

# Moore...from Page 1

problems with people in the community.

The coalition won't know for sure exactly what is causing current bacteria levels in certain streams until more sampling and investigation is completed, but likely causes are livestock near waterways and failing or leaking septic systems.

"What we do is, we draw up a watershed plan or a plan for decreasing the bacterial contamination, and we go after grants to help people fix leaking and failing septic systems, to help provide fencing and alternative water for cattle," said Moore. "We just really go into the area and try to work with the landowners and the folks in the community to correct the problems."

"This is the kind of thing that we've been doing on the Hiwassee River in Towns County since 2007. We just finished a two-year grant where we replaced nine failing septic systems that were all inside of the lake. So, the coalition has a track record for actually being able to address the problems, but we've just got to get our ducks in a row, because grants are so competitive that we have to really know what we're doing, and know where the real problem areas are before we go off asking for money."

Over the coming year, the coalition has several projects lined up for Towns County, including continuing to monitor bacteria levels in impacted streams.

"We have more monitoring stations in Towns County and more volunteers monitoring water quality in Towns County than in any other county," said Moore. "We're going to continue the

monitoring program to include E. coli, and we have four sites in Lake Chatuge where we monitor E. coli. The City of Hiwassee funded the in-lake monitoring program for us to be able to do all that, and they sponsored the equipment that's located in city hall."

Also, the coalition will be erecting an educational kiosk at a low-water boat ramp just east of Hiwassee on Lake Chatuge, between the city and Towns County Schools.

"The Rotary Club has funded a project for us to stabilize the shoreline there, and to put up an educational kiosk about Lake Chatuge," said Moore. "You can actually see the drinking water intake from there."

And on Saturday, Nov. 14, the coalition will once again host its annual Chatuge Shoreline Cleanup.

"We're going to continue to search for funding to implement more projects to fix leaking and failing septic systems, and do shoreline projects like the one I was just talking about at the ramp, and things like that," said Moore. "We're just going to continue to look for funding to do the same types of projects that we've been doing in Towns County."

Furthermore, the coalition will be teaming up with Young Harris College to develop a plan for restoration work on Corn Creek following the conclusion of construction at the college that took place along the creek in recent years.

Towns County may have more volunteers than the other counties in the Upper Hiwassee River Basin, but there's always

a need for volunteers to help with sampling efforts around the county, and volunteers can sign up for workshops in order to receive the necessary training to take samples.

Moore pointed out that the local governments of the two Georgia counties monitored by the HRWC have been proactive over the years, aiding the coalition's mission for clean water in the North Georgia area.

"The City of Hiwassee, the City of Young Harris, Towns County, Union County - we have good support from our local government leaders, and I think that's another very important message, because we don't have that on the North Carolina side of the line right now," said Moore.

"I just want people in North Georgia to understand that their leaders are supportive, and they're helping fund these monitoring programs, and they're open to whatever level of support that they can provide within reason for these projects," Moore added.

Anyone interested in learning how to take samples should contact Moore at the HRWC, as every volunteer helps the cause.

"It's super important and getting more critical every year," said Moore. "As you can see from other parts of Georgia, there's already a lot of controversy over having enough and having enough clean water, and we're fortunate here that right now we do have enough, and we do have enough clean water. The coalition's mission is to help keep it that way."

# Involvement...from Page 1

help nights, kind of like a training on how to help your student do their homework. Those are the kind of things that, with the parents, you'll have much better attendance on those. Spooky Science Night, you'll probably have 80 to 100 parents there, maybe more," he added.

The future holds even more opportunities for parents to take an active interest in their child's education.

"We've got some other things planned. We changed to a new student information system this year and will be delivering information on that,

and I expect that will be well attended. Also the Georgia Milestones Test, we'll be doing an information session on that as part of this Title I thing," said Perren.

At the meeting, he explained that Title I schools receive federal dollars to supplement the schools' existing programs.

"These dollars are used to help identify students who have academic difficulties, to help them meet challenging content. These are things that the school would normally not have if not for this program. It's used for conducting parental

involvement meetings such as this and also recruiting and retaining qualified teachers. It also means that you have parental involvement and parental rights," Perren explained.

"It's just a great program that really benefits our students. And these kinds of meetings don't draw much crowd, but when we get into specific subject-content type things, we'll get a much better turnout, like at the high school we'll have one for getting ready for college and financial aid, and we'll have 50 parents that night," he said.

