

# Towns County Herald

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Wednesday, December 11, 2013

## Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thu: Clouds	44 28
Fri: Clouds	49 33
Sat: Showers	49 36
Sun: Clouds	42 28
Mon: Clouds	45 31
Tues: Showers	45 31
Wed: Clouds	46 32



Upstream Elevation Predicted 12/11/13	
Lake Chatuge	1,918.32
Lake Nottely	1,762.76
Blue Ridge	1,670.56

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## SPORTS

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**Vogel Christmas Tree Lighting Saturday, Dec 14th**

**Unicoi Detachment Toy Distribution December 14 & 21 9 am to 1 pm**



**Free Food Distribution**

**Towns County Food Pantry Distribution Tuesday, Dec 17th 1-5 PM**

**North Mt. Zion Food Distribution Thurs., Dec 19th 10 AM - NOON**



## WRESTLING:

**Fri. Dec 13th @ Home 4:30**

**Sat. Dec 14th @ Fannin**

## BASKETBALL:

**Tues. Dec. 10 @ Riverside (Boys Only) 6 PM**

**Sat. Dec. 14 vs. Pincrest 6 PM**

## Dr. Barge to present School of Excellence Award

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

Georgia State School Superintendent Dr. John Barge arrives in Hiwassee this week to present Towns County Middle School with its 2012 Georgia School of Excellence Award.

The ceremony is scheduled for Thursday at 1:30 p.m. in the school auditorium, TCMS Principal Dr. Darren Berrong said this week.

TCMS was named the Highest Performing schools in the 9th Congressional District based on the College and Career-Ready Performance Index.

When the new College and Career Readiness Index scores were released several months ago, TCMS ranked No. 1 in the State when compared to 180 other middle school systems in Georgia with an overall score of 99.4. When compared to an estimated 400 individual middle schools, TCMS ranked 2nd overall only one tenth of a point below the top school.

"Words can't express how happy I am for my teach-



Dr. John Barge



Melissa Williams



Dr. Darren Berrong

ers and these students," said Dr. Berrong. "What a testament to the hard work they have put in over the past few years. Many of the schools on this list are either Magnet or Charter schools. When I see Towns County Middle School listed side by side with these schools I am simply overcome with pride for this school and this community. In my opinion, there is no greater achievement or

recognition than being named a Georgia School of Excellence in Student Achievement."

Towns County Schools Superintendent Melissa Williams was just as proud of the honor bestowed upon TCMS.

"I join with Dr. Berrong in congratulating the students, faculty and staff at Towns County Middle School on receiving this outstanding honor," Williams said. "This is

a testament to the entire community and the value Towns County places on providing a quality education for our students. These teachers and students have worked hard. What a fitting reward for their dedication and diligence."

Dr. Barge is proud of TCMS as well.

"It took us a while to name the 2012 Schools of Excellence, but we wanted to mea-

sure them based on our College and Career Ready Performance Index rather than the old measure," he said. "With our new, more rigorous accountability system, these schools really shine. Their focus on areas that impact student success is evident across the board."

Dr. Barge is running in the Republican primary for governor. He says Gov. Nathan Deal hasn't done enough to support education in Georgia.

Dr. Barge is expected to have a busy schedule in the North Georgia Mountains this week.

Following his presentation of the School of Excellence Award to TCMS, Dr. Barge is scheduled to speak to the Mountain Movers and Shakers on Friday at 8 a.m. at Mary's Southern Grill in Young Harris.

He'll follow that up with a trip to Blairsville later in the morning to visit Union County Elementary School.

Barge will meet with teachers and talk to students about what they're learning experiences are like.

## Recreation facility Open House

By Charles Duncan  
Towns County Herald  
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Commissioner Bill Kendall

Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall and Towns County residents have been looking forward to the day that the county's new Recreation and Conference Center opens.

Well, that day is Saturday, Dec. 14.

Commissioner Kendall said that an Open House event is scheduled from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the facility on Mining Gap Road.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony is scheduled at 2:30 p.m., with Recreational League Basketball games to follow, Commissioner Kendall said.

The facility is 27,000 square feet and "100 percent funded by SPLOST," Kendall said.

R.W. Allen Construc-



The Open House for the new Towns County Recreation & Conference Center is scheduled for Saturday at 11 a.m. Photo/Marty Roberts

awaits its ribbon cutting. The 27,000 square foot facility is designed to serve as a Recreational/Community and Convention Center that will accommodate up to 1,000 in a banquet-style seating to stimulate economic development, Kendall said.

"That was the goal, to use as many local sub-contractors as possible," Kendall said.

