

# Towns County Herald

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## Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thu: T-Storms 65 47  
 Fri: Clouds 65 42  
 Sat: Clouds 69 45  
 Sun: T-storms 74 49  
 Mon: Clouds 76 51  
 Tue: Clouds 82 54  
 Wed: Sunny 85 58



Upstream Elevation Predicted 05/14/14  
 Lake Chatuge 1,925.09  
 Lake Nottely 1,774.63  
 Blue Ridge 1,686.38

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## Stewart named YHC's Outstanding Scholar

Towns County Herald News Special

**Young Harris** – May 10 was a big day for Jeff Stewart, of Young Harris, as he walked across the stage at Young Harris College to receive his bachelor of music education degree. Stewart, the former Valedictorian at Towns County High School, was one of 167 graduates participating in the College's Commencement ceremony in the YHC Recreation and Fitness Center.



Jeff Stewart

Graduates earned degrees in art, biology, business and public policy, communication studies, education, English, history, mathematics, music, music education, musical theatre, outdoor leadership, psychology, religious studies, and theatre.

Stewart had the opportunity to grace the stage twice, as he was also recognized by YHC President Cathy Cox as one of this year's recipients of the Dr. Charles R. Clegg Outstanding Scholar Award.

This accolade was named in memory of a beloved past president of the College and recognizes graduating seniors

with the overall highest grade point average.

During his time at YHC, Stewart was highly active in many musical ensembles including the College's Concert Band, Chamber Choir, Jazz Band and Purple Reign Pep Band. He was also named a member of the Georgia All College Band that is comprised of student musicians representing colleges and universities throughout the state.

This fall, Stewart will

pursue a master's degree in music performance from Georgia Southern University.

He gained valuable experience this spring while completing the student teaching component of his coursework at West Forsyth High School in Cumming.

"I had to be able to answer questions, motivate, keep the pace moving, stay on track and make sure the students learned something before they left," said Stewart. "It provided me with the best opportunity to experiment with techniques, learn and grow."

YHC alumna and Grammy and Emmy Award-winning singer, author, and actress Trisha Yearwood, Class of '84, delivered the Commencement address to the graduates, sharing with them the importance of following their dreams and finding happiness in their lives.

"The one thing I would say is to be happy. If you find something you love to do, you'll be happy. Whatever that is inside of you, don't be afraid. Don't settle," said Yearwood.

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## Towns deputies arrest Cornelia UCB bank robbery suspect

Towns County Herald News Special

Towns County sheriff's deputies have arrested a 57-year-old Banks County man wanted for armed bank robbery at a United Community Bank in Cornelia on April 26.

Raymond Whitmire allegedly waited in line and when he approached the teller he allegedly threatened that he had a hand grenade.

Subsequent search warrants executed at Whitmire's residence in Banks County revealed what authorities suspect were possible bomb-making materials.

Cornelia authorities felt the bank robbery suspect should be considered armed and dangerous.

Towns County authorities were made aware on Saturday May 10 that the suspect in that robbery could be in Towns County at a motel or a residence off Georgia 339 in Young Harris.

Acting on this information, an investigation began and a check was made of local motels and the residence in question.

At approximately midnight on Sunday, May 11, Deputy Jeremy Parker and SSgt. Cory Ingram located an SUV at the particular residence, which fit the description of the vehicle allegedly used at the scene of the bank robbery. Deputies on the scene continued the



Raymond Whitmire

investigation. Deputies Parker and Ingram discovered that the vehicle was attempting to leave the residence at approximately 12:30 a.m.

After leaving the residence, the suspect was about to pull onto Hwy. 339, a felony stop was conducted by SSgt. Ingram, Deputies Parker and Schuknect, and Chief Deputy Jeff Edge. The suspect was taken into custody and arrested without incident.

Whitmire, of Banks County, was booked into the Towns County Detention Center on May 11 and released into the custody of Habersham County authorities on the same date.

Local charges are pending, Towns County sheriff's reports show

## Kendall honored by Friends of Libraries



Towns County Herald News Special

On April 25th, at the Friends of Georgia Libraries (FOGL) Spring Workshop at the Athens Regional Library, Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall was awarded the "Best Friend" Award.

The award is given by FOGL to a person who has made a significant contribution to statewide advocacy efforts on behalf of Georgia's libraries, or substantially contributed to

the development of a library or libraries in the state.