# Market...from Page 1

in disguise, though they look so much like pumpkins that they might as well masquerade as such.

Known affectionately around town as the Hiwassee Fruitstand, Reynolds said the market also carries dried out cornstalks for further fall decorating needs.

Local apples are currently on the menu, with even more varieties expected come Oct. 1 from all over the region, Reynolds said.

Located across from the Towns County Senior Center, the market specializes in buying and selling local, seasonal produce, and was opened by owner Frank Cox in 1994, when it was just a small stand next to McDonalds.

"We've been here about 21 years, I guess. We're the longest-running fruit stand in Hiwassee," said Reynolds.

Reynolds lived in Atlanta for some time before coming to Hiwassee.

"My father passed away and we came here to see my sister," she recalled. "We visited her one time, went home, packed our bags and our stuff, and came right back."

Reynolds explained that she and her family wanted to come here for their children, the schools, and to get away from all the drugs in Atlanta.

Although she doesn't personally grow any of the produce, she buys from those who do.

"When local produce is around, that's our first and foremost priority to get from. Like the beans and pickles and peppers and cabbage," she said. "And when they have the Towns County Farmers Market down here at the beach and they're done and they don't



**Market Manager Janet Reynolds**

sell it all, they bring it up here for us to buy, and most of the time we do."

They also buy direct from the source.

"We've got local farms around here like S&M and Truman Barrett and all kinds of people around here who grow a lot of great stuff. Anything that's in season, we have it. If it's to be found, we've got it," she said.

The Fruitstand is also currently serving peaches, muscadines, strawberries and other seasonal produce on top of its growing fall selection.

"What we have in the fall, we're looking forward to our pansies, pumpkins, all kinds of stuff. Then you have your fall squashes, like your butternut, spaghetti squash, acorn squash, all kinds of different squash. And we still carry the regular vegetables that, when the locals are over with, we can still get stuff that comes out of Florida or that comes out of Tennessee," said Reynolds.

For Reynolds, maintaining the stand is a labor of love. She likes being able to use the fresh produce to make

her own meals.

"I always try to make different things, to test things out to see what I like. Some turn out good, some don't. Then I get recipes from customers. Customers come in here with recipes all the time with different things that they made," she said.

Along with cash, the Fruitstand also takes debit/credit cards, and Reynolds guarantees great customer service seven days a week - Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 8 a.m. until 7 p.m., with Sundays and Wednesdays operating from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

"Come on in," said Reynolds. "If you're not happy with something, let me know. I am easy to work with, and that's a fact. If you ever have a problem, talk to me - I can fix it. I want anybody and everybody that comes in this place to be treated with respect and to feel that they're always welcome, that when they leave they had a good time or good experience to want to come back again. That's important to me."

to do it before they spend the money in that way, and if they need something bought," said Anderson.

"If they need money on a line item, they'll ask to move it from a different line item if they think they maybe can cut some expenses. And if they have an unexpected expenditure in one line item, they use overage in another line item to cover that. That way they stay within budget throughout the year, or it helps," she added.

# Bower...from Page 1

certainly not over dealing with some of the issues from the stabbing, but at least he and his family can get a little closure from it and begin to go forward with other things."

Deputy Deyton, a resident of Union County, received the life-threatening stabbing injury after arriving as backup with fellow Towns County Sheriff's Deputy Matt Prentice on the scene of a traffic stop made by Hiwassee Police Officer Tracy James involving Bower in the early morning hours that Oct. 1.

Though he was only under arrest for suspicion of DUI, Bower tried to escape by stabbing Deputy Deyton in the neck, who at first was unaware of the severity of his injury and continued to pursue Bower on foot for more than 120 yards.

Deputy Deyton deployed his Taser as Bower continued to resist, but when Deputy Prentice and Officer James approached the altercation in fast pursuit, Deputy Prentice saw Deputy Deyton drop his Taser.

Not realizing in the heat of the moment that Deputy Deyton had been injured in a near fatal stabbing, Deputy Prentice drew his own Taser and deployed it multiple times against Bower as he continued to resist.

It was only then that Deputy Prentice and Officer James discovered that Deputy Deyton was injured. Later, Deputy Deyton would report that, at the time, he believed Bower had punched him and did not realize that he had been stabbed.

Thanks to the fast work of many Towns County first responders at the scene, Deputy Deyton received the care he

needed to survive his attack that morning.

