

## EMC...from Page 1A

some hits, and in some cases, deservedly so.

"The Terry Taylor (former president of EMC Board of Directors) situation (owing more than \$48,000 in back utility bills) should have never happened," Henson said. "It created a backlog of mistrust from the membership and deservedly so.

"I think what needs to happen is for everyone to get on the same page," Henson said. "The directors need to have the best interests of the EMC and the membership at heart when making decisions. If they do that, everything else will work itself out.

"Right is right, and wrong is wrong," he said. "If you make a mistake, fess up, just admit it. Nobody is perfect and people understand that sometimes mistakes are made."

Henson provided a response to a recent Letter to the Editor published in the *North Georgia News* as well. That letter implies that five current or former directors owe more than \$65,000 in loans from the EMC. Policy Bulletin No. 250 prohibits the organization from making loans to employees or directors for any purpose.

"Policy Bulletin No. 232 allows directors, employees and any member of the EMC

to partake in promotions offered by the EMC such as hot water heaters, heating and air, or any other type of energy conservation promotion," Henson said.

"Of the \$65,399 that was mentioned, more than \$45,000 of that is the debt created by Terry Taylor," he said. "The rest of that is money owed for energy conservation promotions, which is perfectly permissible.

"I guess it all goes back to what I was saying earlier, we need to work together instead of against each other," he said. "If we're all on the same page, things will work out."

## Hermits...from Page 1A

success during the same era as The Beatles, and knew The Fab Four from his early days with Herman's Hermits, before the man who discovered The Beatles, manager Brian Epstein, died.

"I knew (Brian) pretty well, he was a really nice bloke," said Noone. "I thought he was a brilliant manager as well. He set the Beatles up beautifully as gents. It was a pretty rough bunch when he got them, so he polished them up nicely and kept them together for much longer than anybody expected."

Much has changed since he entered the business in the 1960s, said Noone, as music has become less of a shared experience than in yesteryears.

"When I was a kid, my mother listened to the same songs I did - they were just on the radio," said Noone. "You'd be in the car and you would hear songs. Now, everybody listens to their own personal

choices.

"You see a car go by, and there's some kid watching a movie in the backseat, and there's some kid with a headset on playing a game. The mom is listening to one thing, chatting on her phone, and the father is listening to whatever he wants to. It used to be people sat in the car and shared the music that was on."

And even after all these years, Noone still gets a kick when he hears one of his own songs playing over the radio.

"When we made those records, it was never on the menu 50 years from now," said Noone. "It was not even five weeks from now that records disappeared forever, I remember. People my age were the first generation of people who were able to collect music. My parents couldn't collect their favorite records - that didn't exist. Now, they're all there for everybody.

"Once upon a time, I col-

lected music. I'd go and buy a Buddy Holly record, and I would bring all my friends around to listen to it. There was no way to share it with them other than listening to it."

Music used to be easier to share among friends in that jukeboxes, record players and radios were primary sources of experiencing music, and people would gather around these beacons of tonal expression, as opposed to everyone owning their own inexpensive MP3 players today.

And this Friday, Noone with Herman's Hermits will be sharing his music via another tried-and-true method of communal experience - with concerts for all who attend the Fair.

"It's nice, I've been there before, I like it," said Noone. "I'm a bit of a tourist. I'll probably get there the night before and spend the day in Hiawassee."

## Deyton...from Page 1A

With such an overwhelming sense of public safety, it's clear that the county is safer now that Deputy Deyton has returned to work.

"A lot of folks were there that helped out," said Sheriff Chris Clinton in the ceremony. "Aaron's been through quite a bit of time getting over this, and he's back with us on part-time light duty as of yesterday. We're very proud to have you back, Aaron.

"Everybody in this room and everybody in this community - everyone I've talked to has expressed their sincere support and thoughts and prayers for you and your family, and we're very glad to have you back."

The evening served as a way of recognizing Deyton and the individuals who were involved that fateful night, as Sheriff Clinton presented awards to many of the people in attendance.

"One thing about the public safety community that is amazing to behold is, we spend

our lives, really, each and every one of us, helping other people, we put ourselves at risk," said Sheriff Clinton. "But when one of us goes down, that hits really close to home, and everybody still does their jobs.

"It's teamwork, and it was fluid. There were a lot of people that night that did their jobs really, really well, and I know Aaron's very thankful for everybody pulling together like that."

Sheriff Clinton presented Deputy Deyton with the Medal of Valor.

"Valor is defined as someone having courage, particularly in a battle, despite the danger to themselves," said Sheriff Clinton. "Not a whole lot of people get a Medal of Valor in this line of work, and I know this gentleman right here deserves the Medal of Valor he's getting."

The Sheriff's Office awarded Deputy Matt Prentice and City of Hiawassee Police Officer Tracy James with Meritorious Service Commenda-

tions. Officer James made the initial traffic stop of the suspect on Oct. 1, and together with Deputy Deyton and Deputy Prentice, the three were able to subdue and apprehend the suspect who assaulted Deputy Deyton.

