

Towns County Herald

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Wednesday, April 9, 2014

Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thu: Sunny	70 43
Fri: Clouds	74 46
Sat: Clouds	76 50
Sun: Clouds	74 53
Mon: Clouds	64 40
Tue: Rain	62 39
Wed: Sunny	63 42



Upstream Elevation Predicted 04/09/14

Lake Chatuge	1,922.18
Lake Nottely	1,770.07
Blue Ridge	1,682.65

INDEX

2 Sections, 14 Pages

Arrests	2A
Church/Obits	6A,7A
Classifieds	2B
Editorial	4A
Letters	4A
Legals	3B

SPORTS

Page 8A



Easter Egg Hunt
TC Rec Dept
April 19th

See page 5A

ENOTAH GARDEN CLUB PLANT SALE
YOUNG HARRIS CITY HALL
APRIL 17

See page 5A



Food Distribution
Towns County Food Panty
Tues. April 15th
2-5 PM

See Page 5A

Charlie Pride at Anderson Music Hall
Saturday, April 12 at 7 PM

See page 9A

Hiawassee Garden Club Plant Affair
April 12th
Town Square

see page 5A



BASEBALL:

Fri Apr 11 vs. George Walton
5 PM
Soccer - OFF
Golf - OFF

Shooter Drill focus: 'saving lives'

By Roy Perren
Towns County Herald
News Special

Almost every month we hear on the news of an active shooter somewhere in our country attacking the lives of our most innocent citizens; our children in our schools.

Through the first six weeks of 2014, there have been 13 active school shooter incidents in the United States.

On Thursday, April 3, more than 30 people gathered at Towns County Schools to think of the unthinkable; how would we react to an active shooter incident at our schools.

If you noticed a mass presence of law enforcement and emergency management at Towns County Schools on Thursday, April 3, you now know why.

Representatives from Chatuge Regional Hospital, Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA), Georgia State Patrol, Hiwassee Police, Towns County EMS, Towns County Emergency Management, Towns County Fire & Rescue, Towns County 911, Towns County Schools, Towns County Sheriff's Office, and the U.S. Forest Service went through an active shooter table top drill to plan how to respond to such an event.

C.J. Worden, GEMA



GEMA's C.J. Worden leads that tabletop exercise in how to react to a shooter on the Towns County Schools campus. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

School Safety Coordinator, facilitated the drill.

Although not involving students, this exercise helped local and state agencies plan on how they would work together not only in an incident of this nature, but in any disaster that might strike our school or community.

While prayerfully it will never be needed, the Towns

County School System has developed an Emergency Operations Plan that covers almost any contingency.

The plan is not just a book on a shelf, but a "living plan" developed with input from community and state organizations and members of the school community.

See Drill, Page 9A

TCHS' Robotics team finishes second



Towns County High School's Robotics Team Dragons and Tiaras placed second in a meet at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta.

Jo Ray Van Vliet
Towns County Herald
News Special

The Dragons and Tiaras, Towns County High School's FTC robotics team, was one of

only 18 FTC teams from Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee asked to the First FTC Robotics Invitational Competition at the Georgia World Congress Center on March 28.

The team won second place in the Autonomous Challenge.

In autonomous mode, the

See Robotics, Page 9A

Nine TCHS students head to FBLA Nationals

Allison Page
Towns County Herald
News Special

Towns County High School students Courtney Marshall, McKenzi Moss, Ashley Abrahamson, Lesleigh Irvin, Allison Page, Mia Manto, Nick McConnell, Major Moss and Devin Wheeler will represent Georgia FBLA at the 2014 FBLA National Leadership Conference in Nashville, Tenn.

Georgia Future Business Leaders of America held the State Leadership Conference and Competitive Events at the Atlanta Hyatt Hotel and Conference Center on March 14 through March 16. Twenty members from Towns County FBLA competed in 19 different individual, skill and performance business events.

TCHS was very successful with 12 competitors finishing in the Top 10 in their events. From those, a local record number will represent Georgia at the National Leadership Conference in Nashville, Tenn., beginning June 28 and running through July 3.

In Friday night's opening ceremony, senior member Lesleigh Irvin was awarded the Georgia Who's Who in FBLA Award. She also received a Georgia Outstanding Member Award for her contributions to FBLA on the local, state and national level. Georgia FBLA Executive Director Monty Rhodes also awarded Irvin with a Georgia FBLA Scholarship.

