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"We are concerned for people's health and we make these advisories based on the possible health issues that could arise from a high contaminant level in certain fish," Dr. Rudo said. "These levels fluctuate and it takes a lot of data to provide enough information to issue this type of advisory. "The only two fish involved in this advisory for Lake Chatuge is the white and large mouth bass," he said. "All other fish in Lake Chatuge are considered safe for consumption."

There has been some concern by Towns County residents and in the surrounding area that all fish in Lake Chatuge may be involved in the consumption advisory.

According to the North Carolina public health officials, this is simply not true.

According to North Carolina public health officials, the advisory consumption for small mouth bass, walleyes and yellow perch are for Lake Nantahala in Macon County, N.C. only.

The Georgia waters of Lake Chatuge have not been

issued an advisory for unsafe consumption of the white and large mouth bass and sportsmen who fish and consume these fish should use a logical approach to the North Carolina warnings.

"We have not issued any consumption warning for the Georgia side of Lake Chatuge at this time," stated a Georgia Department of Fisheries spokeswoman.

"People should feel safe to do whatever normal activities they do in Lake Chatuge because it requires consumption of the fish to become contaminated," Dr. Rudo said.

"Catch and release of white and large mouth bass will not hurt anyone," he said. "You cannot become contaminated by simply touching the fish or swimming in the water."

"We advise that adults and women past child bearing age would be safe to consume one meal per week of the white and large mouth bass in Lake Chatuge," Dr. Rudo said. "A maximum of six uncooked ounces of the fish is considered a proper size portion for a single meal."

Williams...continued from page 1A



Williams delighted his fans during his final performance at Anderson Music Hall on Saturday. Photo/Joe Collins

story it contains."

Williams' songs are all about the emotion one feels when he sings them to his fans.

They are ballads that deal with real life emotions and circumstances and that is what his fans relate to.

There were many tears shed during this night as memories were brought back through his melodic baritone voice.

His simple style is still engaging to this day and his ability to transfer the emotion of his songs was on display at The Hall.

His music has covered several generations and people of all ages attended the show to say farewell to the "Gentle Giant."

He has had 17 number one hits in his career and over 50 major hits.

His No. 1 single release *Tulsa Time* helped earn him the Country Music Association Male Vocalist of the Year in 1978 and the album soon followed as the Academy of Country Music Record of the Year in 1979.

He began the show with *Good Ole Boys Like Me* and moved on to *Some Broken Hearts Never Mend*.

Van Vliet to speak to Mountain Movers and Shakers

Dr. John Van Vliet, associate professor of Business and Public Policy at Young Harris College will be the guest speaker Friday morning at Mary's Southern Grill when the Mountain Movers and Shakers meet at 8 a.m.

Born at Fort Benning, the home of the Infantry, Dr. Van Vliet spent his youth as an Army brat and then followed in his father's footsteps by serving 24 years in the United States Army.

He served in various capacities, that included commander, plans officer, personnel officer, intelligence officer and Military Attaché.

He is proud to claim the 75th Ranger Regiment as his

regiment. Dr. Van Vliet retired as a Lieutenant Colonel in 1994.

Dr. Van Vliet's second career was in the distribution and automation engineering industry. He started as the Operations Manager for a \$30 million electric parts distributor in Greenville, S.C. He then became the Director of a \$160 million business unit with 13 locations in three states. He retired in 2002 and began his doctoral studies.

Dr. Van Vliet is married to his high school sweetheart. They live in Hiawassee, and have two grown daughters and three young grandsons.

Everyone is invited, Movers and Shakers co-founder Sam Fullerton said.

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She has participated in many art shows and has her art work displayed at Brasstown Valley Resort.

"Last summer, we moved from our home on Ramey Mountain to our new home on Longview Circle in Hiawassee," Jackie West said.

At the time they did not realize it, but they were about to find out what a small world it truly is.

Their new neighbors came over to meet them and welcome them to the neigh-

borhood. Thinking what a nice gesture on the part of the neighbors, the mystery still had not been revealed.

"They went home thinking that the name Leon West sounded familiar and they got out their old Russell High School Yearbook and there he was," said Jackie West.

