

# Pride...from Page 1A

attention to music. Pride was discovered in 1965 by legendary Country Music guitarist Chet Atkins and soon afterward, was signed to a recording contract with RCA.

His chart-topping Kiss An Angel Good Mornin' made Pride a Country Music legend.

"We're so excited to have Charley Pride come to Hiawassee," Georgia Mountain

Fairgrounds' General Manager Hilda Thomason said. "He is truly a Country Music legend."

Tickets go on sale Feb. 7 at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds, Thomason said.

"Level I seating is \$47, and Level II seating is \$37. You can go online on at 10 p.m. on Feb. 6 and purchase tickets online at our website."

# Fees...from Page 1A

through March 7 to coincide with federal elections.

HB 310, which passed both chambers with God's speed, makes state and local candidate elections coincide with federal candidate election dates to avoid holding two separate elections in all of Georgia's 159 counties.

The move was necessary after U.S. District Judge Steve Jones changed the scope of Georgia elections, with his July 2013 ruling that the state's elec-

tion calendar, which has traditionally scheduled the primary elections for state and federal offices on the third Tuesday in July, violated the federal Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act of 1986. That law requires the state to send absentee ballots to military and overseas voters 45 days before any federal election.

The date for the May Primary is May 20, Commissioner Kendall said.

# TCMS experiences false security alarm

By Azure Welch  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

The morning of Jan. 24 was not only extremely cold, but ended up being extremely busy on the campus of Towns County Schools.



**Melissa Williams**

The Middle School's alarm system was triggered, which brought response from local law enforcement officials.

Although, not much is being released as to the particulars of the event, Towns County Schools Superintendent Melissa Williams said that "we did have a false alarm at the middle school this morning because our security system was activated by mistake."

ing the system were not provided, it is understandable due to the main goal, which is protecting all of the students who attend Towns County Schools.

Superintendent Williams said that she "did not really want to give too many details about the system because the more information we give out, the more vulnerable our system becomes."

The schools along with their new security system already have strict emergency procedures in place to protect the student body, and these procedures "are posted in every room" of each of the schools.

The alarm system, which is fairly new to the schools, was purchased during the 2013 school year and "installed before Thanksgiving," is what Williams described as "a 'panic button' type of system that links directly into law enforcement radios and tells them instantaneously what room the alarm was activated from."

The emergency procedures include fire drills, tornado drills, snow and other severe weather condition procedures, and procedures for any other type of emergency requiring evacuation from the school buildings. This includes terrorist/sniper procedures which clearly instruct the students and employees about what to do if the "alarm sounds, or the announcement of 'code red' occurs."

According to the superintendent, "law enforcement officials from both the Sheriff's office and the Police Department responded."

Thankfully, Friday morning's activation of the security system was a "false alarm," it is a relief to parents of the community to know that the teachers, school board, and local law enforcement are diligently prepared when it comes to the safety of this communities children.

Superintendent Williams said that they "are very pleased with the new security system and are very appreciative for the quick response time from law enforcement officials."

Although, details regard-

# Robotics...from Page 1A

judged by FLL representatives and scored based on a rubric. The team scored well in all three categories and was nominated for three awards for the project category.

The theme for this year's competition is Nature's Fury and the team chose to study warning systems for tornados. The result of their project research efforts is a novel idea that will improve on existing alert systems called the "Tor-Text." Tor-Text is the team's innovative group text cell phone tornado alert notification system that completes the cycle of communication with

feedback information plus GPS location. Community members can join the group voluntarily for free without sharing their individual cell phone number. The group administrator can then judge areas of concern based on responses, location, and whether or not the person completed the cycle of alerts including an all clear at the end.

The three competitions mentioned above occurred in the morning while the fourth competition, Robot Performance, was scheduled over the course of the day. Teams competed three times each on a mission table

to demonstrate their robot's ability to complete challenges. Out of 32 teams, the Disaster Masters finished sixth in the Robot Performance category. All scores for the day were then collected and tabulated for teams to advance. On Tuesday of the following week it was confirmed that the team would advance to the FLL State Championship, which is the highest level of FLL competition here in Georgia.

The Disaster Masters would like to thank our Principal Dr. Darren Berrong, Towns County Schools Superintendent Melissa Williams, faculty, staff,

students and community for all of their support.

They would also like to thank the local Dairy Queen, Fast Fab Set-up and Design, and an anonymous donor for all of their sponsorship. Finally, we would like to thank our mentor Jo Ray Van Vliet and her family for all of their assistance. The current roster for the Disaster Masters competition team is J.W. Rosser, Kaitlyn Crowder, Connor Kelley, Sylvan Schuette, Owen Davenport, Brooke Spain, and Jared Edwards with Dr. Daren King as coach.

# Homecoming...from Page 1A

It was the highlight of the evening as 28 freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors took center court at the Bill P. Kendall Gymnasium in Hiawassee on Saturday.

Seniors competing for the title of King and Queen included Cesar Bustamante, Cochran, Dylm Clark, Kellsie Cowart, Jaryd Gurley, Jasmine Forrester, Stetson Hedden, Bailey Sutton, Jarrett Milam, and Taylor Vardeman.

Vardeman, a member



**Taylor Vardeman**  
of the state championship Cross Country team, was

chosen as first runner up. The evening's enjoyment also included the selection of the freshmen, sophomore and junior prince and princesses.