See FBLA, Page 9A



Nine members of Towns County High School's FBLA team are headed back to Nationals. Below, McKenzi Moss becomes the first Towns FBLA member to go to Nationals all four years of her career at TCHS.

Chatuge Regional Hospital will get a \$2.5 million facelift

Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Hiwassee Mayor Barbara Mathis is excited about the upcoming renovations schedule at Chatuge Regional Hospital.

Hospital representatives John Gordon and Lewis Kelley were present to speak on the planned improvements at last week's Hiwassee City Council meeting.

The plans include a new entrance way designed to give visitors the impression of being in a soothing lodge. Plans also include a 10-bed adult psychiatric wing.

The City Council will work with the hospital to upgrade and repair the city sidewalks fronting the entrance. The City also will try to work with the Georgia Department of Transportation about the possibilities of a crosswalk from the hospital to the rehabilitation center. The renovation is expected to cost \$2.5 million, and has the Mayor's full support.

"It's really a great thing," said Mayor Mathis.

Mayor Mathis and the City Council are bringing in



Mayor Barbara Mathis

Spring the right way.

At the meeting on Tuesday, the council approved and finalized several renovation projects and awarded a landscaping and lawn service bid for the city landscaping projects. Furthermore, the City is helping to fund an upcoming bass fishing tournament at Young Harris College.

Hamilton Gardens Curator Paul Hanson gave a PowerPoint presentation on the

See Hiwassee, Page 9A

Young Harris City Council adopts emergency plans

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Towns County Emergency Management Director Ricky Mathis, who has served in his job for 37 years, presented the Hazard Mitigation and the Debris Management plans to the Young Harris City Council last week.

He noted that it was urgent that the City adopt the plans as soon as possible, because the plans come with potential federal reimbursement in the case of an emergency.

However, the council hadn't read through each plan thoroughly, so it was initially unprepared to adopt them. The mayor asked if it could wait.

"We're approaching tornado season," Mathis said. "If we wait until next month, what if we have a storm that comes in tonight and tomorrow, and we have a federal declaration, and you miss out on that additional 5 percent?"

Councilman Dr. John Kelley declared himself "impressed" with each plan, and said, possibly in the interests of expediency, that he personally was in favor of moving along with it. His motion was seconded and both the hazard

mitigation and debris management plans were approved.

However, a member of the public expressed concern with the plans, cautious of "hidden costs." Mathis was quick to reassure him that neither plan came with hidden costs to the taxpayers, either presently or in the future.

Water bills are one aspect of the debt that the city of Young Harris is experiencing, some of which has not been cleared up since last City Hall meeting.

After a long silence, Councilman Kelley recommended that the council sit down together and have an "operational discussion" about the water bills.

Young Harris Mayor Andrea Gibby asked that "because we have auditors looking at us," the idea be put forth in the form of a motion.

The water bills are just the continuation of what is quickly becoming a saga of tangled agendas and halting progress for the Council.

Finally, Councilman Kelley addressed another draft of the water rate schedule.

"I am pleased to report that significant advances,

See Young Harris, Page 9A

Wine & Jazz Festival arrives here in June

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

Agritourism will be in the spotlight in Hiwassee on June 13-14 with the Appalachian Wine, Jazz and Art Festival debuts at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds, General Manager Hilda Thomason said on Monday.

Approximately 15 wineries - including most of the mountain wineries - have already signed up to be a part of the festival, Thomason said.

Those wineries include Crane Creek Vineyards, of Young Harris, Hightower Creek Vineyards, of Hiwassee, Odom Springs Vineyard, of Blairsville, Montaluce Winery & Estates, of Dahlonega, Sharp Mountain Vineyards, of Jasper, Cartecay Vineyards, of Ellijay, and Currahee Vineyard of Toccoa.

Hotlanta Dixieland Jazz, of Stone Mountain, and Monica Spears are just two of the many Jazz attractions headed to Hiwassee, Thomason said.

"We're having a meeting (Tuesday) and we'll complete the Jazz lineup," she said.

The Copper Door, of Hayesville, NC, The Ridges Resort, of Young Harris, The Chophouse of Hiwassee, Brother's Restaurant at Willow



Hilda Thomason

Ranch, of Young Harris, and Bowl of Asia have committed to the event as well, Thomason said.

"We're also hoping to get Cowboys and Angels out of Helen, and also Café Portofino," she said. "We've got plenty of good food and these restaurants will be doing special things."

The event also will feature approximately 15 fine art booths, Thomason said.

"We've got several artists

See Wine Fest, Page 9A

TOWNS COUNTY HERALD

