christmas Tree,” while others gathered around a table for make-your-own ornaments.

At another table, people took turns decorating cookies

graciously donated by Ingles, and kids were also able to write letters to Santa and stuff them in a mailbox set up for special delivery to the North Pole.

Hiawassee local Katherine Wilmas made an impromptu trip to the event with her kids Xander, 5, and

See *Light Up*, Page 8A

Santa, music and cookies highlight 48th Annual Tree Lighting

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

YOUNG HARRIS – The City of Young Harris welcomed Towns County children and parents to the 48th Annual Christmas Tree Lighting, which took place at Mayor’s Park on Friday, Dec. 7.

As night set in, the crowd gathered around the gazebo to prepare for the lighting that they all came out to enjoy.

“I welcome all of you to the 48th Annual Christmas Tree Lighting – it’s been a long time,” said Young Harris Mayor Andrea Gibby. “Thank you all for coming. We really appreciate it. It’s not cold like it has been in the past, so we are happy.”

To help promote the holiday spirit, the members of the Towns County High School Band, led by Director Allison Arnold, played some Christmas melodies for people to listen to as they mingled and watched the performance.

A group of kindergarten



Children of Towns County following Santa Claus into Young Harris City Hall on Friday, Dec. 7. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

carolers from Cathy Seis’ elementary school music class joined in on the festivities, and the crowd circled around them while recording the children singing their songs.

“This is the time of the year when we have time to enjoy the music, when we can meet with new friends,”

said Mayor Gibby. “There’s people you probably haven’t met before, so get to know people, and we want to say hello to our old friends.”

“This is a really fun time for me. I love seeing our community come together to enjoy each other and laugh.”

See *Santa*, Page 8A

Sheriff’s Office seeking assistance with abandoned puppies

News Special
Towns County Herald

The Towns County Sheriff’s Office is asking for the public’s help in locating the person or persons that abandoned three puppies.

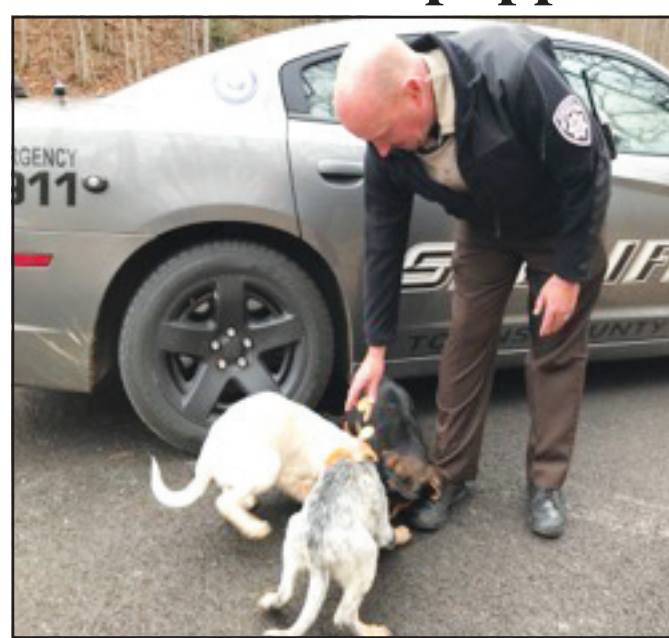
On the morning of Friday, Dec. 7, deputies responded to a call in reference to puppies that were abandoned at a trash dumpster located on Highway 180 Spur near Brasstown Bald.

Upon arrival, deputies located three small puppies near the dumpster on Highway 180 Spur.

The puppies appeared to not have eaten in several days. They were transported to the Mountain Animal Shelter to be checked and cleared medically, and afterwards will be likely placed for adoption.

The Sheriff’s Office is investigating the cruelty to animal incident.

Anyone with information as to the person or persons



Towns County Sheriff’s Deputy J.R. Murray with abandoned puppies.

responsible for leaving the puppies at the dumpster is asked to call the Towns County Sheriff’s Office at 706-896-

4444. All information received will be kept confidential.

TCSO arrests suspect on sexual exploitation of children charge

News Special
Towns County Herald

On Wednesday, Nov. 28, Towns County Sheriff’s Office Investigators and Deputies assisted agents from Homeland Security Investigations with the execution of a search warrant at a residence located within Bald Mountain Park.

Agents from the Georgia Bureau of Investigation and State Probation Officers also

assisted with the warrant.

During the course of executing the search warrant, Towns County investigators recovered evidence that resulted in the arrest of the suspect, Edward Lee Trusky, 38, of Hiawassee.

Trusky has been charged with sexual exploitation of children and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.

See *Trusky*, Page 8A



Edward Trusky

July Term 2018 Grand Jury Indictments continued

News Special
Towns County Herald

The following individuals, who are presumed innocent until proven guilty, were indicted during the July Term 2018 of the Towns County Grand Jury, which met again in December:

Jacob Arch Bowman, criminal attempt to commit a felony (malice murder); conspiracy to commit malice murder; two counts aggravated assault; two counts aggravated

battery; two counts possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony.

Ginger Samantha Lewis, criminal attempt to commit a felony (malice murder); conspiracy to commit malice murder.

Michael Dean Byers, AKA Mikey Byers, violation of Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act; four counts sale of methamphetamine; trafficking methamphetamine or amphetamine.

Shaun Keith Ewing, burglary in the first degree; two counts theft by taking.

Carey Edward Kendall, possession of methamphetamine; obstruction of an officer; recidivist.

Chris Lee Brooks, manufacture of marijuana; possession of marijuana, less than an ounce; possession of drug-related objects.

Thomas Dexter Shook, manufacture of marijuana; possession of marijuana, less than an ounce. See *Grand Jury*, Page 8A

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Pearl Harbor Remembrance