

Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

Your Hometown Newspaper Since 1928

50 Cents

www.townscountyherald.net

Publication Number 635540 Volume 86 Number 16

Wednesday, February 18, 2015

Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thurs: Sunny	20 5
Fri: Snow	34 22
Sat: Ice	43 37
Sun: Rain	49 33
Mon: Ice	43 26
Tue: Clouds	43 25
Wed: Sunny	44 21



Upstream Elevation Predicted 02/18/2015	
Lake Chatuge	1,915.48
Lake Nottely	1,761.70
Blue Ridge	1,670.01

INDEX

2 Sections, 16 Pages

Arrests2A
Chamber9A
Church6A
Classifieds2B
Editorial4A
Letters4A
Legals2B

SPORTS

Page 10A

Do You Qualify for a Habitat for Humanity House?



See Page 9A



Food Distribution

N. Mt. Zion
Thurs. Feb 19th
10 AM - NOON

on Page 6A



Former US Senator Saxby Chambliss to speak at YHC

Thurs. Feb 19th
See Page 3A

Head Start Pre-K Registration begins March 2nd

See Page 2A



Baseball

Fri Feb 20
vs. Union Co 5:30

Deal declares state of emergency

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Gov. Nathan Deal has declared a state of emergency due to extreme winter weather expected starting Monday, Feb. 16, which could create conditions with the potential of lasting through the week.

"Acting on a recommendation from the state's Emergency Operations Command, Gov. Nathan Deal this evening signed an executive order to declare a state of emergency for disaster preparedness for the 15 North Georgia counties under a winter storm warning and will ask state workers in affected areas who are not involved in emergency response to work from home," according to a press release issued by the governor's office.

"I am issuing this order out of an abundance of caution, so the state can make all preparations necessary to quickly and efficiently address any potential winter weather problems," said Gov. Deal in the press release. "We will monitor the weather throughout the night and allocate state resources as needed should ice formation creep further south into the metro area."

Gov. Deal has declared emergencies for Catoosa, Dade, Dawson, Fannin, Gilmer, Habersham, Lumpkin, Murray, Pickens, Rabun, Towns, Union, Walker, White and Whitfield counties.

"The governor's order notes that in these counties forecasts call for ice accumula-



Gov. Nathan Deal

tion and moderately high wind gusts that could bring down tree limbs," according to the release.

"I remain hopeful that the low pressure system will move northward, thus allowing warmer temperatures into our state," said Gov. Deal. "With forecasts showing temperatures hovering around the freezing point, however, we have to work on the assumption that we'll face icy conditions."

In an effort to minimize the number of afternoon commuters, according to the press release, Gov. Deal "is directing state agency heads to close state offices in the 15 affected counties as well as at the State Capitol, with the exception of all essential and emergency personnel. State employees in these areas are encouraged to telecommute."

If there's snow, Towns County is ready for it, said Towns County Sole Commis-

sioner Bill Kendall.

"We've got plenty of salt and No. 7 gravel," said Commissioner Kendall. "Now, the No. 7 is a little larger than the No. 89 that some counties use, but No. 7 gives you better traction."

And if it's ice?

"We recommend that people just stay home, because you can't get out on black ice and do anything, anyway," said Commissioner Kendall. "If they have a medical problem or need food or have an emergency, just call 911, and we'll send an ambulance or a fire department rescue team. Even if we have to walk to get to them, we will get there."

Should the storm kick up a wintry mix, Commissioner Kendall recommends that people stock up on food and water ahead of bad conditions, and that they remain indoors.

"Also, they need to remember that there are 450 miles of county roads for these men to try to keep up, and they can't get them cleared immediately," said Commissioner Kendall. "So, folks just need to be patient."

The commissioner advises people, especially those who are on steep, narrow mountain roads, to get food and water when roads are clear, ahead of these kinds of potentially icy events.

"And stay in," said Commissioner Kendall. "It's really hard with slick ice - you can't get trucks out on them,

See Weather, Page 8A

EMC membership group seeks interlocutory injunction

By Charles Duncan
Towns County Herald
cduncan.tch@windstream.net

The four Blue Ridge Mountain EMC members suing six sitting directors, and the EMC's general manager are seeking an interlocutory injunction to prevent the directors and general manager from accepting indemnification payments, insurance benefits, or expense advancements from the Blue Ridge Mountain Electric Membership Corporation unless and until the BRMEMC complies with the requirements for indemnification under O.C.G.A. Section 46-3-306, Towns County Superior Court records show.

Plaintiffs Krista L. Gooch, Larry Williams, Andrew E. Stephens, and Barbara Moss, filed the motion in Towns County Superior Court in the final days of January, court records show.

On Jan. 2, the membership group filed suit in Towns County Superior Court seeking remedy to what they call breaches of fiduciary duty by the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC general manager, and the six directors, according to a copy of the lawsuit obtained by the North Georgia News and Towns County Herald.

According to the 219-page lawsuit, the group seeks a jury trial to decide the case.

According to the motion for interlocutory injunction, plaintiffs are not asking the



Court to determine whether the Director Defendants or Akins should be indemnified, provided with BRMEMC insurance coverage, or have expenses advanced.

"Code Section 46-3-306(e) leaves such a determination to three people: the disinterested directors, legal counsel hired by the disinterested directors, or the BRMEMC members. All plaintiffs are seeking is an interlocutory injunction prohibiting the Director Defendants or Akins from accepting indemnification payments, insurance coverage, or expense advancements without first ensuring that the statutory requirements are satisfied. This is not only what Code Section 46-3-306 requires, but it also comports with the public interest in ensuring that the Director

See EMC, Page 8A

Rogers brings home bronze at state



Daulton Rogers is all smiles as he stands on the podium in Macon at the State Class A championships.

