

## EMC...from Page 1A

deploying TECI's \$12 million Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) initiative as well as a high bandwidth, redundant, territory-wide telecommunications and tower upgrade project in excess of \$8 million.

Additional professional credits include that of principal author and technical specialist for application development of the much sought after Department of Energy Smart Grid Investment funding, then awarded to only 100 electric utilities across the nation. Awarded funding has afforded TECI historically

unprecedented operational efficiencies and cost reductions.

Academically, Nelms has both a Bachelor's of Science in Electrical Engineering and Wireless Engineering from Auburn University as well as a Master's of Business Administration from Florida State University. A licensed professional engineer, Nelms is also a certified professional distribution engineer by the Tennessee Valley Public Power Authority.

Nelms was born in Newnan and raised for several years in Watkinsville before moving to Cullman in

North Alabama. He currently resides in Tallahassee, Fla. with his wife, Elizabeth, and their two children, Bradlee and Mara.

BRMEMC President, Steven Phillips was ecstatic about the news of Nelms' hiring.

"We are excited to have someone with Jeremy's knowledge of the electric industry and educational background to lead us into the future," Phillips said. "The Board is looking forward to working with Jeremy to provide our members with the best service possible."

## Market...from Page 1A

grow down in Atlanta."

Ruthie Lee has been a Farmers Market vendor for several seasons, and she sells hand-sewn items, some of which employ a special lace technique called "tatting" that she learned decades ago from her Great Aunt Ruth, after whom she was named.

Lee said she was thankful for the space provided by the Farmers Market's current location, but believes it's time to starting looking into moving their operation to the Hiawassee Square.

"This is a great location for people to just pull up and sell out of their trunks and all that, but it could easily be done at the square, which would bring more people into the city of Hiawassee," said Lee.

"And I think that, because a couple of our businesses have gone out down there, and we lost the Victoria's Boutique and all that down there, I just feel like it would bring more people to the Downtown Square."

Melvin Masters of Hiawassee is an organic farmer with Rock Hill Farms, which is owned by Truman Barrett. Masters tends the farm with the help of his wife, Amanda, and their two young children, Autumn and Garrhett.

"This is our second year here," said Masters, speaking of the Farmers Market. "Rock Hill Farms is a family business that thrives on supporting their locals. We supply to the restaurant chains, starting from Daniel's Steakhouse all the way to Paul's Steakhouse in Helen. We even supply to Denton's Grocery where they cook at down there."

"We supply to the Dairy Queen, the Mexican restaurants, Enrico's. We supply to



Craig Pietz of Nora Gardens awaits customers. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

all the restaurants around here as well as sell at the Farmers Market on Saturdays. Right there in front of the business office (in Young Harris) we try to keep a booth with vegetables on it."

Rock Hill Farms utilizes a patented special compost mixture that took 15 years to develop, called Better Earth Compost, and the farm operates on a large scale. For example, the Masters are currently growing between 18,000 and 20,000 tomato plants.

"We like to be able to go straight in the garden, pull a vegetable out and be able to eat it right there on the spot - that's what we thrive on," said Masters, adding they also thrive on family fun. "Everything that we grow is a heritage seed that's come through Truman Barrett's family. We re-see the next year, which is no GMO products. That means that anything we grow, we can get the seed off it again."

Several members of the Towns/Union Master Garden-

er Association kept their regular place at the Farmers Market that Saturday, available to answer any and all questions about gardening and growing plants.

Craig Pietz, another regular vendor at the Farmers Market, showcased his country quaint spread of heirloom garden vegetables, flowers and ornamental living art.

"And I have honeybees," said Pietz, who is a big Towns County Indian fan. "I'm out of honey already - my spring honey is already gone. I'm not a great big producer, I only have five hives, but it's quality over quantity. I'd rather have something real good than a lot of something mediocre."

To visit with these vendors and meet more, or to become a market vendor (go ahead, it's free), check out the Towns County Farmers Market on Saturdays from 9 a.m. until noon, directly across from the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds.



## Speech Contest deadline, Thursday, July 7

By Lily Avery  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Mountain Movers and Shakers are hosting their annual Student Speaking Development workshop and contest, with the deadline for entry being Thursday, July 7.

The workshop is open to all middle school and high school students. There will be five workshop sessions held on July 7, 14, 18, 21 and 25 at 6:30 p.m. at the New Senior Center before the contest on August 1.

Winners from grade sixth through 12th will have the opportunity to win a cash prize for places 1st through 4th as well as smaller prizes for sixth, seventh and eighth graders.

Every year the program holds great emphasis on the ins and outs of public speaking, focusing heavily on presentation of a speech. This year, however, a new portion will be added to the workshop to teach kids to not only deliver a speech but also properly write one.

"We would like for this to be the largest workshop we've had," said Mover and Shaker Sam Fullerton. "It's not about the money, it's about how far they can go."

