

Towns County Herald

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Wednesday, September 2, 2015

Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thurs: Sunny	86 66
Fri: Clouds	84 65
Sat: Rain	79 64
Sun: Rain	78 63
Mon: Rain	80 62
Tue: Rain	81 63
Wed: Clouds	80 61



Upstream Elevation Predicted 09/02/2015	
Lake Chatuge	1,922.05
Lake Nottely	1,769.71
Blue Ridge	1,679.96

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6th Annual Tractor Show and Parade
Union County Farmers Market
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Lake Chatuge Charity Classic Golf Tournament
 Sept. 18th
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2015 Chamber Business Showcase
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SPORTS FOOTBALL
Fri. SEPT. 4 VS. MT. VERNON 7:30
SOFTBALL
Wed. SEPT. 2 VS. COMMERCE 4:45 PM
TUES. SEPT. 8 @ COMMERCE 4:45 PM

Brewer takes the reins as EMC GM

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

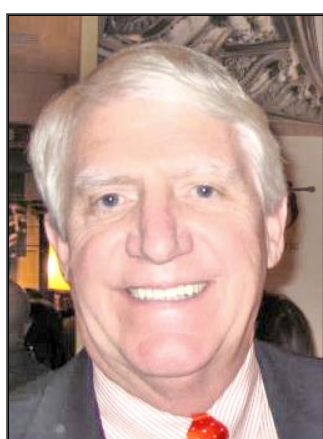
The Blue Ridge Mountain EMC Board of Directors has formally announced that Dan Brewer has been hired as interim Executive Vice President and General Manager, according to a release from the cooperative.

Brewer replaces Matthew Akins, who resigned as Executive Vice President and General Manager on Aug. 21.

Brewer has 44 years of experience in the electric industry, including more than 27 years managing electric cooperatives across the country.

Brewer has served as interim general manager for three other co-ops located in Colorado, Missouri, and Montana.

An electrical engineer, Brewer began his co-op management career in an extremely rural community in Indiana, followed by a 20-year stint as the CEO of Blue Grass Energy Cooperative in Kentucky, a 56,000-meter co-op located near



Dan Brewer
 Lexington.

In recent years, Brewer has been serving as an executive search consultant for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), helping cooperatives across the country with their CEO search efforts.

Brewer and his wife, Paulette, have two sons and three grandchildren.

BRMEMC President Bill Prather said that Brewer would bridge a critical gap

for BRMEMC as it moves forward.

"Dan Brewer will help bridge a critical gap for the EMC as we search for our next permanent vice president and general manager," Prather said. "Dan brings a wealth of experience to the table, and has the skill sets needed to move this cooperative forward."

The EMC Annual Meeting is Sept. 12. Two board of director seats are up for grabs and one has already been decided.

In Union County, Mickey Cummings, Patrick Malone and Charles Rich are on the ballot by petition.

In Towns County, Roy Perren, who got on the ballot by petition, faces Jerry Nichols, who was nominated by the EMC Board of Directors.

In Fannin County, Larry Williams is unopposed on the ballot after gaining admission to the ballot by petition. Prather, the EMC Board of Directors' president, declined the nomination to seek another term on the board.

Fire & Rescue gets quick knockdown on fire



Towns County Fire Chief Harold Copeland and firefighters look over the ruins of a home in Bald Mountain Park on Jones Gap Road. Thanks to a swift response, a good portion of the home was saved. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

By Shawn Jarrard
 Towns County Herald
 Staff Writer

Thanks to the swift response and tireless efforts of Towns County Fire and Rescue in the late hours of Wednesday,

Aug. 26, most of a home on Jones Gap Road in Bald Mountain Park was saved from total destruction by fire.

The fire has been deemed suspicious and is currently under investigation, according to Towns County Fire Chief

Harold Copeland.

Damage occurred in the kitchen area, burning up a wall and creating a hole in the ceiling, allowing for the release of superheated gases that likely

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Abi David receives high honor

By Shawn Jarrard
 Towns County Herald
 Staff Writer

Several Towns County youths took part in the recent Mountain Movers and Shakers meeting featuring keynote speaker U.S. Rep. Doug Collins.

Of the many goals of the Mountain Movers and Shakers, the group's most important ideals have everything to do with the future of the county and, by extension, the country, through the advancement of area youth leadership via public speaking and community awareness.

After speaking on several issues, including veterans' affairs, the Iran Nuclear Deal, Planned Parenthood and coming up with the federal budget, Rep. Collins honored local high school student Abi David, who is homeschooled and helps to run her family's honey business.

"I wanted to take time for Abi David," said Rep. Collins, pointing to David seated nearby. "If you don't know of her work with Uganda and the issues that she has there - we



U.S. Rep. Doug Collins presents Abi David with the Certificate of Congressional Recognition at the Movers and Shakers meeting in Young Harris. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

just wanted to recognize her work with the clean water, the wells. If you've not seen her information, you've not had a chance to get involved with just knowing what your folks here in the county are doing.

"Sometimes it's just highlighting the good stuff. I want to give this Congressional Recognition to Abi for her hard

work in helping go beyond Towns County, go beyond the mountains of North Georgia to actually impact the world. That's what you can do when you put your mind to something. Thank you so much."

David, 17, received the Certificate of Congressional

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Young Harris Festival a breath of fresh air

By Mason Mitcham
 Towns County Herald
 Staff Writer

At the Young Harris Art Festival on Saturday, Aug. 29, the usual eclectic mix of vendors and craftsmen set up to show off and sell their creations.