Much to their surprise and the West's as well, their new neighbor, Paul Wilson, was Leon's old friend, old time neighbor, and schoolmate from East Point.

Paul and his wife

Louise had moved to Towns County some time back not realizing that Leon had moved there as well.

This was a very special surprise for both of the gentlemen. "The day after Christmas, we received the best gift ever. Bill and his wife Lilly showed up on our doorstep as a surprise," Jackie West said.

"We invited Paul and Louise to come over and we enjoyed an old memory party," said Jackie West.

"The boys went through the yearbook and shared mem-

ories of their childhood days," she said.

"They talked about old times in school, growing up in the same small town, and their combined memories of fighting in the same war."

It was a trip down memory lane for three men who had served this great country during World War II and lived to share those memories.

Fate brought them together as childhood friends and again as older adults who had a lot of catching up to do.

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made warning residents of the treacherous road conditions.

"We answered 10 accident calls by noon on Friday and numerous abandoned vehicle calls but there were no casualties or serious injuries," the sheriff said. "We had deputies patrolling through the night to monitor road conditions but by 11:30 p.m. the temperatures had risen and the precipitation had turned to rain and the roads became safe."

Sheriff Clinton would like to thank all the public service personnel who worked long hours keeping the citizens of Towns County informed about the treacherous road conditions.

"I want to thank the local media outlets for helping us warn the people of the dangerous road conditions and to Commissioner Kendall's Office for sending out the warning call," Sheriff Clinton said. "Also, I can never thank the deputies and other public safety workers of Towns County enough for risking personal injury to protect our citizens," he said. "We are very thankful that there were no fatalities or serious injuries reported."

The recently issued flood warnings were still fresh on the minds of many in the area as weather officials missed predictions on how high the flood waters would become in the Hiawassee River the week before.

But those same officials



Salt trucks were a frequent site in Towns County on Friday. Photo/Todd Forrest

got it right on Friday and the decision by local authorities was correct in their precautions of closing schools and local county municipalities.

The old cliché of "being better safe than sorry" was applied and many accidents were avoided although several did occur as scanners were screaming all over the county.

U.S. and State highway departments were busy early on Friday and continued distributing anti-freeze mix on state and federal roads until the afternoon

and evening hours saw an elevation in temperatures and precipitation turned to rain. This was a bad situation and required officials to jump into action to make roads passible for motorist who absolutely had to travel early of Friday.

It was an accurate weather advisory and all authorities answered the warning professionally, causing many people to stay home and avoid the treacherous conditions.

The Towns County Sheriff's Office was hard at

work monitoring roadways and overpasses to keep road crews updated on the changing road conditions well into the night.

It was a concentrated effort on all fronts and the Towns County residents should be thankful that they have a concerned government that cares for their safety and acts accordingly.

Thank those in charge the next time you see them because their sacrifice on Friday morning was a very positive effort that kept alot of people safe.

Flu...continued from page 1A

Health Department or their health care provider," District 2 Public Health spokesperson David Palmer said.

Public Health officials advise everyone over the age of 6 months old to receive the vaccination unless they are in the high risk category which can, and should, be determined by a physician or health care provider.

Nursing mothers or people with certain egg allergies fall into this category.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta recommends that people who are at a high risk from complications of flu symptoms and their caregivers be vaccinated annually.

The high risk group includes, but is not limited to, those individuals who have asthma, neurological conditions, heart disease, diabetes, blood disorders, liver disorders or anyone who has a weakened immune system.

The CDC stipulates that any individual who wishes to receive the vaccine should consult a doctor or health care provider concerning their own individual needs.

The good news is that the vaccine seems to be effective.

CDC officials say that more than 60 percent of vaccinated people will not have to visit their doctor for flu related symptoms.

This percentage is well within the expectations of the

CDC who has declared, "persons receiving their vaccination who have become ill with the flu, report that symptoms are not as severe. Many individuals report that even though they became ill the symptoms and time away from work or school is lessened."

There will always be some who still get sick even though they are vaccinated, but this year's vaccine is doing a good job of prevention.

One reason many people forgo getting vaccinated is the fear that they will succumb to the flu from the vaccine.

