

Towns County Herald

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National Day of Prayer will be May 5

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Thursday, May 5, is the National Day of Prayer, and churches in Towns County will come together on that day to hold a prayer breakfast at the Towns County Recreation and Conference Center.

For planning purposes, a pastor and community breakfast meeting was held at the rec center on Wednesday, March 30, where tickets to the May 5 event were available for the churches to purchase.

Emily Phillips, co-chair of the committee to plan the prayer breakfast, said that she hoped that the churches will be able to buy enough tickets to fund the entire event. That would allow certain members of the community to attend for free if necessary.

"What we did is we sent an email out to every church and we asked that, just from the churches in the community,



Community members and pastors from several area churches attended the National Day of Prayer planning meeting on Wednesday, March 30

if we can sell 500 tickets, it'll cover it," said Phillips. "That way all the youth that are coming in for the youth choir, all the veterans, anybody who shows up the day of, there's not going to be a ticket required."

Event Media Coordinator Irma Flanagan explained that the reason behind the

National Day of Prayer is to have a collective, nationwide opportunity for the nation to pray together.

"The idea is for the whole country to get together and pray together. It's about unity, basically, and the unity of Christians praying in unison," she said.

This is not the first time Towns County has celebrated the National Day of Prayer with a prayer breakfast. For several years, the breakfast was held at McConnell Memorial Baptist Church.

"McConnell Memorial was doing the National Day See *Prayer*, Page 10

Towns County Clean Sweep Week soon

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Earth Day Week begins on April 22, and in honor of the occasion, Grace Howard is holding her third annual cleanup of Towns County, recently named Towns County Clean Sweep Week.

"The program runs through two Saturdays, April 16 through April 23," said Howard. "We have special bags that allow you to take road trash and other debris to the landfill station at no charge."

Prize money in the amount of \$200 will be awarded to the business that picks up the most trash, the church that picks up the most trash, and the individual that picks up the most trash.

"We started this three years ago as just an effort to see what we could do in the county to begin to have a regular



Grace Howard

event," said Howard. "It was the result of something I saw in the paper from Suches. They had a big cleanup over there, and I thought that if Suches can do it, we can do it."

The Towns County Clean Sweep Week is sponsored by the Towns County

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Enotah CASA: 'children most valuable, most vulnerable resource'

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

On Thursday, March 31, Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall signed a proclamation honoring April as Child Abuse Prevention Month.

The proclamation explains that while children are our most valuable resource, they are also the most vulnerable.

Furthermore, child abuse and neglect can be prevented by supporting Towns County's families to prevent the far-reaching effects of mistreatment. By providing a healthy environment that is free of neglect, the community of Towns County can ensure that children grow to their full potential.



Commissioner Bill Kendall signs a proclamation in his office with members of the Enotah CASA on Thursday, March 31

Linda D'Angelo, Executive Director of the Enotah CASA, or Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children, explained that CASA's mission is to provide

for children who have been neglected or abused.

"We advocate to get them a safe, permanent home as quickly as possible," said D'Angelo. "We represent

their best interests to the juvenile court system, making recommendations in their best interest.

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GMRC on board for Hiawassee city planning



Adam Hazell of the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission gives a presentation on planning in the work session of the Hiawassee City Council on Tuesday, March 29.

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

further steps toward planning its future.

At the Work Session meeting of the Hiawassee City Council on Tuesday, March 29, the City of Hiawassee took

Adam Hazell, a member of the planning staff of the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission, gave See *GMRC*, Page 10

Mountain Regional Library renovation to start soon

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Mountain Regional Library System's Board of Trustees held a call meeting on Friday, April 1, at the temporary headquarters of the Mountain Regional Library in the old Blue Ridge EMC building.

MRLS Director Vince Stone led the meeting, which was to hire Winkler & Winkler Construction Professionals out of Blairsville to complete the renovation of the Mountain Regional Library in Young Harris.

The board hired Winkler & Winkler in that meeting, which put in the winning low bid of \$802,033. This bid leaves about \$200,000 of the \$1 million budget to go toward



Front, Ernie Seckinger, Sandi Vaughn and Barbara Hale; back, Joan Crothers, Susan Sinram and Karan Harper attend the called MRLS Board of Trustees meeting on Friday, April 1

associated non-construction costs

"So that gives us our almost \$200,000 for our costs, our FFE (furniture,

fixtures and equipment), contingencies and things like that," said Stone, adding that moving costs and paying the architect and for project

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Yoakam plays for two hours, gives two encore performances

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

For nearly two hours and two encore performances, Dwight Yoakam thrilled fans at Anderson Music Hall on Saturday, April 2.

The show featured oldies, goodies, and even a few new tunes from the Honky Tonk musician, from his 2015 album "Second Hand Heart," as well as a several covers that sounded as good live and coming from Yoakam as they did on record from the original artists.

More than 1,700 people attended the concert, and Yoakam didn't disappoint - he danced all night long in his Blackjacket cowboy boots, seeming to only increase his



Dwight Yoakam with Lt. Mark Henderson of the Towns County Sheriff's Office backstage before the show

energy as the night wore on.

Of course, those gathered knew they were in for a treat that evening.

"I've been a fan for a

real long time, and I heard he was coming so I had to be here," said Zachary Reece of Blue Ridge, who was seeing

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Wildfire preparation a must in forested Towns

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

National Wildfire Preparedness Day is on Saturday, May 7, and for the Towns County Fire Coalition, it's an opportunity to inform others about fire safety.

"The main goal of the coalition is just to raise the awareness level, to educate, and to hopefully get as many of the communities in Towns County as we can certified as 'Firewise Communities,'" said President of the Towns County Fire Coalition Marsha Elliott.

On May 7, the Coalition will be working to spread awareness and education about the threat of wildfire.

"We're going to be doing a variety of activities



Marsha Elliott

around the county, hopefully that day, to emphasize the importance of precautions to prevent wildfires," said Elliott. "Things that you can

See *Wildfire*, Page 9A

Students excel in 'Science Olympiad'

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

On Saturday, March 19, Towns County Elementary School students participated in a region-wide competition known as the Science Olympiad.

Held at North Oconee High School, the Olympiad was a tournament-style competition that tested student knowledge in the fields of science, technology, math and engineering. Out of 22 teams, Towns County took Sixth Place.

To prepare for the big event, the Towns County team met on Thursdays for practice and had mock competitions every other week against the team from Union County. Teachers Debi Williams, Quilla Thomas-Bradley and Lisa

See *Science*, Page 10



The Towns County Science Olympiad Team assembles ahead of the 2016 Regional Tournament, which took place on Saturday, March 19.

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