The Movers and Shakers Development Team coordinated the workshop. The team is comprised of Dr. Amber Barrett, Col. Gene Moss, Brandy Creel, Dr. Aubrey Sanford, Sam Fullerton, Ash Todd, C.J. Owens, Terry White and Adam Penland.

Judges for the contest will be brought in from mem-



Terry White

bers of the community and neighboring communities that are not directly affiliated with the Movers and Shakers to ensure a level of fairness.

"Part of our goal is to help students understand that it's far more than just the message, it's your body language and how you interact with your audience to pull them in," said Development Team Chairman Terry White. "You have to pull them in with your emotions. That is a connection that comes from speaking."

"That's one of the things, through the process of teaching kids how to get up and publically speak. We've asked the students who've signed up to think about the subject they are speaking about."

"The point here is you need to talk about something that you have a passion for. If you're sharing something that you have an emotional experience with, it's normal, it's natural."

Previous students who have gone through the work-

shop have garnered monumental success in public speaking contests statewide as well as nationally.

One such student, Adam Penland, a 2016 Towns County High School graduate, recently competed at the national Future Business Leaders of America convention in Atlanta, with the possibility to advance to an international level. He was named a finalist out of 115 students and is the only student competing from the state of Georgia.

Jasmine Forrester, a Young Harris student who attended the workshop, also competed at the national level. Though she did not place, it is still a huge accomplishment for her and a good testament to the skills she has acquired and honed through the program.

"This year, the speech program, we hope will be better, bigger and generate more opportunities to the students," said Fullerton. "Of course, it's not about winning and ranking. It's about advancing yourself in life."

"What it does for a student, it just overwhelms you when you think about what these students are doing. We're very happy about it and excited about it."

"We're going to be with these kids and we hope that we can do more than we've done before. "We appreciate everyone's help and participation."

Right now, there are 20 students signed up for the workshop and contest but the Movers and Shakers extends an invitation to anyone who wishes to participate.

## Candidates...from Page 1A

those signatures in on time, and should therefore be appearing on the General Election Ballot.

Potential candidates have one shot at getting the appropriate number of signatures on their nomination petitions, said Towns County Registrar Tonya Nichols, stating that, "once a petition is turned in, it cannot be supplemented or amended."

So the current tally as of press time Monday is as follows: Chambers, fully qualified as an Independent candidate; Curtis and Barrett, qualified as Independent candidates pending verification.

All three paid their qualifying fees.

In other election news, early voting for the July 26 Republic Primary and Non-partisan Runoff Election began Tuesday, July 5.

The runoff races in

question are as follows:

- The office of 8th District State Representative in the Georgia General Assembly, where voters will be deciding between Matt Gurtler and Kent Woerner.

- The office of Towns County Board of Education Post 5, between Nathan Noblet and Kilee Smith.

Those interested in voting early can do so on weekdays between Tuesday, July 5, and Friday, July 22, from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. each day. There will be no early voting on Saturday, July 16, as previously reported.

The three weeks of early voting will take place in the office of the Towns County Board of Elections and Registration at the Old Rock Jail, between the Towns County Courthouse and the Towns County Public Library in Hiawassee.

Tuesday, July 26, will be the actual Election Day for the runoff. Voting will run from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. that day, and voters will be voting at one of the four predetermined polling precincts on Election Day.

The Towns County Board of Elections encourages all registered voters to vote early, as that is the most convenient way to vote given the centralized location and the three weeks to do it.

It should be noted that those who voted the Democratic ticket in the May 24 election will not be able to vote in the Republican Primary Runoff.

However, voters who did not vote in the May 24 Primary can still vote in this runoff, though they must have been registered to vote in time to have voted in the May 24 Primary in order to vote in the July 26 Runoff.

## Little River Band...from Page 1A

with a couple songs from their new album, "Cuts Like a Diamond," which had everyone bobbing their heads and tapping their feet, enjoying the new music.

One song from the album, The Lost and the Lonely, was specially dedicated to veterans and current soldiers in honor of the Fourth of July.

"We're going to jump out of the hits to play something a little appropriate for this weekend," said Little River Band bassist, Wayne Nelson. "This next story is probably one some of you have already lived through."

"Imagine you're a mom or dad, and through the door come your son or daughter who says 'I can't take what's going on in the world, I have to do something about it.' So they put on a uniform."

"Lets bring them all home safely."

The crowd stood to their feet, cheering with pride for America, for United States soldiers and for the opportunity to honor both with such a renowned classic band.

Opening for Little River Band that evening was local Blairsville band, Modern Vinyl. Modern Vinyl is comprised of three Blairsville members - Connor Smith, Patrick Smith and Micah Tanner - and one Hiawassee member, Kaleb Garrett.

