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Regional Commission districts throughout the state will be asked to consider a 10-year, 1-cent sales tax that will fund transportation projects in their region over the next 10 years.

The Mountains region includes Towns, Union and even Hall and Forsyth counties. The Mountains region is expected to collect an estimated \$1.25 billion over the life of the 10-year sales tax period.

Of that amount, 75 percent of those dollars would be designated to a number of transportation projects decided upon last fall by a Regional Roundtable of local officials.

The remaining 25 percent of revenues from the TSPLOST would be given to cities and counties throughout the region to spend on local projects that were not included on the list approved by the Roundtable.

Callaway said that over the 10-year period, Towns County would keep \$1 million, the city of Hiwassee would receive \$37,000 and the city of Young Harris would receive \$22,000 to spend on local road projects.

Regarding the vote on the TSPLOST set for July 31, Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall and many others county-wide say they will vote no on TSPLOST, simply because they say it has nothing to offer Towns County.

Commissioner Kendall also explained that the 1-cent TSPLOST, which would take Towns County sales tax rate to 8 cents on the dollar, does not exempt food and heating oil. It does however exempt motor fuel,

jet fuel, off-road fuel for heavy equipment, farm and or agricultural equipment, locomotive fuel, public mass transit fuel, the sale or use of energy used in manufacturing or processing tangible goods and building and construction materials. In addition, the commissioner said that the TSPLOST tax is only levied on the first \$5,000 of any transaction involving the sale or lease of a motor vehicle.

"Our State Rep. Stephen Allison voted no on the legislation to bring TSPLOST forward," Commissioner Kendall said. "Thank you Stephen, you know how much this extra penny tax will impact the people in your district."

"I believe the people of Towns County and the people of Georgia need to follow Rep. Allison's lead and vote no on July 31st to the TSPLOST referendum," Commissioner Kendall said. "Not exempting food and heating oil like propane and kerosene is an insult to the people who are already struggling to make ends meet."

Last year, the Towns County's Transportation Development Act project committee rejected the \$16 million project offered by the TSPLOST Roundtable Executive Committee to build the 1.1 mile expanded road to the Clay County, NC line. The project was meaningless, Commissioner Kendall said.

"It is a widening project to the North Carolina line," Towns Comprehensive Plan Co-Chair Grover Garrett said. "According to the state of North Carolina Department of

Transportation, North Carolina has no plans to widen their portion of the route over the next 20 years."

"You see, it's a road to no where, it serves no purpose," Commissioner Kendall said. "It threatens Woods Grove Baptist Church, Laurel Hills Memory Gardens (the cemetery) and three businesses. It's not a good deal for Towns County."

The local project committee submitted seven projects to the TSPLOST executive committee for approval, all of which made sense for Towns County. However, all seven projects fell on deaf ear.

The project that was selected for Towns County had been on the Georgia Department of Transportation list for quite some time. Ironically, it's the most destructive project in terms of county-wide impact.

Callaway didn't dispute Commissioner Kendall's claims or the local committee's claims, and ironically, his handouts don't mention the exempted items or the non-exempted items.

"We're encouraging you to weigh in and look at what the benefits are," Callaway said. "Georgia is one of the fastest growing states in the country and yet it has underfunded transportation. I don't think we should fund everything that the government comes up with, but I do think that we should fund transportation."

"If we don't, we'll have problems that will continue to plague us for years and years," Callaway said.

Perhaps TSPLOST will fall on deaf ear.

Cemetery...continued from page 1A

time, historic, revered church's property, to infringe upon our sacred cemetery where our loved ones lay, is not keeping with good and responsible planning," Hesson said. "Not only do we not need it, we do not want it."

"We respectfully request that you convey to the planning committee to please delete this project in its entirety," Hesson said.

In a statement to the Towns County Herald, Hesson said that Towns County is willing to relinquish part of its mountains and valleys.

"But we ask that you please do not disturb the places where we worship or where our loved ones lay at rest in our cemeteries," he said. "We ask that all of our concerned citizens make their sentiments about this proposed roadway be made known to the Towns County Commissioner's Office."

Woods Grove Baptist

Church member Marilyn Berrong said that the "road to no where" makes no sense whatsoever for Towns County. Representatives from Towns County conveyed to Roundtable members that there were other projects more deserving that would benefit Towns County.