Because Deputy Deyton was one of his own, Sheriff Clinton contacted the Georgia Bureau of Investigation to move forward with the investigation. Sheriff Clinton also contacted White County Sheriff Neal Walden, who agreed to jail Bower for as long as necessary.

"During the course of the investigation the following was learned," according to a TCSO press release. "Daniel Lee Bower admitted that he was able to dislocate his thumb in order to slip out of the handcuffs that had been placed on him previously by a Hiwassee Police Officer. As Deputy Deyton was speaking with Bower, Bower said he slipped out of the cuffs and pulled a knife that was hidden inside a belt that had been made to look like a regular belt buckle. Bower then stabbed Deputy Deyton in the neck and fled on foot."

Deputy Deyton received life-saving surgery and spent a month at Northeast Georgia Medical Center on his initial visit, and underwent several additional surgeries throughout the following months.

Finally able to return to work two months ago, Deputy Deyton's comeback was heralded by the awarding of two well-deserved medals of recognition: a Medal of Valor awarded by the Towns County Sheriff's Office, and a separate Medal of Valor from the Georgia Sheriffs' Association at the Sheriffs' Summer Training Conference in Jekyll Island in July of 2015.

During the course of

his hospitalization and the months that followed, Deputy Deyton and his family remained constantly in the thoughts and prayers of the public that Deputy Deyton served.

Area residents made donations to an account set up by United Community Bank to help offset the cost of missed work for Deputy Deyton and his wife, Christine, who missed worked to be by her husband's side, and even the Georgia Bulldogs stepped up to help raise money for Deputy Deyton.

After reaching out to the University of Georgia's football chaplain, Kevin "Chappy" Hines, Sheriff Clinton and Deputy Deyton received a wonderful surprise. Hines himself a deputy sheriff in Oconee County, hand delivered an autographed football and football helmet from UGA Head Football Coach Mark Richt. The items were raffled off with the help of Towns County CLEA.

"The Towns County Sheriff's Office would like to thank the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, Georgia Sheriffs' Association, Hiwassee Police Department, Towns County Fire Department, Towns County Emergency Medical Services, Towns County 911 Dispatch, District Attorney Jeff Langley and staff, United Community Bank, UGA Football and Coach Mark Richt, UGA Football Chaplain Kevin "Chappy" Hines, Towns County Sheriff's Citizen Law Enforcement Academy alumni, and our community for their generous donations of financial support for Deputy Aaron Deyton during this time," said the sheriff's office in its release.

# Title I...from Page 1

best way to spend money," said Dr. Berrong.

Conversely, there are only a few differences between the IE2 option and the charter option.

"There are some differences in charter where they could give you some extra funds for the charter school, but most systems were afraid that that pool of money would be spread so thinly that it wouldn't be worth the extra trouble that it takes to get to be a charter school. It's a lot more work involved," said Dr. Berrong.

"So we felt like with all the work involved in that, we would choose the IE2 option, which would allow us to still get

all of the waivers that a charter school would, but it wouldn't be as difficult to go through the process," he added.

Towns County Schools will be applying for the class size and reporting requirement flexibility options.

"These are things that we have already been putting waivers in for, but if you do not choose to be either a charter school or an IE2 school system, and you stay status quo, they will not give you any waivers whatsoever," said Dr. Berrong.

"What we can't do with flexibility is to do something that's going to change the Quality of Basic Education funding formula. We can't put something in place to try

to sneak around and get more money from the state. They're not saying they're going to give us more money - what they are saying is that we can spend the money they give us however we want to spend it," he added.

"The biggest waiver for us is the financials, where we don't have to stay within the certain categories the state says we have to stay within. So if we have so much money for first grade, but we don't have to spend that money in first grade but we need that money in third grade, we have the ability to make that choice to put more money in third. So that's the biggest one for us, is the financial freedom," he said.

# Hiwassee hires Carl Vinson Institute

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

The City of Hiwassee is conducting personnel evaluations, and is hiring the Carl Vinson Institute of Government from the University of Georgia to analyze employees and employee salaries.

"They will be coming the first of the year. We're going to be looking at everyone's salary. They're going to assess every individual employee and they will classify them and they will tell what they think their salaries should be or shouldn't be. A lot of people have concerns about overpaid employees," said Hiwassee Mayor Barbara Mathis.