"Modern Vinyl is all about vinyl, old music," said Modern Vinyl lead singer, Patrick Smith.

"Travis Tritt, Three Dog Night, and Little River Band - all these bands are relevant to



us. It's what we love, what we love to cover. It's our craft. It's what we love to do."

Fans came from all over the Southeast to hear Little River Band, reminiscing about younger years and all the memories that come with revisiting music of the past.

One fan, Lee Price from Gainesville, stood backstage waiting to meet his childhood idols and told of how he came to love Little River Band and why they mean so much to him, personally.

"I think my favorite song is The Night Owls," said Price. "It's one of the ones that I really get a kick out of listening to, put the headphones on and jam out."

"My parents, back in the mid and late 70s, we

would go camp out at Coopers Creek, and they would listen to Little River Band's greatest hits all the time so I started listening to it like that."

"Then it evolved. My kids, they listen to what I listened to. It always brings back good memories."

"They're one of those kinds of groups that you listen to when you were little and it brings back a lot of good memories."

Little River Band ended the night with their hits, Lady, and Lonesome Loser, followed by taking pictures of the audience to post on the band's Facebook page.

All in all, it was a night well spent, full of excitement, good vibes, classic rock and a night Hiawassee will never forget.

## Fire Safety...from Page 1A

from infant children to 5 years old. They're taking care of our precious future."

Chief Copeland and Firefighter Rosser earned their Daycare Professionals certification through the Georgia Fire Marshal's Office in Atlanta several years ago in order to be able to teach this class.

"Basically what this class is, it's a recertification for them in fire safety," said Chief Copeland. "We went over fire extinguishers with them, just all kinds of safety measures for daycare teachers."

According to Towns County Water Rescue Team Cmdr. Terry Parker, to equip a diver with the dry suit will cost \$3,000.

"Once we get the diver in the dry suit, we want to get them into a full facemask so they will be fully encapsulated and can dive in any temperature of water, in any kind of environment," Parker said.

When the demonstrations weren't being held, Flotilla 23 set up a booth to hand out brochures on boating safety.

"We're here to inform

"There are many schools and many daycare facilities throughout the nation that do catch fire. So they know where their safe spots are outside the building, how to evacuate the children, where to go with their evacuation, and accountability of the children that are there that day to make sure everything's okay."

One of the benefits of having Chief Copeland and Rosser do the training is that the daycare saves a significant amount of money compared with bringing in someone from Atlanta, which can

translate into higher rates for parents.

"We're able to do it in-house now, since James Rosser and I went and obtained Daycare Professionals certification - it saves the county a lot of money," said Chief Copeland. "And if Union County were to call us, or any others, we're on the list if any other areas wanted to call so that we can go do the class for them. It's a state certification. We can go anywhere in the state and do it."

Disorder train their own service dogs. The raffle was raising money to allow Paws 4 A Warrior to update its training facility and expand the program.

A bloodhound from Independent Search & Rescue Canine Handlers, Inc. (ISRCH) was also at the event.

ISRCH is a national group of independent search and rescue K9 handlers and support personnel available for call throughout the United States to serve fire, rescue, emergency management and law enforcement agencies.

## Rescue...from Page 1A

(dry suits)."

the public about Georgia laws, regulations, equipment that is necessary on boats and stuff of that nature," Cmdr. Nixon said. "We also teach a boating safety class, and our next one is coming up on July 14 at the Ridges at 8 p.m. It allows anyone between the ages of 12 and 16 years old to operate a boat or personal watercraft (PWC)."

One of the booths at the event was manned by Paws 4 A Warrior, a charity organization that helps veterans in the tristate area diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress

Building, also known as the old Recreation Center.

"This Heritage Day is special because we're honoring our veterans," said Towns County Historical Society President Sandra Greene. "We're definitely concerned about the World War II veterans because they are leaving us at such a rapid rate but we also don't want to short-change the Vietnam veterans and the Korean veterans."

"And especially veterans from the wars we have been having for the last ten years or so. I think we need to make sure they're honored also."

"But, really, if you've

served our country then you're a veteran. Just because you didn't serve in wartime doesn't mean you're excluded."

"Heritage Day in general is important to us because the local history is fading away because people are moving away."

Heritage Day will begin sharply at 11 a.m. and will end at 2 p.m.

The Historical Society would like to extend an invitation to everyone in the community, not just veterans, to come out, participate in the festivities and show support for the local history and brave members of the Armed Forces.

## Heritage Day is on Saturday, July 9

By Lily Avery  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

The ability to celebrate local heritage is a freedom to be cherished and embraced. What better way to continue the celebration of America's independence than by commemorating such local and national culture, made possible by men and women who have laid down their lives throughout the years fighting for such rights.

The Towns County Historical Society is hosting their annual Heritage Day, with an emphasis on local veterans, on Saturday, July 9 at the Towns County Historical Society