According to the CDC this is impossible because there is no living virus found in the vaccine.

The Georgia epidemic status seems to have missed Towns County so far and hopefully it will continue to prove absent at such a level, even though it has been worse than last year.

Chatuge Regional Hospital Administrator Lewis Kelley said the flu has been bad this season and is defiantly worse than last year.

"We've seen more patients being admitted to the hospital this flu season and it has been extremely hard on the elderly and young children," Kelley said. "There have been a significant number of cases where respiratory issues have led to pneumonia in both age groups and that is higher than last year."

These respiratory prob-

lems have led to a longer stays in the hospital with an average of two to three weeks, Kelley said.

"I recommend that everyone who hasn't been vaccinated to get their flu shot," he said. "People seem to believe that the vaccine can give them the flu but that is simply not true."

"Only approximately 8 percent of those who receive the vaccine have the flu and their symptoms and the duration of the illness is drastically reduced. The vaccine certainly proves its value," Kelley said.

CRH Director of Nursing Machellev Lovell reported that the hospital saw a lot of cases in the Emergency Room before Christmas but that number has dropped somewhat going into the New Year.

"We are still seeing more this year than last year, but it seems to be in somewhat of a decline as of now," Lovell said. "We recommend everyone take precaution, and if you haven't gotten your flu shot, make plans to see your healthcare provider to schedule a time to get vaccinated because it is bad this year."

Towns County Schools nurse Jena Oliver has observed similar situations.

"We had a high volume of cases before the Christmas break but since returning in January, we have seen very little in the way of flu type illness," she said. "We never breached the 15 percent level

that would require us to close the schools.

"Still, we want children and adults alike to know that if you have flu like symptoms you should stay home," she said. "Don't return to school or work until the symptoms have been over for at least 24 hours."

Palmer said District 2 Public Health has seen a slight decrease in the number of physician visits since Christmas, but flu statistics fluctuate.

"It has been a very active season and we advise everyone who hasn't been vaccinated to get their flu shot," Palmer said. "The flu season can possibly run until the end of March and it is not too late to receive the vaccine," he said.

The influenza virus may not be at epidemic levels in Towns County, but it is a fact that it is worse than usual.

Public Health officials recommend that everyone vaccinated or not, observe the usual precautions in their daily activities.

Wash your hands often with soap, cover your mouth when you cough preferably in the cup of your elbow and keep your hands away from your face and mouth.

Most importantly, if you have flu like symptoms, stay home.

These are simple things that we all can do to keep the spread of this illness to a minimum and it is just common sense during this time of the year.

City Hall...continued from page 1A

Mathis said. "We have needed more room for all the offices we use for city business and our desire has been to move into this building and now it has come to fruition.

"I am so proud for the citizens of Hiawasse because this is their premises and they should be proud as well," Mayor Mathis said.

The new building now houses the offices of the Mayor, City Clerk, City Manager, Hiawasse Police Department and all legal personnel that are part of the Mayor's office.

The Police Department is upstairs and welcome all to

come by for a visit.

"We have a lot more room here and the City Police all have their own offices located upstairs," Mayor Mathis said.

"This will enable the people of Hiawasse to access their officers and gives each officer a place to meet and do business with our citizens," Mayor Mathis said.

The building is approximately 4,000 square feet in size due to some enhancements the city needed to make to accommodate an increase in population needs and to meet the commercial building codes.

"We extended the back

some and we enlarged the front to enable us to have a small conference room, which we have been in need of for the last several years, and it is a big benefit for everyone," Mayor Mathis said. "We are now able to do our jobs better and serve Hiawasse more professionally since we have more room."

The citizens own this building and are welcome to stop by and visit.

There is an Open House planned for the near future, but as of now they are still waiting for the elevator to be installed and then the building will be complete.

"The facility and all the improvements have been paid for and we own it debt free," Mayor Mathis said. "We would like to sell the old building so if anyone is interested please feel free to contact my office at 706-896-2202. As soon as the elevator is installed we will announce an Open House so everyone can stop by and see their wonderful new City Hall," Mayor Mathis said.

The Open House will be announced through social media and the *Towns County Herald* so look for the time and date to be announced soon.

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