The 9th Grade Prince is Kobe Denton, and the Princess is Mary Ivey.

The 10th Grade Prince is Sterling Hedden, and the Princess is Taylor Underwood.

The 11th Grade Prince is Efen Figueiroa, and the Princess is Karlie Albach.

Erin Westberry and

Wesley Bloodworth were the reigning Homecoming Queen and King when the evening began.

Others taking part in the event included freshmen, Adam Barrett, Esther Batye, Denton, and Ivey; Sophomores Chaiz Davenport, Savannah Dyer, Sterling Hedden, Emily Kogod, Daulton Rogers, and Underwood; Juniors Grayson Carver, Albach, Cory Ellis, Morgan Bradley, Figueroa, Kayla Davis, Gabe Gillean, and Carly Gilfilian.

# Gibby...from Page 1A

our Nation."

Being mayor has taught Gibby many things, but one thing in particular that she says it has taught her, is that "we can learn something from each and every person" within our communities, and that is why it is so important to become an active part of the community and to attend the city council meetings.

Mayor Gibby strenuously said more than once that people need to get involved, and if they want their voices heard, instead of simply "grumbling" about what is wrong, they need to attend community meetings where they will be able to give their own opinions about the state of the city in which they live.

Mayor Gibby informed those in attendance that Young

Harris is a small town, and as Mayor she is faced with the hard task of making things work on a "very tight budget, and minimal employees," and these six city employees in Young Harris work very hard doing their jobs and deserve praise and a little bit of patience if things are not done as fast as people in town would like them to be done because as the mayor reminded them, "Young Harris is a small town with six employees doing the jobs of at least 30-40 people."

Mayor Gibby also expressed the thoughts of some people about the state of our Nation, and one thing that the mayor suggests, is "fixing things here in our small communities" before we try to jump ahead and fix things in our Nation. The Mayor states that the people need to take things one step at a

time and "fix things here...and help things here...before we can change thing elsewhere."

As a way to ensure that the future of Young Harris is a prosperous one is by preparing the city's infrastructure to prepare for the growth of the town in the future.

According to Mayor Gibby, it has been the goal of "past council's and present council" to prepare Young Harris for the future and that is why they have invested over a \$1 million dollars to the preparation of the town's infrastructure because businesses will not build if the town cannot sustain the building.

Preparing the infrastructure means that the town has prepared the water and sewers to handle the future growth of Young Harris for the next

25 years or more. In addition, Mayor Gibby explained that the town "is fixing the sidewalks, putting in pretty street lamps along the way, because if you don't have pretty, businesses will not come, and we are putting in benches along the way."

Mayor Gibby is extremely passionate and excited about Young Harris and the future of the town, and said loudly and proudly that she "believes in the future of Young Harris Valley."

Echoing her sentiments, Sheriff Chris Clinton said at the end of the mayor's speech that Mayor Gibby "is a mayor who does what is right...she has a lot of heart...and I appreciate the mayor" and her passion for the people of the Young Harris community."

# Shirley Stallings steps up for Towns County community libraries at critical time of need

By Azure Welch  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer



**Shirley Stallings**

Shirley Stallings, a long-time member of the Towns County community is stepping up once again to help the community she loves.

Prior to the Towns County Library receiving the go approval and the go ahead with the building's much needed remodeling and additions, Stallings was instrumental in helping the Towns County Library to receive the much needed funding.

before" she sleeps to help the Young Harris Library because as Stallings said "it is a shame that the employees and patrons of the Mountain Regional Library are having to walk on the same carpet that was originally installed in the building back in 1978."

As she did before, Stallings is on a mission to once again collect at least 700 signatures as she did for the library in Hiawassee because she believes that by taking a stack of tangible letters to the capital provides a much greater impact than someone simply expressing the feelings of a community; these letters "will back up the communities' sentiments."

youngest and oldest members of a community can gather and get the best out of life, and I am making a vow to help the Mountain Regional Library in Young Harris get the money for much needed renovations, so the all of the libraries within our communities can continue to be the best that they can be."

Towns County libraries in Hiawassee and Young Harris are a part of one of the busiest library systems in our state, and Stallings' continued faith and passion for books is going to continue fueling her way as she is once again set on a course to get the signatures needed to help ensure the approval of the grant money for the renovation of the Mountain Regional Library in Young Harris.

Stallings personally set out on a campaign to get fellow members of the community to support the renovation goals of the Towns County Library by collecting over 700 signatures on letters of support that she then drove and delivered personally to the capital.

Stallings has had a long time love and admiration for libraries and said that "many years ago, when I was a young teenager with lots of questions, it was the librarian at the Towns County library" who told her "that there is an answer to every question within the

books at the library, you just have to want to find the answer bad enough to find it."

Ever since then, Stallings has been a long standing supporter and user of the library, and now she is aiming to "help the Young Harris Library" to get the much needed approval from the state to receive the grants needed to renovate and remodel the Mountain Regional Library in Young Harris.

Stallings was able to help all those involved with the procurement of the funding for the library in Hiawassee by assisting members of the community boards, senators, and representatives in obtaining "90% of the money in the form of grants...", which is absolutely fantastic."

Stallings passion for libraries is a personal one, but she also believes that community libraries are where "the

Stallings vows "that I am once again going to drive to the capital and hand deliver the letters myself."

However, this time she is up against a much tighter time frame because the budget talks are set to move much faster than in previous years due to the earlier election time frames that are happening this year.