Carl Vinson previously analyzed City of Hiwassee employees in 2010, recommending salary upgrades in all positions.

However, a vocal group of citizens have expressed concern that city employees are overcompensated for the work they do, especially compared to other cities.

At the time in 2010, the city did not have the funds to implement the classification plan as recommended. Hiwassee City Manager Rick Stancil's opinion is that they will not have the funds this time, either.

"The issue is, a lot of folks in the community think city employees are underpaid or overpaid. So basically we had Carl Vinson come in and do the analysis," said Stancil.

"The issue they were looking at was the classification

plan, similar to what teachers undergo. If you have a classification plan, your basic income raises are given regularly, based on longevity or that type of thing, and they recommended a classification plan to the city," he said.

"Since that time, we've had five years where we've not given any cost of living (adjustments). There's not been any significant salary increase, so common sense and logic are still going to say that many of our positions are underpaid," said Stancil.

Stancil estimates that to have the Carl Vinson Institute revisit the analysis will cost taxpayers \$6,000.

"Several folks in the community have pretty much demanded that we go out and see Carl Vincent again. I guess it's an issue as to whether or not it's a good use of taxpayer money or not, but we're getting demands put on us that analysis needs to be done," he said.

"At the council meeting, we had people stand up and say we can bring in minimum wage employees to take these people's places," he added.

The Carl Vincent Institute will look directly at an employee's worth based on what services they provide and make recommendations based on whether they find an employee to be undercompensated or overcompensated. Stancil's opinion is that minimum wage employees cannot replace skilled and licensed workers.

"If the water treatment plant is running, you've got to have a licensed operator. We

# Mayor Barbara Mathis



**Mayor Barbara Mathis**

have three operators all licensed to run the water treatment plant. They have to be there. We probably need a fourth, to be candid. Right now we're at three, and we're paying them on overtime. You can't fire one of those licensed operators and go out and find somebody at minimum wage to replace them. That applies also to the sewer plant," he said.

The last time the Carl Vinson Institute made a recommendation, the city couldn't move on the recommendations.

"So if it's already been done one time, nothing's changed, it's very unlikely you're going to get a different result. Sometimes you need outside sources to look at that, because sometimes people make certain claims without a foundation in fact, and it's good to have somebody outside come in. Now, is it worth \$6,000? That's going to be a decision for the city council," said Stancil.

# Annual Hike & Help the Hemlocks

On Saturday, September 26, Save Georgia's Hemlocks and the Benton MacKaye Trail Association are teaming up for their annual Hike & Help The Hemlocks, and the public is invited. It will be held at Lake Winfield Scott Campground, accessed from Highway 180/Wolf Pen Gap Rd., which runs off Highway 60 near Suches.

With the twin purposes of raising awareness of the threat posed to the hemlocks by the invasive insect hemlock woolly adelgid and actively working to save the trees, the event will offer a choice of two morning activities. Participants can take an

educational family-friendly hike led by BMTA members through some wonderful woods to enjoy the beautiful scenery and learn a bit about the efforts being made to save the hemlocks in the Chattahoochee National Forest. Or they can participate in a service project with SGH and the U. S. Forest Service to treat (or retreat) pre-tagged hemlocks in designated conservation sites within the campground.

Everyone will come together for a picnic at the covered pavilion beside the lake, some interesting lunch-and-learn presentations, and plenty of time to get to know other good folks

who love the outdoors. The event is free, but participants must register in advance and indicate whether they want to hike or treat trees - either way it's a great way to initiate the fall season!

So dust off those boots, pack a sack lunch, and invite a friend to come along. Drinks and dessert will be provided. Driving directions and other details are posted on the SGH and BMTA web sites. Space may be limited, so early registration is advised. Hikers should call 706-636-3499 or e-mail rshbmta@gmail.com, and hemlock helpers should call 706-429-8010 or e-mail donna@savegeorgiahemlocks.org.

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Finally, the Towns County Extension Office requested a deduction of \$1,425 from the salary line to go into new technology for the office.

"The extension office is wanting to buy a new computer and a camera and an inkjet printer, which wasn't in their budget at the beginning of the year. They're going to hire a part time agent for Union and Towns

counties. Mr. Robert Brewer's not getting paid anymore since he retired, so there's extra money in their salary line, so they asked to buy a computer, a camera and a printer," explained Anderson.

The line item transfers happen periodically throughout the year.

"It's about three times a year, because we try to get them