"We don't understand why the wishes of the people of Towns County were not honored," Berrong said. "Our church is currently 30 feet off the right of way. If they bring the five-lane road down as they are proposing, it will bring the road either up to our steps or it will totally destroy our church."

Berrong said there is no defined purpose of the road.

"No one seems to be able to tell us why that road is being widened," she said. "The purpose of the road is not there. If we're spending \$16 million for 1.1 mile of five

lanes of roadway, where is the safety? It also will destroy two businesses at the beginning of the road, not to mention the strip mall. I just don't understand the purpose."

Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall said nothing about TSPLOST makes sense until you get into the larger counties.

"TSPLOST was just thrown together and it was made to benefit the metro counties," he said. "It's a raw deal for the people of Towns County and all the other small counties that really don't have a say because they don't have enough voting population."

"All we can do is hope and pray that there are enough people out there that are against this thing," he said. "We have to do our part and hope that folks in Hall and Forsyth counties send a message to the State Capitol on July 31st."



TSPLOST opponents say a favorable vote on July 31st would be detrimental to Towns County along Georgia 17 where a 1.1 mile, five-lane expansion project would destroy a church and a cemetery and several businesses. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Super Tuesday...continued from page 1A

Georgia election law requires the Secretary of State to set a date for the state executive committee of each party which is to conduct a presidential preference primary to submit a list of the names of the candidates of such party to appear on the presidential preference primary ballot. On Oc-

tober 6, 2011, Secretary Kemp issued a notice to the chairman of each political party to notify that the deadline for submitting the list of candidate names for the 2012 Presidential Preference Primary is November 15, 2011.

Georgia election law also requires the Secretary

of State's Office to publish the lists of each party's candidates on its Web site during the fourth week immediately preceding the date on which the presidential preference primary is to be held.

Although several candidates have already withdrawn from the race, their names still appear on the ballot.

Homecoming...continued from page 1A

This year's contestants include senior sCody Smedley and Lindsay Patton, Walker Guss and Kindle Moss, Noah Calhoun and Courtney Farmer, Dakota Barrett and Ali Bleckley and Rylan Albach and Gabby Arencibia.

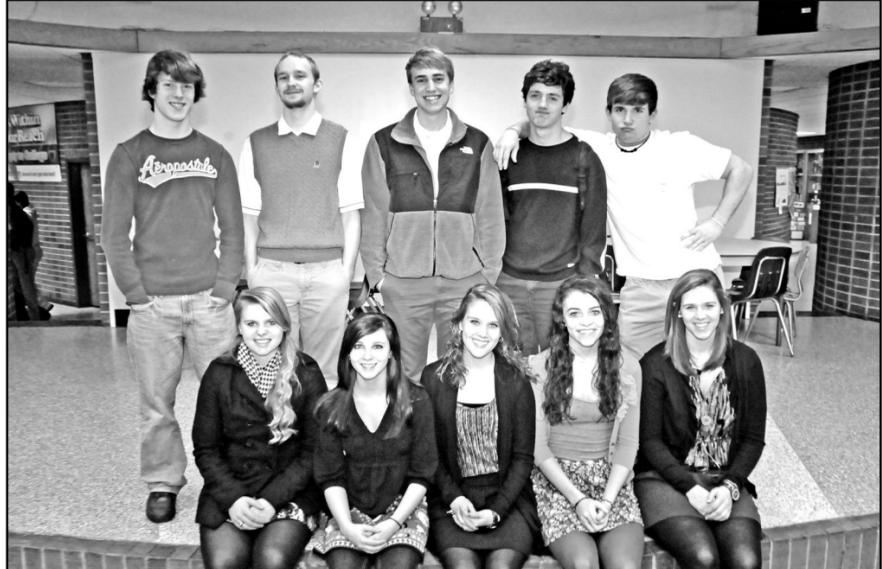
This year's junior representatives include Austin Wood and Kayla Olin, Ryan

Tallent and Brittany Ledford, Tyler Hoffman and Meagan Ellis and Wesley Bloodworth and Dadrion Blythe.

The sophomore representatives include Cesar Bustamante and Bailey Sutton, Garrett Bradshaw and Cadi Olin and Brett Barrett and Eryn Cochran.