Hiawassee Chief of Police Jimmy Wright accepted the Meritorious Service Commendation on behalf of Officer James.

In the ceremony, Sheriff Clinton recognized Fire Chief Harold Copeland and several firefighters: Wayne Canterbury, Jeff Scott, Tyler Keyes, Evan Keyes, Billy Keyes, Bruce Berrong, Marty Roberts and John Dancsecs.

He also recognized 911 Director Laura Stamey and dispatchers Christine Van Nus, Presley Smith, Angela Duvall and Karen Abercrombie.

Towns County EMS employees Curtis Walls, Corey Ledford, James Cowart, Justin Mitchell and Brad Hamer were also awarded certificates of appreciation.

## Kendall...from Page 1A

has since wanted a similar monument in Towns County.

"I've been wanting to see if we can get something similar

to that, and we've been talking to people," he said. "And so a gentleman from Blairsville that's been doing that artwork

in Meeks Park and all around the country, is coming soon to look at that and do something in metal like that."

## Midway a happening place to be at the Fair

**By Mason Mitcham  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer**

On Thursday, July 16, the Smokey Mountain Amusements Carnival opened at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds.

Located at the ball grounds adjacent to the fairgrounds, the Midway compliments the Georgia Mountain Fair.

"The Georgia Mountain Fair always gets a carnival to come in, and they pay us a percentage for being here," said Hilda Thomason, general manager of the Fairgrounds. "I've been using Smokey Mountain Amusements for a long time, and this is Smokey Mountain Amusements, but Billy Clark, who owned the carnival all these years, is actually retiring and getting out of the business."

The carnival ownership is shifting to Katie Wilson and her husband, who have helped manage the Midway for almost a decade. Unfortunately that means the carnival is going through a bit of a transition period and has had to downsize somewhat.

"They've got some rides, and he's put his rides with them. He usually has about 30 rides, but he's got a lot of empty space down there," said Thomason.

She added, "I think they'll do okay."

Thomason expects the Midway to provide entertainment for children while the adults are at the Fairgrounds listening to their Country Mu-



sic favorites or learning about the arts of blacksmithing or moonshining.

"It is for the children. Something the kids like to do is ride the rides. But the music is the biggest part for the adults. People like the music and they like the crafts and they like the Pioneer Village too, but it's just

been real difficult about the carnival this year," she said.

The carnival's growing pains will hopefully be short lived.

"It's just a lot of equipment, a lot of money, and a lot of big headaches that go along with it," owner Katie Wilson said.

## Parade...from Page 1A

Le Church with his pontoon boat full of Ski Club members. He came just after the other Grand Marshal, none other than Rhubarb himself.

"Hilda Thomason contacted me several months ago and asked me if I want to do it and I said I hadn't been on the radio in about seven years and she said that it doesn't matter, people still remember me. And this is one of my favorite places. My daughters and me drove up here yesterday, and to me one of the most beautiful drives is between Pickens County and Towns County. I just love it," said Jones.

Jones has degrees from the University of West Georgia and Shorter University.

He is now a senior director at the Office of Development for Special Projects at Kennesaw State University. He is currently working on getting funding for a new motorsports program for KSU.

Before that, he was an adjunct professor of media studies.

Most folks don't know that about Rhubarb. But one thing they'll never forget is his annual *March Across Georgia* to raise money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

And they'll never forget that Rhubarb was the voice at WYAY Eagle 106.7 FM in At-



lanta for 23 years. Those days at Y106 landed Rhubarb in the Country Music Hall of Fame as a disc jockey. He's also had film roles in *Remember the Titans*, *Major League*, *Trouble with The Curve*, and in *The Heat of the Night* television series.

Before that, his radio days included WWCC in Bremen and WCLS in Columbus. He also worked at WSKY AM in Asheville, NC and WPID in Piedmont, Ala. He was inducted into the Georgia Radio Hall of Fame in 2007.

Although he now has a career in education, he stays connected to his old career in his spare time.

"I have a radio station inside my house, but I voice track for a radio station down in Montgomery, Ala., where I used to live, and in August I'm going to start voice tracking a mid-day show for Carrollton," Jones said. "It kind of keeps my finger in it."

He added that the teaching career and the radio career are similar in a lot of ways.

"They both require time and discipline. They both require preparation. Radio was fine, but I look at it, as I wanted to do other things. When I started at West Georgia, I wanted to be a teacher. And I got to do that," he said.

## Library attendance up in Towns County

**By Mason Mitcham  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer**

At its monthly meeting on Tuesday, July 14, the Towns County Library Board had some exciting news to share: library attendance is up by more than half since the same quarter of 2014.

