

Towns County Herald

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Wednesday, January 28, 2015

Local Weather and Lake Levels

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| Thurs: Rain | 49 32 |
| Fri: Clouds | 47 28 |
| Sat: Clouds | 52 34 |
| Sun: Rain | 41 29 |
| Mon: Snow | 39 15 |
| Tue: Sunny | 43 23 |
| Wed: Clouds | 49 31 |



| | |
|---|----------|
| Upstream Elevation Predicted 01/28/2015 | |
| Lake Chatuge | 1,914.17 |
| Lake Nottely | 1,761.47 |
| Blue Ridge | 1,668.58 |

INDEX

2 Sections 16 Pages

| | |
|-------------|----|
| Arrests | 2A |
| Church | 6A |
| Classifieds | 2B |
| Editorial | 4A |
| Letters | 4A |
| Legals | 2B |

SPORTS

Page 10A

No Greater LOVE to benefit
5K RACE & 1 Mile Walk February 14, 2015

Tricia Spear
Feb 14th

Food Distribution
Feb. 3rd 2-5 PM

See Page 2A



Boy Scout Troop 125 Fundraiser at Ingles

See Page 3A



AARP Driver's Safety Course

Feb. 16th

See Page 3A



Basketball

Fri. Jan 30
@ Lakeview 7 PM
Sat. Jan 31
@ George Walton 4:30 PM

WRESTLING

Sat. Jan 31
Area Tournament
Commerce High School 9 AM

Kendall pledges aid to Towns' libraries

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Towns County Library Board of Trustees met Tuesday, Jan. 13, for the regular Towns County Library Board meeting at the Towns County Public Library in Hiwassee. Currently, the Towns County Public Library and Mountain Regional Library in Young Harris are experiencing a \$15,000 budget shortfall.

The shortfall is a combination year-over-year budget cuts from the state and increased healthcare costs that have carried forward to local employers.

Because of this \$15,000 shortfall, both public libraries of Towns County had to close for five furlough days the week after Christmas, and are facing the necessity of taking one furlough day each week going forward.

So far, the libraries have shut down for three furlough days in the month of January. Towns County Public Library's furlough days are scheduled for Fridays, and Mountain Regional Library's furlough days are scheduled for Tuesdays.

But funding could change all of that, according to Debbie Phillips, branch manager of the Towns County Public Library.

And Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall has been listening.

In response to the library board's request for a \$15,000 funding increase, Commissioner Kendall said that he will find some funding to replace



Towns County Sole Commissioner has pledged financial aid for Towns County's public libraries to ease the pain of state financial cuts for libraries. He has pledged a \$7,500 separate county grant for the third and fourth quarters that end June 30, 2015. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

library shortfall due to the cuts by the state.

"Raising taxes is not an option that I will consider," said Commissioner Kendall. "Therefore, I must find these funds by reducing expenditures in other places in the county budget. In addition to the county's regular annual budgeted fund to the library, I will increase the county's funding to the library with a \$7,500 separate grant to fund the third and fourth quarters, ending June 30, 2015, of the library's 2015 fiscal year, with a requirement that this special grant be used to pay salary and benefit shortfall for employees, to avoid layoff and furlough days."

Commissioner Kendall will also be recommending to the board that staff be reduced

by one-third of one employee through attrition as employees retire or resign, and that they be replaced with part-time employees, "saving tens of thousands of dollars in insurance benefits."

"This will leave four full-time equivalent employees for Towns County Libraries. This should avoid future furlough days for employees and closing the library on furlough days," said Commissioner Kendall.

"Taxpayers of Towns County and cities will be funding its library per capita well above the amount that the Mountain Regional Library counties of Union and Fannin and their cities fund their libraries on employees per capita and dollars per capita, i.e. Towns

See Libraries, Page 8A

Robotics team heading to state



News Special

Towns County Herald

On Jan. 17, the Towns County Middle School Robotics team, *TCMS Praetoria Nave*, participated in a First LEGO League (FLL) Super Regional at Athens Academy and advanced to the FLL State Championship to be held on Feb. 7.

The team had to initially compete in three categories - Robot Design, Project, and Core Values.

These categories are judged by FLL representatives and scored based on a rubric.

The team scored well in all three categories, particularly in the project area where they had received a first place trophy in a previous qualifier.

The theme for this year's competition is *FLL World Class: Learning Unleashed*, which focuses on developing new ways to learn various

topics.

The team chose to study the effect of personalized word problems in mathematics.

The result of their project research effort is a novel idea that will improve how present day students prefer to learn new material.

My Math My Way!!! is the team's innovative solution to personalizing math word problems efficiently with common computer software like Microsoft Word, or Google Docs.

The team additionally created individualized student learning packets to accompany various lessons based on each student's learning style.

The fourth competition, Robot Performance, was scheduled over the course of the day.