Representatives from the freshman class are Cruz Shook and Mia Manto and Grant Arencibia and Karlie Albach.

The Homecoming ceremonies will take place during halftime of the Varsity contest between the Indians and Riverside. Get there early to get a good seat.



The Towns County High School Senior Homecoming Court for 2012. Photo/James Reese

D.A.R.E....continued from page 1A

liams and John Butler walked the aisle and collected Certificates of Achievement for their participation in D.A.R.E.

Drug Abuse Resistance Education is a collaborative effort by D.A.R.E. certified law enforcement officers, educators, students, parents and community to offer an educational program in the classroom to prevent or reduce drug abuse and violence among youth.

The emphasis of D.A.R.E. is to help students recognize and resist the many direct and subtle pressures that influence them to experiment with alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, inhalants,

or other drugs or to engage in violence.

The D.A.R.E. program offers preventive strategies to enhance those protective factors – especially bonding to the family, school and community.

At the end of the course work, D.A.R.E. students write an essay, which is judged on the criteria offered in the classroom experience. The essay winners for 2012 were Chase Rogers from Debi Williams' class, Lea Neamy from Laurie Main's class, Fernanda Torres from Ruth Taylor's class and Janean Barnes from John Butler's class.

Sgt. Jones began teaching D.A.R.E. in 1996. This is his 15th graduating class from the program.

"I want to thank Sheriff Chris Clinton for his love and affection for the D.A.R.E. program and the results it provides these young people," Sgt. Jones said. "I also want to thank him for allowing me to be his D.A.R.E. officer."

"I'd also like to thank our sponsors, Young Harris Dining Hall, Ingles, VFW Ladies Auxiliary and Dollar General for their support of these young people," Sgt. Jones said. "We couldn't do it without them."



Towns County Transportation Projects Committee member Alisa Richards talks with Georgia Transportation Alliance Executive Director Doug Callaway following last week's TSPLOST meeting at Brothers Restaurant at Willow Ranch. Photo/Charles Duncan

Bridge...continued from page 1A

"After the new bridge is finished, traffic will be shifted to the new bridge and the old bridge will be demolished," GDOT Communications Director Teri Pope said.

The most recent GDOT numbers show that the average daily traffic on the bridge in 2010 was 14,700.

The new bridge also will be much wider and longer. It will be 350 feet long and 44 feet wide with three spans crossing the creek. The new bridge will have two, 12-foot wide through lanes and a 10-foot wide shoulder for each direction.

"The existing bridge has no shoulders – if you have car trouble there is no safe place to get out of the travel lane," Pope said. "The new shoulders on the bridge are a vast safety improvement and allow pedestrians to cross without impacting vehicle traffic."

Replacing the bridge at Brasstown Creek is one of five bridge replacements on the State Transportation Improvement Program for Towns County.

The total cost of all five bridge projects is

\$16.856 million. Those projects include a replacement bridge at Georgia 66 at Crooked Creek; Georgia 2/U.S. 76 at Hightower Creek; Tallulah River Road at Tate Branch and Georgia 17 and Georgia 75 at the Hiwassee River.

For those who could not attend the meeting in Young Harris, a copy of the plans will be at the GDOT area office in Cleveland or at the District Office in Gainesville. They will also be on GDOT's Web site.

"You can copy and use these images. www.dot.ga.gov then choose information then public outreach then choose TOWNS from the pull down list of counties and the

Free food distribution

As always, the Towns County Food Distribution will be Tuesday. The distribution will be held at The Towns County Food Pantry from 2 p.m.-6 p.m. All that are in need of food assistance are encouraged to attend. If you are unable to pick up your food please contact the pantry at 706-896-4783 prior to distribution day so arrangements can be made to deliver your food. All clients and inquiries are confidential.

project will come up," Pope said. "You will find the map of the project, called display and the handouts that we gave out."

Ledford wins poetry award



Brenda Kay Ledford
Brenda Kay Ledford of Hayesville, NC, won the Royce Ray Poetry Award for her poem, "Lake Chatuge."

Her poem was published in the January, 2012 issue of "Aires: A Journal of Art and Literature." This is a publication at Southeastern Community College in Whiteville, NC.

The Royce Ray family has given lifelong support and contribution to the literary arts in North Carolina. For information, contact: aparker@sc-cnc.edu