In addition to the knife and the soap makers, the artists and the photographers, the woodcarvers and the gardeners, a family of blacksmiths also set up near the back of Mayor's Park.

The Zeigler family now boasts three generations of blacksmiths - 6-year-old Mason Zeigler is the son of Lance Zeigler, who is the son of John Zeigler.

"I got my son hooked, and he's got his hooked," John Zeigler explained.



The Zeigler Family boasts three generations of blacksmiths.

chanic since he was younger than Mason.

"Over the years I've been a mechanic, I've repaired equipment, built trailers, built equipment. So blacksmithing is just a continuation of the use of metal," Zeigler said, explaining that he does it for the love of the

fire and metal.

"It's the fact that you can take a piece of metal, cold and unforgiving more or less, and then you can take a 6-year-old or a 4-year-old girl who can bend it just by heating it," he

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David Allan Coe headlines at The Hall

By Shawn Jarrard
 Towns County Herald
 Staff Writer

Entertainment is the name of the game at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds, and this September, Anderson Music Hall will play host to a duo of first-time visitors.

David Allan Coe, known for an avant-garde approach to Country Music with his particular brand of Outlaw Country, will perform at The Hall on Friday, Sept. 4, at 7 p.m.

His many hits include The Ride, You Never Even Called Me By My Name, Would You Lay With Me (In A Field Of Stone) and Mona Lisa Lost Her Smile, and tickets for Coe are still available for \$34 and \$24.

Later in the month, the Taste of Home Cooking School Show will bring its live-cooking event on Saturday, Sept. 19.

The show promises exciting, energy-packed live cooking demonstrations fea-



David Allan Coe

turing Chef Michelle Roberts, with plenty of door prizes and special perks for VIP tickets, which are only \$37, and regular tickets are \$17.

Chef Roberts has never been to Hiawassee, and said she is excited to come to the area and experience new things.

So, what can people expect from the show?

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Book and Bake Sale going strong for Friends of Library

By Mason Mitcham
 Towns County Herald
 Staff Writer

Towns County's two libraries, along with the Friends of the Libraries of Towns County, have kicked off their annual "Book and Bake" sale, this year headquartered at the old Blue Ridge Mountain EMC building.

The sale began on Wednesday, Aug. 26, and has turned out to be the biggest book sale yet.

"We estimated when we started that we had about 20,000 or 25,000 books," said Book Sale Chairman John Roberts. "This is a wonderful venue for a book sale, except we don't want anybody to get back in the back and get lost."

The surplus of books comes in large part from a donation after the closing of a library in Dahlonega, and what didn't come from Dahlonega was gotten by many other generous donors.

"Most of the better books, the best ones, were donated to us by a lot of wonderful people in the area. We've got great people with great books," Roberts said.

Roberts has been working the Book and Bake Sale for close to 15 years, but he said that change is coming soon.

"In the new library, when they finish the renovation in Young Harris, the new one will have its own bookstore. So we'll sell books year round, and have an occasional sale to clear the shelves, so we're going to be very busy still," he said.

So far, the sale has exceeded expectations, already



John Roberts

racking up more money than last year.

"We're ahead of last year by a whole bunch," said Roberts. "So we'll end up with enough money that we'll get matched again, we're hoping by (Towns County Sole) Commissioner Bill Kendall, who has been good to us for many years. If we raise \$5,000, he manages to match it for us, so that's a pretty good incentive to do a good job, so we're going to beat that this year for sure."

Even after earning all that money, the sale is still going strong.

"I think our total last year for the sale itself was about \$4,000, and we're over that already and we still have the rest of today to go, and then next week we'll have three more days, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday," said Roberts.

The money will go straight back into the library system.

"We buy 85 percent of the new books for the library. The state is hardly giving any money for books, so we're

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STEM program cranks up at TCES

By Mason Mitcham
 Towns County Herald
 Staff Writer

Towns County Elementary School has started working on its STEM - Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics - certification, which will not only help students qualify for future jobs, but it's also just plain fun.

As part of the STEM curriculum, elementary school students get to work hands-on with robots. Not the big city-smashing robots like in the movies - these "Finch" robots are much friendlier, small and shaped somewhat like baby birds.

"We got these Finch robots on loan from Carnegie-Mellon, which is an Ivy League school," Elementary School Principal Dr. Sandy Page said. "Every child has one, there's 34 of them, and they learn from Debi Williams and Lisa Ledford. They'll take these robots and program two at a time, and they work in teams. They have to program commands, so for example, the robots kiss and their noses light up. It's fun."

The Finch robots allow students to write interactive programs that make the Finches behave in a variety of ways. The robots are equipped with light, temperature and obstacle sensors, as well as motors, buzzers and LED lights.

Jo Ray Van Vliet, the high school robotics team mentor, took the lead to develop this program. She found out about the loan program at Carnegie-Mellon and took steps to arrange for the elementary school



Dr. Sandra Page

to get the Finches.

"She is just incredible in starting this program, she is instrumental," said Dr. Page.

The Finch robots are patented by Birdbrain Technologies, which believes that all kids should have the chance to learn coding and computational thinking skills. To that end, it aims to provide the robots to a diverse group of students so they can expand their exposure to computer science.

"Basically, it's to give children a hands-on approach to programming," said Lisa Ledford, who runs the math and science lab. "We know that a lot of these children, the jobs do not even exist today that they will do when they're adults, so we want to expose them to as much as we can and get them motivated to learn more, so that's what this is about."

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