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Young Harris City Councilman John Kelley regarding the LOST distribution percentages over the next 10 years.

Commissioner Kendall acted on the committee's unanimous recommendation to accept Kelley's proposal for percentages of LOST distribution for 2013-2022.

The 'absent municipalities' section of the law provides that a county's distribution certificate does not have to be signed by all qualified municipalities as long as the combined population of the 'absent' municipalities is less than one-half of the aggregate population of all qualified municipalities in the county.

However, the individual absent municipalities must each receive a per capita share of all of the proceeds that are designated for distribution to all of the qualified municipalities in the county.

According to the most recent U.S. Census, Young Harris has the larger daytime population of 899 residents compared to Hiawassee's daytime population of 880.

This left Young Harris in the unique position of negotiating with Hiawassee to resolve the municipal share of the tax proceeds.

Young Harris made a generous proposal to Hiawassee regarding the LOST distribution percentages for the municipalities over the next 10 years.

Hiawassee accepted the proposal as offered which left the it receiving the larger piece of the proverbial pie which will be phased in over the 10-year period.

Both Mayor Gibby and Mayor Mathis signed Certificate of Distributions for the "phase in" periods acknowledging each municipality's portion of distribution as well as that of the county.

"The Young Harris City Council and I are happy that the cities and county have reached a settlement in the LOST negotiations," Mayor Gibby said. "The process was chaotic and unnecessarily argumentative."

"We have reached an agreement and for this we are happy," Mayor Gibby said. "Now we can finally get back to the business of taking care of

local communities."

Mayor Gibby also added, "The manner in which the state statute was constructed is rather disappointing, as it sets up county and city governments to be in conflict. We urge our state officials to take a look at revising this monster before the next negotiation arrives."

Commissioner Kendall and Mayor Gibby seem to be on the same page regarding this issue.

"The LOST law as written pits the county and city against each other and needs to be amended," Kendall said. "During this entire process, officials representing the county and cities were dedicated to reaching an equitable agreement for all taxpayers without cost and conflict of court litigation. In the end, this feat was accomplished."

"Citizens were well served by the county-appointed LOST Negotiating Committee and elected officials from Hiawassee and Young Harris," said Kendall.

The LOST distribution percentages agreed upon and the phase in periods are as follows: **2013-2014**, county 81 percent, Hiawassee 10 percent, Young Harris 9 percent; **2015-2017**, county 80 percent, Hiawassee 10.5 percent, Young Harris 9.5 percent; **2018-2022**, county 79.5 percent, Hiawassee 11 percent, Young Harris 9.5 percent.

Commissioner Kendall expressed his thanks to the County Negotiating Committee, Chairman Chris Bradshaw, Vice Chairman Grover Garrett, Cecil Hughes, Terry Williams, and Jim Powell as well as Young Harris City Councilman Kelley and the city of Young Harris "for recognizing the need to reach a mutual agreement in resolving the LOST distribution."

He commended their roles in reaching a funding formula that "we feel will result in a fair and equitable property tax roll back for all citizens over the next 10 years."

"We appreciate Mayor Gibby's and the Young Harris City Council's efforts in working with the City of Hiawassee to reach a quick settlement agreement for the LOST distribution percentages," said Kendall.

Moore...continued from Page 1A

in his first No. 1 hit, *Small Town USA*.

Moore made the move to Nashville right out of high school at the young age of 18 after first starting college on a sports scholarship.

He admits that he knew after only two weeks there that music was his "true calling," and with his family's blessing and support, he set out to make that calling a reality.

Moore released his debut album, *Justin Moore*, in August 2009 on the Valory Music Company Label and his second album *Outlaws Like Me* debuted June 2011.

He also signed on for the 2011 summer *Flatts' Fest Tour* with Rascal Flatts.

He ended 2011 with Miranda Lambert and Darius Rucker.

Moore started January 2012 with Blake Shelton and wrapped up the year on the Eric Church's Blood, Sweat, and Beers tour.

Last year ended on a high note with both his albums reaching Certified Gold status within one month of each other.

His singles, *Small Town USA* and *If Heaven Wasn't So Far Away*, have also achieved Certified Gold Status.

The latter also brought him a nomination and win in the 2011 Inspirational

Country Music Awards for Mainstream Inspirational Country Song and Inspirational Video.

Georgia Mountain Fair General Manager Hilda Thomason said Justin Moore's debut in Hiawassee is greatly anticipated.

"We are real excited to have Justin Moore coming to Anderson Music Hall," she said. "We still have plenty of seats available and we are hoping to fill all 2,900 seats."

"We want everyone to come out and support the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds' concerts and enjoy the great music and great venue that we offer," she said. "We are bringing the big city concerts to our little town and we try to have something for folks of all ages."

Rose Falcon (on Toby Keith's label) will be opening for Moore.

Thomason wants to remind everyone that Three Dog Night will be performing on March 9th and plenty of tickets are still available.

