

Bradshaw...from Page 1A

a five-story student housing complex on Main Street.

This structure would fall under county jurisdiction for fire protection, and the city has asked the county to not only grant an exemption from the county's building height ordinance, but also provide fire protection for the building.

Commissioner Kendall has already denied the exemption for variance request, though the Young Harris City Council had hopes of making a plea to Commissioner-elect Bradshaw when he assumed office in January.

However, on Friday, Bradshaw made it very clear that he would not be going against the ordinance, as he feels, like Commissioner Kendall, that it is not in the best interest of the county.

"If that building is built in Young Harris, where else are they going to want to build one?" said Bradshaw. "Who else is going to want to build one? You're going to have people wanting to build all over the county. If that happens, your taxes will have to go up because you're going to have to have fire protection for these folks. But what bothers me worse than that is that it changes the character of the county.

"We definitely want growth, but we want controlled



Dren Green is a sixth-grader at Towns County Middle School. He delivered his 4-H District Project Achievement on Kareem Abdul-Jabbar at the Dec. 16 weekly meeting of the Mountain Movers and Shakers

growth. That's just the way I feel, but we definitely don't want to change the beauty of our mountains and our lake and our streams. We're going to grow, but these folks who come in and want to grow, they're going to have to grow by our rules."

Bradshaw ended his time speaking to the crowd by thanking them again for their continued support, adding that he looks forward to working with the people of Towns County.

Also at the meeting,

Towns County Middle School sixth-grader Dren Green shared his 4-H District Project Achievement about basketball star Kareem Abdul-Jabbar with the group. Green placed fourth in his category for the speech at the DPA competition in Blairsville earlier this fall.

Last week's meeting was the last of the year for the Mountain Movers and Shakers, but the group will resume regularly scheduled meetings in January.

Kendall...from Page 1A

President Sandra Green presented Commissioner Kendall with a painting of Bell Mountain County Park, which is considered to be one of the greatest things he will have left for the county during his time of service.

"The historical society is presenting this to you as a token of our appreciation for your continued support," said Green. "It is a painting of one of the most significant legacies that you have here.

"We thank you for making us keepers of the mountain, but you're the real keeper of the mountain because, without you, we would have never had it."

Former Mountain Regional Library System Director Donna Howell also presented Commissioner Kendall with a gift, a mug inscribed with "You Make the Difference," and expressed her immense gratitude for everything he has done for the people of Towns County.

Overwhelmed by the affection displayed by his longtime constituents and fellow citizens, Commissioner Kendall thanked the group simply and graciously.

"You all are doing an important job for the county," said Commissioner Kendall. "It's very important. Thank you so much for everything you've done, everything you're doing, and for this."

Keeping with the holiday spirit, Commissioner Kendall brought 50 copies of the Bell Mountain County Park dedication ceremony for all those present to take home as a gift from the commissioner's office.

While the meeting began by commemorating Commissioner Kendall, the historical society also held a Christmas program afterward, led by Jason Edwards and Jerry Taylor.

"It's been wonderful this past year, it really has, with the historical society," said Edwards. "There have been many things going on in the community that have been history-related, like the Ivy Mount Cemetery.

"When Jerry and I were thinking about what we wanted to do for this program, we kept thinking about family Christmas. Most of us are family one way or another,



Commissioner Kendall studying a gift from former Mountain Regional Library Director Donna Howell in the December meeting



Towns County Sole Commissioner-Elect Cliff Bradshaw introduced himself to the historical society that Monday



Jason Edwards

and besides that we are the brotherhood of man, and we're all pushing for the same goals.

"We're looking forward to the New Year, to the Old

Rock Jail and the Presley Post Office, and even things that we haven't even thought about yet."

The festivities included a plethora of games, trivia and holiday-themed tunes, creating an atmosphere of fellowship and yuletide cheer throughout the rest of the evening.

Taylor offered up snippets of holiday songs, played on the society's recently acquired reed organ, and those in attendance were encouraged to "name that tune." Those who figured the tune out before the rest were awarded with a handcrafted Christmas ornament of their choosing, presented by Edwards.

Edwards and Taylor split the group into two teams, the red and green team, and had members of the audience to send representatives from each team to participate in trivia, holiday Pictionary and much more.

All in all, it was an evening full of whimsical fun, as everyone gave thanks for the year that has passed, and looked forward to the wonderful year ahead.

Foster Children...from Page 1A



The Towns and Union Foster Children's Enrichment Program is a local nonprofit made up of CASA or former CASA volunteers. Pictured L-R: Richard Paolillo, Kathy Malone, Lorena Johnson, Diana Smith, Pam Curley, Liz Ruf and Pat Elliott.

The process begins around the first of September, as program co-founder Pat Elliott begins rounding up a master list of children who will benefit from the yearly Christmas program. This year, that number is just over 100.