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The 2014-2015 Towns County Indians wrestling season was a whirlwind from the word go.

Not only did the team finish with a 24-10 dual match record - which, according to Indians Head Coach Jeff Stowers, "that's pretty good, I don't care who you are" - the team also sent three Indians to grapple in the 2015 GHSA Traditional State Championship.

Daulton Rogers bagged the bronze, while his tenacious teammates Kaine Hoffman placed fourth and Thomas Mitchell placed sixth.

"It was a year of great accomplishment," said Coach

Stowers. "We did a lot of really, really good things with what is really a pretty young wrestling team. We get everybody back this year but Kyle and Aaron, and Aaron was hurt most of the year, so he really wasn't able to wrestle a lot for us. So, we accomplished a lot of great things."

Coach Stowers marks the official end of wrestling each year as a bittersweet time in his life and the life of his team.

"I'm glad to get to spend some time with my family finally, but the fans and the kids kind of become part of your family, you spend so much time with them," said Coach Stowers. "I'm going to miss those guys and their families, spending time with them. It's

been a really, really good year. I'm just incredibly proud of the kids and proud of the things that we accomplished, the goals that we set, and how close we got."

"Even though we didn't accomplish some of those goals, to have the chance to try to challenge for a true second, and to be able to qualify kids to go to state, and even to have an opportunity to have somebody that might get to the finals - those are the things that, four or five years ago, we never would have had the opportunity to do," said Coach Stowers, remarking once more how incredibly proud he is of his Indians. "We've come a long way, and it takes a long time. We're just going to keep plugging at it."

The quest continues for veterans

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Towns County Veterans Monument Committee held a core group meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 10, to discuss and finalize the year's calendar of events.

Ultimately, the goal of the committee is to arrive at a list of eligible names of veterans to be honored at a dedication ceremony at the Veterans Park in front of Towns County High School on Veterans Day, which is Wednesday, November 11.

"The Veterans Park Monument Committee seeks those names of deceased veterans (from Jan. 1, 2012, forward), who were residents of Towns County," according to the committee's notice to Towns County residents. "Eligible names will be engraved on a monument panel in Veterans Park, Hiwassee, Ga."

Eligibility is determined by a set of criteria arrived at by the monument committee, including: a DD214 or Honorable



Discharge certificate or separation record; a death certificate; proof of residence (tax record, family records, notarized records, etc.); a check for \$60 (made out to WNC Marble & Granite, Mr. Matthew Barton) to assist in defraying engraving costs.

Families that wish to have a veteran honored at the

Veterans Park should bring the above items or copies to the second floor of the VFW on the first Saturday of each month running from April 4 to Sept. 5, 2015, between 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. "for review and listing as space allows."

Due to the July 4 holiday

See Vets Page 8A

Rogers speaks to Shakers

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Towns County Tax Commissioner Bruce Rogers spoke to the Mountain Movers and Shakers on Friday, Feb. 13, at Mary's Southern Grill.

The meeting took on a question and answer format.

One question dealt with the process of getting a reevaluation of property values, which has to do with the tax assessor's office, but Rogers knew the answer.

"After Jan. 1 each year, if you feel that you're being unfairly charged, you have from Jan. 1 until April 1 to come in to the assessor's office," said Rogers. "Come in and request a taxpayer return. They will give you these forms, you can fill them out. And on this form, you can state what you believe should be the fair market value on your property."

At this point, the assessors review the form to decide whether or not they agree with the person filing the form.

"It still puts you in a po-



Bruce Rogers

sition to receive an assessment notice that year," said Rogers. "And during this time, you have 45 days if they disagree with you and you want to take it farther to file an appeal on this property. You go before the board (of equalization) and state your case. And I'll say personally that it works, because I've done it myself."

At one point in the past, Rogers felt that his property was being "unduly assessed." He researched the parcels ad-

See Taxes, Page 8A

Shortfall at libraries to be covered

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

One item of discussion at the Mountain Regional Library Board of Trustees quarterly meeting that took place on Wednesday, Feb. 4, was an adjusted budget for the libraries of Towns County.

Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall announced recently that he will be helping the libraries meet part of their budgetary shortfall.

In the Jan. 13 meeting of the Towns County Library Board of Trustees, the board had asked Commissioner Kendall for assistance with a \$15,000 budget shortfall that was forcing Towns County Public Library and Mountain Regional Library to close one day each week apiece.

The shortfall is a combination of year-over-year budget cuts from the state and increased healthcare costs that have carried forward to local employers.

In response to the library board's request for a \$15,000 funding increase, Commissioner Kendall said that he will find some funding to replace library shortfall due to the cuts by the state.

"Raising taxes is not an option that I will consider," said Commissioner Kendall. "Therefore, I must find these funds by reducing expenditures in other places in the county budget. In addition to the county's regular annual budgeted fund to the library, I will increase the county's funding to the library with a



Commissioner Bill Kendall

\$7,500 separate grant to fund the third and fourth quarters, ending June 30, 2015, of the library's 2015 fiscal year, with a requirement that this special grant be used to pay salary and benefit shortfall for employees, to avoid layoff and furlough days."

Because of this pledged \$7,500, the MRLS board decided to adjust its budget for Towns County libraries to "reduce down the days closed at Towns and Mountain Regional libraries in half," according to MRLS Interim Director Susie Brendle.

"Instead of the Towns County and Mountain Regional Library employees having reduced hours and being closed

See Libraries, Page 8A

TOWNS COUNTY HERALD