The groundbreaking for the Recreation and Conference Center was held 14 months ago, and now, a finished product

## Moore delivers message on best management practices

By Azure Welch  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Callie Moore of the Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition spoke to the Hiwassee City Council last week about best management practices.

Moore discussed the Coalition's proposal for agricultural best management practices in regards to the proposed site for a "Mayor's Park" in Hiwassee.

Moore provided the council with a very well prepared and executed proposal which according to her is very lengthy, and for the purposes of this meeting, she would simply "highlight what is important to the council for making a decision regarding a very small portion of the complete project."

The "Mayor's Park Proposal" is a very small part of the Lake Chatuge Watershed Action Plan which has been ongoing since 2007.

The purpose of the action plan was the result of a "poor" rating in regards to the "ecological health" of the Chatuge reservoir.

This rating was based on TVA's regularly completed monitoring of Lake Chatuge's Ecological Health Rating, and since monitoring became an annual event in 1998, the ratings for the ecological health of Lake Chatuge have been a steady decline.

According to the executive summary of the action plan, "the scope of the Lake Chatuge Watershed Action Plan encompasses a wide variety of water quality concerns within the 189-square mile drainage area of Lake Chatuge and the purpose of the plan is to recommend actions that, if implemented properly, will result in an improvement in Lake Chatuge's ecological health rating." These efforts would drastically improve because of "better development in terms of watershed and water quality protection."

For the purposes of Moore's proposal to the Council, the focus was on the Lake Chatuge Watershed project in regards to the proposed site for the "Mayor's Park," which is the public boat launch on Main Street in Hiwassee; it is about half mile east of the Downtown area.

According to Moore, the comprehensive analysis of the site location was the jointed efforts of many people including graduate students who provided their expertise by developing much of the proposal, and due to experts from the University of Georgia's College of Environment and Design.

Moore told the Council that the analysis yielded recommendations in three different categories: septic system improvements, agricultural best management practices and storm water issues.

The Coalition has already completed "one of the septic system improvements within the city limits already" according to Moore.

Although the project "did not get as much money for design work in the grant"



Callie Moore

Moore said, however, the recommendations designed for the "Mayor's Park" site will provide the biggest bang for the buck in addition to providing the intended improvements.

Storm Water issues are separated into two categories, residential storm water and commercial and institutional projects.

The proposals for the residential storm water improvements include educating those residences within the project scope how to do "rain harvesting and "we'll provide rain barrel workshops, and we are going to be doing some residential rain gardens in the spring at various houses throughout the watershed," Moore said.

"Rain gardens are very easy and a fun community project," she said, which not only benefits the water quality, but provides beautification for the area as well.

Proposed renovations are bio-retention areas, these are grass swells, landscaping type of features, with layers of sand and gravel, so when it rains, the water will filtrate into the ground instead of running off into the lake.

These grass swells would take care of most needs when the parking lot is paved.

Proposal of a viewing deck on the high end of the area, there is a high point there and there aren't many large trees to remove in the making of this deck, and this would be a handicapped accessible viewing location.

Surface Hydrology will be utilized by changing the water flow on the west side and making it a viable "best management practice" to ensure that the water in this area drains properly with the same type of layered effect of sand and gravel to filtrate the rain water.

This will eliminate the current standing water issue to prevent erosion and sediment control problems.

Another benefit of this project would be in a beautification sentiment because

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TOWNS COUNTY HERALD



## Christmas Spirit arrives in Young Harris

By Azure Welch  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Young Harris - On Friday night, Dec. 6, Young Harris City Hall was filled to capacity as families came together as a community to usher in the Christmas Season.

Mayor Andrea Gibby welcomed all to the Annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony at Mayor's Park.

The festivities of the night also included Towns County Elementary students singing Christmas Carols, a scrumptious array of refreshments, and this was all followed by the arrival of Santa Claus.

The Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony has been a constant staple of the holiday season in Young Harris for the

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The Christmas Season has arrived in Young Harris. Photo/Azure Welch

## Tour of Homes a Holiday treat

By Azure Welch  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

On a damp and chilly Saturday, Dec. 7, the Towns County Chamber of Commerce hosted their annual Mountain Country Christmas Tour of Homes.

This year's tour featured seven homes located throughout Towns County, all decorated for the Christmas holidays and these families graciously opened up their homes to all of those who joined in the event.

According to Jane Holland, director of Towns County Tourism Association, the seven homes on the tour either vol-

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The Clark Home, Cupid Falls Farm is a working fiber farm situated on 7 acres of alpacas, llamas, and sheeps to name a few of the animal residents. Photo/Azure Welch