Kendall was nominated by Mountain Regional Library System Director, Donna Howell and was unanimously approved by the Friends of Georgia Libraries Board.

Barbara Hale, past president of the Friends of the Libraries of Towns County and current FOGL Board member and Howell, Mountain Regional Library System Director, were given the honor of presenting this award to Kendall.

He is the only County Commissioner ever to win the award.

In the letter notifying Kendall of the award, FOGL President Kathy Ash wrote, "Your unwavering commitment to, and critical support for, Towns County's public libraries is a shining example of an understanding of the value of libraries to our Georgia communities."

"Your commitment of

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## Garden Club winners announced



Towns County Herald News Special

Congratulations to Towns County High School students who won on their entries to the three different

contests sponsored by the Hiawassee Garden Club, The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc., and National Garden Clubs, Inc.

In the High School

Gardeners Essay, "Today's Choices Affect Tomorrow's World," Alexis Roach won 1st Place in State and also was Deep South Region

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## Workforce Development almost 1 year old

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

A year ago, Micah Thomas began a journey that no one could predict.

As the mobile jobs bus driver and its only training instructor, Thomas is the link between gainful employment and building an accurate resume for many job seekers in Northeast Georgia.

The journey began when Georgia Mountains Regional Commission Workforce Development obtained two mobile training units with Workforce Investment Act funding through the Governor's Office of Workforce Development. Thomas became Work-



Micah Thomas

force Development's connection with a growing unemployed work force. Thomas and the jobs bus were on hand Wednesday at the Mountain

Regional Library in Young Harris.

"The program is growing," Thomas said. "We focus a lot on the mountain counties. We're able to give a lot of one-on-one attention with the mobile unit. We're excited to give that individual attention."

The Jobs bus is equipped with video technology, computer stations, and a teacher station to conduct training sessions. They're used in each of the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission's 13 counties, including Union and Towns counties, to provide a resource for the unemployed and the underemployed to access needed

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## Wilkinson receives high grades

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

District 51 State Sen. John Wilkinson (R- Toccoa) has received an 'A-plus' grade on the Georgia Chamber's 2014 legislative scorecard.

The Georgia Chamber's scorecard recognizes legislators that supported pro-business initiatives during the recent legislative session.

Midterm assessments from the 2013 legislative session, as well as a final grade for the biennial legislative term, were also included on this year's scorecard.

"The Georgia Chamber is a prestigious organization that works year round for the betterment of business in our state," Sen. Wilkinson said. "It is an honor to receive this rating and I will continue to support legislation that protects the rights and privileges of Georgia workers and businesses."

Decisions Georgia legislators make while serving in the General Assembly have long-term impacts on our state's economic prospects, said Georgia Chamber president and CEO Chris Clark.

"Receiving a high score on the Georgia Chamber's scorecard confirms a lawmaker's commitment to passing job



Sen. John Wilkinson

creation and economic development measures," Clark said. "We commend Sen. Wilkinson for his support of Georgia's business community."

Initiatives enhancing Georgia's competitiveness through economic development, legal reform, business and industry, environment and energy, and education were designated as scorecard issues by the Georgia Chamber Government Affairs Council prior to the start of the 2014 legislative session.

Each legislator's grade reflects an assessment of his or her support for pro-business legislation and the business community.

## Howard: 'Great American Cleanup on May 18th'

By Mason Mitcham Towns County Herald Staff Writer

It's the time of year for allergies and stuffy noses, and for some, spring and summer couldn't be more unwelcome.

For others, like Grace Howard, it's a time for action.

At the Hiawassee City Council Meeting on Tuesday, she spoke about the first Annual Towns County "Great American" cleanup.

It's called "great American" because the program runs across the country, and for the first time, it's coming to Towns County," she said.

On the week of May 18th, Howard and associates are taking the opportunity to do a little spring cleaning.

All across Towns County, they and volunteers will be picking up litter and road trash in designated bags available at the Court House or the City Halls.

The volunteers will take the filled trash bags to the Towns County Transfer Station during that week, and a prize of \$150 will be given to the person who fills the most bags.

At the Council meeting, Howard unveiled the new posters that will be visible around town. "We have an opportunity for everybody to engage



Mayor Barbara Mathis

in this," she said. Other news addressed at the City Meeting had to do with the Community Connection that the City hosted earlier that day, which was an opportunity to thank legislators for their work and to continue to discuss future needs.

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TOWNS COUNTY HERALD