Once the group figures out who all they're going to be helping - with anonymity intact, of course - foster parents receive blank wish lists to be filled out by the children.

"Over the years, we've developed a big list of sponsors," said Richard Paolillo, another of the program's co-founders. "We'll send the sponsors a list, and they'll buy the items on the list. We also get cash donations, too, which comes in handy because we always have to buy extra (to finish filling in some wish lists). It's grown over the years, because some sponsors have been with us for a long time."

The program was founded years ago by now ex-CASAs Elliott, Paolillo and his wife Mary Jane, as well as Sherry Wendt, in order to fill a need for kids when other programs fell through due to the economic recession.

Some of the main volunteers who work with the program include former CASA Lorena Johnson and current CASAs Diana Smith, Pam Curley, Kathy Malone and Liz Ruf.

"I've helped wrap, I've helped deliver gifts, and the fun part is actually getting to deliver to the kids that you work with," said Ruf, who has volunteered as a CASA for 10 years. "We deliver two weeks early, so sometimes you're delivering gifts to the foster parents, but with the older kids, sometimes the foster parents will say, let's let them open one gift while you're here.

"And it's so fun to see, because they have no idea they can get a gift like an American Doll, or just something that they've never had an opportunity to get before for Christmas."

Monetary donations can be given year-round to the Towns and Union Foster



Volunteers have been working hard through December to get the presents wrapped and where they need to go before Christmas



One generous donor gave multiple bicycles, helmets and other gifts for the Union and Towns County children in foster care.

Children's Enrichment Program, and those interested in contributing or becoming a sponsor for next Christmas can contact Elliott at (706) 896-3749, or Paolillo at (706) 745-1190.

Donations can also be made toward the program's Back to School initiative, which is the other area in which Elliott, Paolillo and friends help to normalize the experiences of children in foster care.

The Back to School part of the program takes place before the start of each school year. Foster children are given the ability to go shopping for new school supplies and a new school outfit, just like all the

other kids who start school each year with new clothes and materials.

Those involved with the program would like to thank the multitude of generous supporters who for years have made Christmas mornings special for the foster children of Towns and Union, many of whom are fostered outside their home counties and school systems.

Also, program organizers would like to thank Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris for allowing them to store their hundreds of presents in the spare rooms of the old Towns/Union County Jail.

Grandparent...from Page 1A

bells as they moved from room to room.

This year, instead of a winter hat, the team decided to gift Bible verse pocket calendars with the much-appreciated scent free hand cream and a Christmas ornament.

In order to make the gift packages a reality for residents year after year, Ford and company look to find a larger presenting sponsor, which this year was Total Recover Paint & Body Shop.

Sponsorships go toward covering the cost of gifts, and all told the gifts cost \$15 per package. The Joy Team invites anyone and everyone to become sponsors for next year's cycle of Adopt-a-Grandparent.

Those interested in donating, businesses or individuals, can check out the website at www.adoptagrandparentnoga.com.

One of the reasons that Ford and Wallace decided to start the initiative back in 2013 was that they couldn't stand the idea that there were elderly residents of the county who may not receive a single visitor or special present on Christmas Day.

Last year, the ladies were able to deliver 276 total gifts to residents of Union County Nursing, Lazy-R and Chatuge Regional Nursing Home. They expanded that to 280 total gifts this year, and hope to add Stonehenge Assisted Living for gifts to be delivered before the end of the year.

"The smiles on all of their faces are amazing," said



Every year, Ford and Wallace's Joy Team hand out gifts to residents of the Chatuge Regional Nursing Home

Ford. "Coming down the hallway, even the nurses are smiling. Each year we learn, and I think the one thing that we might incorporate next year is a little recorder with some Christmas music."

A third member of Ford and Wallace's Mary Kay team helped in Hiawassee on Saturday, Alicia Rogers, and everyone was excited to see the women as they spread Christmas joy from room to room during their gift deliveries at Chatuge Regional Nursing Home.

"When you talk to the residents and you spend time with them, you leave the conversation more blessed than they do," said Rogers last Friday. "I love delivering the gifts and seeing the excitement on their faces. This is the real deal right here."

David Vogel is an activity aide at the Hiawassee-based nursing home, and he

said that, when it comes to community involvement at the nursing home, "the more the merrier."

Community involvement shows love, that the residents are important - that they have value and worth," said Vogel, speaking on his Chatuge Regional family of elderly.

Back at Union County Nursing Home, Treatment Nurse Shawna Harkins said that she truly appreciated the idea behind Adopt-a-Grandparent.

"Our residents enjoy having people come visit them any time," said Harkins. "We have some residents who don't have family to come see them, and it makes them feel like they're still part of the community.

"And especially for those who don't have family to come and see them, it makes them feel like part of a family."