Teams competed four times each on a mission table to demonstrate their robot's

See Robotics, Page 8A

Towns FBLA sending 16 to compete at state



By Ashley Abrahamson

For the Towns County Herald

Towns County FBLA is sending a record 16 competitors in 12 events to state level competitions.

The 2015 FBLA Region 15 Leadership Conference was held at Madison County High School in Danielsville on Thursday, Jan. 22.

Members of Towns County FBLA had 31 competitors in 18 different business events that contended with competitors from other FBLA chapters in Region 15 for a chance to advance to State

Competitions.

The Awards Ceremony was exciting to say the least - a record 16 competitors in 12 events will be advancing to state level competitions.

The following region winners will be state competitors: Will DeVries in Introduction to Business Communications; Zach Davenport in Introduction to Business Communications; Carly Gilfillan in Business Calculations; Ashley Abrahamson in Computer Applications; Alyson Nelson in Spreadsheets; Alana Calhoun in Word Processing;

Nick McConnell in Database Design and Applications; Mia Manto in Client Service, the team of Makenzie Carroll and Cadence Nichols in Business Ethics; Faith Kimsey in Public Speaking I; Adam Penland in Public Speaking II; Mia Manto in Future Business Leader and the team of MegAnn Bradley, Emily Davis and Kyle Davis in Public Service Announcement.

The following competitors also placed first in Region 15, but will not be advancing

See FBLA, Page 8A

City submits corrective action plan for '14 Financial Report

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Hiwassee City Manager Rick Stancil submitted the Response and Corrective Action Plan for the City of Hiwassee in regards to its Annual Financial Report ending fiscal year June 30, 2014.

This corrective action plan is in response to a finding made by the state auditor who performed the city's annual audit.

A finding of an auditor is an auditor's "belief as to a deficiency or something that needs to be improved for future audits," said Stancil.

The finding in question concerned a failure to submit timely adjustments to certain financial aspects of the city's accounting before the audit took place.

The city's action plan outlines steps that are meant to avoid the need for late adjustments when a capital project



Rick Stancil

- such as a water tank at the school or new intake pumps at the water treatment plant - is misclassified as a maintenance cost to a building or facility.

"We've got to meet more often to look at how they're classifying things," said Stancil. "Again, the goal being is when the auditors come in at the end of the year, we may have five to 10 adjustments, not 15, 20, 25, 30. So, those are the kind of things they want

See Plan, Page 8A

Back up generator now in place for city water treatment plant



By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Rowe Cannup Water Treatment Plant has another feather in its cap - a new diesel generator capable of powering the entire plant in case of power failure.

The generator was secured a few weeks ago, but it was hooked up and online, ready to go, by Wednesday, Jan. 21.

"Wednesday, we did a full test, and we ran every pump that we would normally run, plus we kicked on a couple extras just to see," said Randy Warne, who is Operator in Responsible Charge at the water treatment plant. "The generator didn't even grunt. It's plenty big enough to do this job."

"And it's a used generator. A new generator was around \$100,000 installed, and we got this one, it's used, but it was \$23,000 all total, installed and wired. So, we saved a bunch of money right there. And it's got its own battery charger, it's got its own block heater, so it's ready to start at any time. The temperature can drop and we can still fire that thing right up," said Warne.

Last year, the water treatment plant received new intake pumps capable of reaching

See Generator, Page 8A

Towns County is ready to Live Mas



By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The owners of Hiwassee's soon-to-be-here Taco Bell franchise broke ground with city and county officials at the site of the restaurant on Tuesday, Jan. 20.

"We are very glad to have them, and we all look forward to having this," said Hiwassee Mayor Barbara Mathis. "I love Taco Bell, and I think everyone in this area loves Taco Bell. We're glad to see the groundbreaking, because this is what we've been waiting for, just to see the first step, and we've completed the

first step today."

Doug Augustine and Mike Bender of Atlanta-based Georgia-Texas Enterprises acquired the Hiwassee franchise on Dec. 31, as they purchased Bob Cox's book of business. Cox was the franchisee behind securing a Taco Bell for the area.

"Taco Bell asked us if we would honor the development agreement that they had with Mr. Cox," said Augustine, CEO and president of GTE. "We looked at the area and we did our homework, and we said, yeah, it seems like a great, perfect fit for Taco Bell, and a great place to open up a store."

generation Taco Bell franchisee. His father, Gene Augustine, opened the family's first Taco Bell in Newnan in 1988. Gene started GTE with his brother-in-law, who lived in Texas, in order to fund the construction of that first restaurant.

Nearly 27 years later, the company is still going strong and still building stores. Hiwassee will be restaurant number 11 for GTE.

"Buying stores right now is a lot more difficult, so building is a better strategy if you want to grow," said Augustine. "But again, it's a lot more risky when you build a store because

See Taco Bell, Page 8A

TOWNS COUNTY HERALD

