

Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

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Wednesday, Jan. 27, 2010

Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thur: Cloudy 52 30
Fri: Rain/Sleet 39 26
Sat: Snow 38 14
Sun: Sunny 41 16
Mon: Cloudy 45 29
Tue: Snow 49 30
Wed: Snow 44 30



Upstream Elevation Predicted 1/27/10
Lake Chatuge 1918.20
Lake Nottely 1763.60
Blue Ridge 1671.40

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Subscribe

The Towns County Herald wants to make a difference during hard times.

For those currently unemployed, Senior Citizens and U.S. Military veterans, the Herald offers \$5 subscriptions for 1 year. That's a savings of \$21 off the newsstand price.

This offer extends to residents of Towns and Union counties in Georgia and Clay County, NC.

Simply bring proof of unemployment status; a simple Photo ID will suffice for Senior Citizens.

Veterans must provide proof of U.S. Military service.

The Herald also offers \$10 subscriptions for new subscribers from Towns and Union counties in Georgia and Clay County, NC.

At the end of one year, those subscribers can renew at a rate of \$15.

Again, we hope to make a difference when folks need it the most.

Homecoming changes

Due to a wrestling conflict Homecoming has been moved to Saturday, Feb. 6. The event will be held at half time of varsity boys' game with the Lakeview Academy Lions.

Food

Distribution

The monthly mobile food distribution for families in need will be held at North Mt. Zion Church of God on Friday, Feb. 12th from 10 a.m. to noon. This outdoor food distribution will be held in the rear parking lot of North Mt. Zion Church of God on Scataway, rain or shine. We look forward to seeing you there.

Meeting

A community meeting is scheduled Thursday, Feb. 11 at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds at 5:30 p.m. in Anderson Music Hall. To discuss the Annual Moonshine Cruize-in. Promoter Rakes Parish will be there.

Call (706) 896-4966 for additional details.

County explores new ways to get smart on crime

By Charles Duncan
TOWNS COUNTY HERALD
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A crowded Towns County Courthouse filled with local residents heard about how their community is getting smart on crime.

On Friday, Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall and Hiwassee Mayor Barbara Mathis hosted a group of guest speakers discussing various ways to promote public safety in addition to saving taxpayer dollars. Their goal: combat illegal drug traffic and the problems associated with the trade.

The meeting also focused on promoting mentoring programs for youths and an official from the Georgia Department of Corrections spoke of ways to transition offenders coming back into the community from prison.

"Your concerns are our concerns," said Mayor Mathis.

Hiwassee Police Chief Jimmy Wright said an important key to the process is having a strong working relationship with the Towns County Sheriff's Office and other law enforcement agencies.

"We're all out here to achieve a common goal," Chief Wright said. "We always want our communities to be safe."

Towns County Sheriff Chris Clinton elaborated on the "common goal."

He told residents that just over two years ago, Towns County was faced with a glut of illegal drug trade and burglaries. The latter skyrocketed out of control. Also, there were multiple bank robberies throughout the region.

"The constitutional of-



Towns County Sheriff Chris Clinton talks about getting smart on crime last week in the Towns County Courthouse. Photo/Matthew Jarrard

Recidivism is a rather lofty word that we use a lot in criminal justice," he said.

The sheriff said that criminals have a tendency to fall back into committing crimes. In 2008, as many as 23 percent of the people arrested in the United States were arrested more than once. It's about 1 percent in Towns County.

"I've always said, and I still believe, that drugs and crime go hand-in-hand. In 2009 there were 327 drug arrests made in Towns County," he said. "We're not going to tolerate drug dealing in Towns County."

Cory Beggs, manager of the Blairsville-based Union

See Get Smart, page 2A

Travis Tritt to play The Hall

By Charles Duncan
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The legend of Travis Tritt is coming to Anderson Music Hall on April 16th.

The Grammy Award-winning Country Music performer has charted more than 30 singles on the U.S. Billboard charts, including five that reached No. 1. Tritt also has two Platinum albums to his credit, *Country Club* and *T-R-O-U-B-L-E*.

His second album, *It's All About To Change* yielded three Top 3 hits, *Anytime*, *The Whiskey Ain't Workin'*, and *Here's A Quarter (Call Someone Who Cares)*.

Tritt's interest in music began at the age of 3 when his father James bought him his first guitar. The singer, songwriter and musician recorded his first demo in 1982 for Warner Brothers Records. He continued to hone his



Country music legend Travis Tritt will play The Hall on April 16th.

unique sound until he hit a home run in 1989 with *Country Club*, which featured his first No. 1 hit, *Help Me Hold On*.

Tritt, who was born in Marietta an attended Sprayberry High School, also has been the inspiration of a special edition MacBook, which featured his likeness and included a free copy of his *The Storm* album with the purchase of the computer.

At the age of 29, he became one of the youngest performers ever to gain en-

Turning up the Heat

By Charles Duncan
TOWNS COUNTY HERALD
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Towns County Sheriff Chris Clinton isn't kidding when he says drugs and Towns County don't mix.

Towns County sheriff's deputies, Union County sheriff's deputies and the Appalachian Drug Task Force teamed up to put the smack down on alleged illegal drug activity in both counties as part of Operation Winter Heat.

Operation Winter Heat was a team effort sting operation aimed at curtailing the illegal drug trade in Towns and Union counties, according to Task Force Commander Brad Parks, a GBI Special Agent.