Chris Young will be coming to The Hall on April 12th and tickets go on sale March 8th. For additional information, call the Fairgrounds' office at (706) 896-4191 or visit their Web site at georgiamountainfairgrounds.com.

Lady Indians...continued from Page 1A

rallied from an 8-point fourth quarter deficit for a heart stopping 43-41 overtime victory at Providence Christian in their final regular season game.

And back on Jan. 15th, the Lady Indians had rallied from a 34-21 halftime deficit on their home court to the brink of victory, but fell just short in a 58-56 loss to George Walton Academy.

Now they head to the state tournament.

Seeding for the Class A Public State Tournament will be set this week after the *Towns County Herald* deadline with the Lady Indians to host a team to be determined at a time to be determined on Friday, Feb. 22nd.

If victorious on Friday, the Lady Indians will play again Tuesday, Feb. 26th, once again, against an opponent and at a time to be determined, but likely as the host team.

The winner of that potential game for the Lady Indians will qualify for a State Class A Final Four appearance.

Under a split state tournament sending public and private schools into separate divisions in effect this year for the first time, there will be 16 public schools included in their division of the state tournament and 16 private in their own division for a total of 32 Class A teams included.

Classes AA and above will include 32 teams without a split between public and private with their state tournament



The Towns County Lady Indians clinched another Region title for a three-peat. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

games beginning on Tuesday of this week.

Region championship teams, such as the Lady Indians, will be seeded at the top of the state bracket in the order of their power rankings determined by a formula set up by the Georgia High School Association.

Additional teams not winning a region championship are added for a total of 16 teams based on their power rankings.

The formula gives teams 5 points for a win plus a point for each win by their opponent

with points totaling a third of the number of wins by a winning opponent also awarded to each team.

The number of points are then added up and divided by the number of games played to establish a power ranking.

Games against out of state opponents are not included in the formula, resulting in a somewhat smaller power ranking than would have been received by the Lady Indians if these games were included.

They would have re-

ceived five points for each of two wins against Hiwassee Dam and five for each single win against Hayesville, Murphy, and Highlands plus the appropriate number of points that would have been earned as a result of some 17 wins by Hiwassee Dam, 13 by Hayesville, 8 by Murphy, and 7 by Highlands.

Visit the *Towns County Herald* Web site at www.townscountyherald.net to see which Class A foe the Lady Indians will host on Friday at Bill P. Kendall Gymnasium.

Wilkinson...continued from Page 1A

Feb. 14th.

"I sponsored this bill to recognize the Georgia Young Farmer's Association, founded in 1971," Sen. Wilkinson said. "They serve their communities through classes, field demonstrations, school tours, and other educational activities which allow young farmers to increase farming efficiency and productivity. A group that greatly deserves recognition."

In other legislative action, Sen. Wilkinson sponsored Senate Bill 97 which would allow beef producers the opportunity to hold a referendum to create an Agricultural Commodity Commission for beef.

Sen. Wilkinson explained that commodity commissions are farmer-funded programs that provide for research, education, and promotion of their respective commodity.

There are currently 12

Agricultural Commodity Commissions in Georgia (apple, cotton, milk, peanuts, etc.) which are administered by the Georgia Department of Agriculture.

"A state assessment would allow beef research, promotion, and education efforts to return to levels that farmers and ranchers have enjoyed in the past," Wilkinson said. "I presented the bill to the Senate on Feb. 14 and it passed unanimously. It now goes to the House for consideration."

Wilkinson also sponsored Senate Bill 100 which would reestablish the Career and Technical Education Advisory Committee.

"This committee was in place for several years and served an important role in advocating for Career and Technical Education," said Wilkinson.

The legislation authorizing its existence expired on Dec. 31st. Wilkinson reports that this bill

unanimously passed the Senate Education Sub Committee on Academic Support and will now go to the full committee for consideration.

According to Wilkinson, if it is passed, the director of Career and Technical Education in the state Department of Education will report annually to the commission on the status of CTE in the state, and the commission will issue an annual report on any needs, issues, and challenges facing the program.

"Career and Technical Education is an important component in providing a skilled workforce for economic development in our state and I am pleased to advocate for it in the Senate," said Wilkinson.

A bill that Wilkinson co-sponsored, Senate Bill 94, would establish a statewide Alzheimer's and Dementia Task Force to assess the current and future impact of these

diseases in the state. It has passed the Senate, according to Wilkinson, and has been read twice in the House. The Task Force members will examine Georgia's existing programs and determine the need for additional legislation.

Besides passing legislation, the Senate welcomed newly-elected Sen. Dean Burke (R-Bainbridge) from Senate District 11, formerly held by Sen. John Bulloch (R-Ochlocknee).

Burke was sworn in as a senator on Feb. 8.

"I look forward to serving with Sen. Burke, but I will miss my friend John and all his support and encouragement in my life and career," said Wilkinson.

To contact Sen. Wilkinson as the legislative session continues, he can be reached by phone at (404) 463-5257 or by e-mail at john.wilkinson@senate.ga.gov.