"We have had a gargantuan amount of increase. Even last quarter's statistics were up since we got back into this building in Oct.," said Branch Manager Debbie Phillips. "We've had lots of things going on, lots of attendance for various reasons. These are not all just someone that may come in to get a book. There's lots of things that are going on besides that."

New programs may be driving attendance upward. For example, the library event passes to the Atlanta Zoo are up by 82 percent. A family can check out one zoo pass per year, per household from the library, receive a receipt, and use that receipt to gain free admission into the Atlanta Zoo.

Another reason for increased attendance is simply that the library has been closed

fewer times this quarter. In 2015, the library has enjoyed almost half again more hours open to the public, giving more people more chances to come and enjoy its services.

Next, Director Vince Stone gave his report.

"During the past three months, I have had successful meetings with a majority of our major funding agencies including Commissioner Kendall and I was able to meet him and present our request for the next year, which he didn't seem to have a big problem with," Stone said. "We basically asked him to match what they gave us last year, and he didn't seem to think that would be a problem, but we won't know for sure until like September or November."

In other news, Stone attended a regional board meeting recently. "We passed motions to hire the architectural firm officially, hire the project manager officially, and the lease agreement was approved officially for us to move our library to the electric company building down the street," he said.

"There was something significant that was passed at this regional board meeting," he went on. "We will be closing the libraries on Veterans Day. We have never done this in the past but because some managers have expressed to me some patrons had complained that we were closing on Martin Luther King Day but not Veterans Day. They felt that since we're a conservative region, we should give our patrons and our staff a chance to celebrate Veterans Day, so we will be closing."

The regional board also voted to pass a new budget, which guarantees pay raises almost universally for all library staff.

"It was very much needed," said Stone. "We had some people at \$7.50 an hour that were doing fantastic work for us that we were able to move up. And if all our funding agencies come through, like they promised, we should be able to afford all the raises and not have any furloughs for next year. So everything looks good at this point."

## Food Pantry now serving 1,000 families a month

**By Mason Mitcham  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer**

At the county meeting on Thursday, July 16, Towns County got a sobering reminder of the realities of economic downturn and poverty.

The Towns County Food Pantry serves about 1,000 families a month, or about 1,800 individuals.

"We have anywhere between 65 to 75 volunteers a month that give about 1,000 hours," said Teresa Stephens who oversees the Food Pantry. "I have two paid employees, they work 20 hours a week, and they give selflessly, and every volunteer we have gives selflessly. If we didn't have that, we would not be able to function."

Stephens hopes to possibly partner with the Towns County Farmers Market in the future to see if they can help the food pantry. For the present, the food pantry will have a booth at the Georgia Mountain Fair all week.

John Becker, the president and CEO of the Food Bank of Northeast Georgia, gave a presentation about the state of hungry families in Northeast Georgia, including Towns County.

"We serve 14 counties in Northeast Georgia, and Towns is one of those," Becker said. "Our job as a food bank is to support food pantries. That's our primary job, and Teresa is here and she does a fabulous job with the Towns County Food Pantry. They are good people."

The Food Bank of Northeast Georgia works toward ending hunger as part of a greater



Towns County Food Pantry's Teresa Stephens.

community effort to alleviate poverty.

"We look at what's called food insecurity and folks struggling to figure out where their next meal is coming from," said Becker. "In the United States, the food insecurity rate is 15.8 percent. Here in Georgia though, it's 18.7 percent," he informed those assembled.

"In Towns County, primarily the reason you're doing better is because of folks like Teresa and the good people of Towns County helping people out. Ya'll have 13.3 percent of your population reporting food insecurity, so it's down from there but that's because of the activities of the chair of the sectors here helping out," he added.

Towns County is doing a little more to alleviate hunger than the state average, but those in the county that do face food insecurity are doing a lot worse. In other words, although the food pantry is helping many people, those

who go hungry unfortunately go very hungry.

"Folks who are struggling here in Towns County are really having a hard time," Becker emphasized.

"You know what the economy is like, and gas prices and all that are really taking the starch out of people, and so it's really good to have strong community systems," he added.

Stephens is one of the county's biggest assets in helping to reduce hunger. She started about seven years ago, and although she doubted herself at first, the food pantry now provides to thousands of people.

"I was like, I don't know how to do this, I don't know how we're going to make this work, but it did work," she said.

"We're still private donations, we don't get government money or anything for the food pantry, so it's the people of Towns County helping Towns County, and we do only serve Towns County," she said.

ing to see what they have," she said. "They have different stuff every year. I like the jewelry man, he's one of my favorites."

As far as concerns about the size of the Midway, she said that the carnival couldn't justify bringing in a larger amount of equipment if it doesn't regularly get the kind of turnout that will help pay for it. However,

they're making up in quality what they lack in quantity.

"We're going to have like a water ball attraction. It's like a hamster ball. Kids get in these inflatable balls and roll around in the water. I would want to ride the rides for sure," she said.

The Midway will be open through Sunday.