The officers and narcotics agents made a series of drug-related arrests that included more than a dozen arrests in Union County and numerous arrests in Towns County, sheriff's reports show.

Some of the arrests of Towns County residents actually happened in Union County, sheriff's reports show.

Devon Davenport, of a Young Harris address was arrested in Union County on a Towns County Appalachian Drug Task Force charge of possession of morphine.

Dawn Davenport, of a Young Harris address was

arrested in Union County on Towns County Appalachian Drug Task Force charges of violation of Georgia's Controlled Substance Act, sheriff's reports show.

"We're not going to tolerate drug dealing in Towns County," Sheriff Clinton told residents during a community meeting at the Towns County Courthouse. The sheriff wasn't smiling when he said it.

The two departments were working together on an unrelated incident earlier this month in Union County.

The incident unfolded when an intoxicated male had kicked the rear window of a patrol unit out in Union County and fled the scene on foot. Union Lt. Chad Deyton called upon Towns Deputy Billy Shattles and his K-9 *Darth* to assist.

According to Deputy Shattles, Union deputies contained the area well making K-9 *Darth's* job much easier. A track was quickly found and pursued by *Darth* and Shattles. *Darth* flushed the suspect from the wood line and into the arms of Union County deputies where he was safely apprehended.

The incident proved that once again teamwork is the key to local law enforcement operating safely together as one unit.

Kendall asks FEMA for time

By Charles Duncan
TOWNS COUNTY HERALD
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Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall is asking the Federal Emergency Management Agency for more time to prepare accurate Flood Insurance Rate Maps to determine digital flood hazard maps.

On Monday, Commissioner Kendall spoke with Rob Lowe, analysis chief with FEMA's Atlanta office, about the importance of accurate flood maps to Towns County property owners. He urged Lowe to allow the county to help collect accurate data to be used in the preparation of flood plain maps.

Kendall said that he is cautiously optimistic that FEMA will approve Towns County's request. Lowe told Kendall that Towns County had his full support as it traversed through the FEMA channels to get the county's request approved.

Georgia's Floodplain Mapping Program is an agreement between Georgia and FEMA for the development and updating of Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (DFIRM).

Currently, Towns County, as well as the cities of Hiwassee and Young Harris have a September deadline to adopt new ordinances that regulate development in floodplain zones in the county.

Failure to do so would mean the residents that re-



EPD/DNR representative Ban Youisif talks with residents during last week's public hearing on floodplain maps. Photo/Matthew Jarrard

side in the county and both cities would not qualify to receive the lower insurance rate afforded by the Flood Insurance Rate Maps.

On Thursday, the Towns County Courthouse was packed with residents expressing concern over inaccurate and antiquated data being used to prepare the proposed floodplain maps for Lake Chatuge.

Bad maps could cost them thousands in flood insurance premiums.

A review of proposed floodplain maps presented last month showed significant errors that prompted Commissioner Kendall to threaten litigation if changes were not made.

The errors in the proposed floodplain map showed several homes under water, it also showed the City of Hiwassee's Treatment Plant under water, which isn't the case.

Knowing that the proposed maps are inaccurate, Commissioner Kendall investigated ways to develop

maps with accurate data. He said the estimated cost of acquiring accurate topographical information for new floodplain maps ranges between \$50,000 to \$100,000. An aerial flyover of Towns County would allow for more accurate GIS information that is said to be accurate within six inches.

The information provided by TVA for the proposed maps brings the accuracy within six to 10 feet.

The bottom line is developing a more detailed, reliable and current floodplain map that provides accurate information of the areas most likely to be impacted by flooding. More accurate information helps those overseeing development decisions in determining areas likely to be at risk for flooding, Kendall said.

Floodplain maps are used to determine at risk areas for flooding. In this case, the floodplain maps

See Floodplain, page 2A

Familiar forecast:

more cold and snow

By Charles Duncan
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Think warm thoughts. According to the National Weather Service colder temperatures are back in the forecast as Old Man Winter doesn't know the meaning of the word 'relief.'

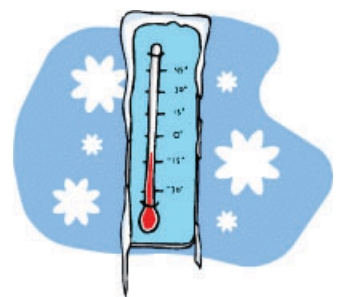
Cold weather is predicted to dominate the weather forecast for yet another week as the region attempts to dry out from a deluge of rainy weather.

The white stuff was falling again on Monday night but didn't amount to much.

A solid system of flurries failed to accumulate Monday night and ended rather unceremoniously as the wind chill factor dipped into the 20s.

However, the weather service calls for more frozen precipitation in the days ahead.

Temperatures are expected to hover around 30 degrees overnight on Thursday. By the time Friday evening rolls around, forecasters are calling for freez-



ing rain and 26 degrees.

The predictions of frozen precipitation don't end there. A 30 percent chance of snow showers are in the forecast for Saturday with highs in the upper 30s and lows in the mid-teens.

On Sunday, the mercury is expected to rise into the low 40s, but brace for those lows as overnight temperatures are expected to hover in the teens.

The days ahead are expected to be cold with more snow showers expected into next week.

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