Shooting...continued from page 1A

The incident occurred shortly after midnight last Monday, Towns County sheriff's reports show.

Arrest warrants show that Thomas broke into the home at 367 Opal Road with the intent of committing a felony.

Once inside the home, Thomas shot the male victim in the face with the sawed off 20-gauge shotgun, arrest warrants show.

Thomas then threatened his estranged wife with the sawed off 20-gauge, taking her and the couple's three children, ages 12, 14, and 16 years of age hostage, according to arrest warrants and sheriff's reports.

A physical altercation then took place between the two men.

During the altercation, the three children escaped through a bedroom window and their mother fled through the door.

The mother and her children both arrived at a neighbor's residence and called 911, sheriff's reports show.

The gunshot victim also escaped from Thomas and fled to the neighbor's residence, sheriff's reports show.

Sheriff Clinton secured the neighbor's residence to prevent Thomas from reaching the family he seemed intent on harming.

Deputies secured a pe-

rimeter and two K-9 teams were dispatched to locate Thomas, who had fled on foot after not being able to return to his sister's vehicle parked at a vacant residence, which was secured by deputies.

The victims, while traumatized by the event, did not appear to have any life-threatening injuries.

Once the scene was secure, Sheriff Clinton, assisted by deputies who formed a perimeter, were able to get the shooting victim out of the area and transport the gunshot victim to emergency personnel, who waited at another location free of harm's way.

They helped the mother and her children gather per-

sonal items from their home after it was secured and safely escorted them from the area.

The shooting victim was treated and later released from a local hospital, sheriff's reports show.

Deputies were posted at the residence of the neighbor, as well as at the hospital to prevent Thomas from causing any further harm to the family.

Afterwards, Thomas was located in the wood line behind the vacant residence, where he had parked his sister's car, and was taken into custody without incident.

Sheriff Clinton said the investigation is ongoing and further details will made available later.

Perren...continued from Page 1A

summate community servant, and Elvis impersonator, there is a new skip in his step.

"I'm excited," he said. "I've been talking with Mrs. Williams about this for quite a while. She needed someone to fill this position and it was very intriguing. An added benefit, I've still got some young ones, and I can spend more time with my family."

Williams said that Perren is the perfect person for the job of director of Student Services.

"Roy understands the problems that at-risk students face," she said. "What a jewel we have in Roy Perren, for him to accept this challenge and cherish it."

In his youth, Perren was a STAR Student without direction.

Last year, Perren told a group of Towns County honor students a story about a young man who was his school's STAR Student.

That young man was Perren.

Upon graduation, Perren joined the United States Marine Corps.

Afterward, he attended the University of Georgia with the goal of becoming a lawyer.

A chat with his advisor

broke the news to Perren that lawyers are a dime a dozen.

He then lost interest in his education and left the university.

A few years later, after running restaurants, Perren decided to go back to college.

He left his job as general manager of a Cracker Barrel and returned to the class-room in 1990 at the age of 34, this time at West Georgia University.

He graduated in 1992 with a bachelor's degree; a year later he had a master's degree and in 1994, he had earned a six-year specialist's degree.

Perren admitted that his biggest mistake after high school was that he didn't have a plan.

Years later, as an adult, Perren took responsibility for that.

As a teacher and a parent, Perren hopes that never happens to one of his prized Towns County students.

He spends quite a bit of time talking students out of dropping out of school.

Perren is thrilled to be in a role to help support students in making their plans for tomorrow.

The Towns County Herald wishes Roy Perren the best and continued success in helping students make the right decision.

City of Hiawassee to upgrade pump station

By Libby Shook
Towns County Herald
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The Hiawassee City Council met on Tuesday, Feb. 5th, at their new office facility and approved the Resolution Awarding the construction contract presented by Project Manager Don Baker of Engineering Management Inc. (EMI) for the Longview Sanitary Sewer Pump Station upgrades.

The City of Hiawassee received six bids from area construction firms and EMI was in charge of tabulating the bids received and reviewing the contractor qualifications.

For the base bid, the apparent low bidder was Square Deal Enterprises of Sautee with a bid of \$176,162.

"EMI has worked with Square Deal Enterprises in the past and has always had good experiences with them," said Baker.

"During our company background check of the

company, we received good references," Baker said. "All of the companies and agencies we contacted gave favorable reviews and indicated that they would use them again if given the opportunity."

According to Baker, EMI assisted the City of Hiawassee in obtaining a USDA loan in the amount of \$996,000, which will finance the already constructed belt press building and equipment as well as finance the new Longview Sanitary Sewer Pump Station.

"EMI was not involved with design and construction of the belt press building and equipment," Baker said. "Our involvement in this project was to assist the city in getting a long term loan to pay for the belt press building and the new pump station."

"EMI designed the pump station and is still managing the pump station project," said Baker.

Baker said that the new construction should begin sometime around the beginning of March.