Work Ready... continued from page 1

ment," he said. "If every- ment, Everson said. body does their role, it will work, we've seen it happen.'

Towns County already is a certified Work Ready Community in progress, one of 99 counties statewide with the same designation.

Being a Work Ready Community means a county has the skilled workforce needed to meet business demands and drive economic growth, as well as the educational foundation to build a pipeline of workers ready to create ongoing success, Everson said.

The goal, Everson said, is to make every sector of the business community Work Ready Certified.

To become Work Ready Certified requires a three-hour test that examines each individual's skills in applied math and science, locating information and reading for information, Everson said.

There are four levels of skills grading: platinum, gold, silver and bronze.

bronze, silver or gold grading, there is skills gap training available at North Georgia Technical College's

Georgia Work Ready was launched in August 2006 by then Gov. Sonny Perdue and the Georgia Chamber of Commerce to improve the job training and marketability of Georgia's workforce and drive future economic growth for the state.

It is the only initiative of its kind to be conducted through a partnership between a state government and state chamber of commerce, independent businesses, and the education community ensuring that companies can more reliably match the right people with the right jobs.

Work Ready is based on a skills assessment and certification for job seekers and a job profiling system for businesses. By identifying both the needs of business and the available skills of Georgia's workforce, the state can more effectively generate the right talent for the right jobs.

Everson said the as-For those scoring a sessment of workers' skills was developed by the same SAT and ACT tests.

Blairsville campus to provide their Certified Work Ready cost-free skills improve- Community goals, they are tial employers.

able to maintain their status by ensuring that their available workforce continues to earn Work Ready Certificates, engages local businesses to recognize and use Work Ready, and continues to increase their public high school graduation rate. To continue their

work, each county will receive a \$10,000 grant. Their Work Ready Community teams also will receive a two-year membership to their local chamber of commerce and a budget for additional Work Ready outreach materials. Counties that are fully certified receive road signs and a seal denoting the year they achieved certification. As for Georgia's un-

employed job seekers, there's the Be Work Ready program where they can gain a valuable competitive advantage for their job search - a Work Ready Certificate, powered by ACT's nationally accredited WorkKeys assessment system. The opportunity to earn a Work Ready Certificate is offered at no cost group that developed the via the state's network of technical colleges, validates Once counties attain and individuals' skill and knowledge levels to poten-

> "Unlike the millions of citizens who have lost their jobs, homes, and retirement, we are fortunate to have jobs, and benefits," he said. We are in many, many

many of our friends and neighbors. One of the most troubling aspects of my job is the many citizens that come by the office daily looking for and wanting to work and having to tell them I have nothing available at

"May is the month that millions of students will graduate high school and college to enter the workforce," he said. "They no longer can look forward to being assured of a good job as was the case in the past. It should not be that way in America; however, we will endure this eco-

Birthday...continued from page 1

tionist Carey Waldrip.

The dignitaries spoke of the changes to the Towns County landscape, the challenges ahead, trials and tribulations that our forefathers may never have imagined. The community, now 155 years old, obviously is well into the 21st century. "There are going to be

challenges, growing pains, so to speak," Mayor Gibby said. "We still like to see our mountains; we still enjoy the natural treasures. It's a good place to be; I'm happy. We celebrate our history, but we look forward to define our future." Commissioner Kendall

praised the Towns County Historical Society for keeping the event an annual festive occasion. He spoke about history, challenges of growth and the efforts to make the future somewhat brighter for the next generation.

"Certainly, to know where we're going in the future, we need to know where we've been," he said. "We've had controlled growth over the last decade. The U.S. Census Bureau says we've grown about 12 per-

cent over that time period.

"It's a lot better to have trees and grass than it is to have too many people," Commissioner Kendall said. "Lumpkin County has more than 40,000 people and they're about the same geographical size as Towns County. That county is havand congestion issues that have come with that 'We're committed to

controlled growth in Towns County," he said. "Hopefully, we can get some jobs in the future. We've got some challenges ahead but we're working to build our infrastructure through capital outlay projects funding by the recently passed Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax.

"What the Historical Society is trying to do is preserve these mountains," Commissioner Kendall said. "I remember how much my folks loved these mountains. The old time folks knew every branch, creek and hollow in Towns County.

'Our history is an im-

portant part of who we are and it's important to preserve our history for future generations," he said.

Waldrip, who knows a good bit about history stressed the preservation of

the historical Unicoy Turnpike remnants in Towns County. The Unicoy Turnpike ing a lot of traffic problems Trail predates written history The Turnpike follows ancien trails that ran through the lands

of the Cherokee Nation. It has been a major corridor for human travel for thousands of years and was the original gateway for early settlers into the frontier of the Appalachia.

The trail runs through Georgia, into North Carolina and ends in Vonore, Tenn. I follows an ancient trade path that includes Towns County better known as the northernmost end of the old Unicoy Turnpike.

"We want the whole trail preserved," Waldrin said. "It all has to be one unit It's our greatest historical treasure. What we're trying to do is simple, preserving Unicoy Turnpike remnants It's not as easy as it sounds.'

Shortfall...continued from page 1

enues for local governmoney to pay their taxes and the recession cycle continues to feed on itself. "Over the past three

years we have experienced the worst recession since the Great Depression that started in 1929," he said. "I have worked very hard and am pleased that by careful monitoring of expenditures and eliminating recurring expenses and by using attrition, not replacing non-emergency employee vacancies, I have not had to lay off any employees. "Hopefully, I will be

able to manage the upcoming 2012 budget in a similar fashion," he said. "Howhave done all through this nomic situation.

ues, the Tax Digest and rev-recession, I will carefully balance the needs to proments. The large number of vide essential county sercitizens out of work have vices while looking after the had a hard time finding taxpayers who foot the

Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax dollars approved March 15 by local voters cannot be used to eliminate revenue shortfalls in the general revenue budget for employees' salaries and benefits. 'SPLOST Funds, as

required by law, will be spent the present time. for the capital outlay projects listed on the ballot as approved by the voters,' Commissioner Kendall said. Those projects include

roads, fire hydrants, water, sewerage, fire equipment, libraries, recreational and community facilities.

Commissioner ever, the large decrease in Kendall said that as county the Tax Digest, which is just employees move forward, nomic storm. Things evennow hitting us, is going to it's time to look at the posi- tually will get better and make it very difficult. As I live side of the local eco-

ways more fortunate than

Park Ceremony...from page 1

to the memory of Ralph and Johnnie," Nancy said. "It will be a benefit to Towns County for years to come."

Commissioner Kendall said that the purchase of the Foster property was an historic moment in Towns County history.

said, referencing the property's purchase. "We Recreation here in Towns that much. The residents of

will be a perpetual memorial County over the years to no Towns County deserve that training. avail.

"The young people here have never had adequate facilities for athletics and the older generation doesn't have the walking trails that other communities around us have," he said.

"We'll have a park to build programs and have a place for the families in our comhad tried every conceivable munity to enjoy. The chilway to develop Parks and dren of this county deserve

much."

ceeds from the property's sale to the county by the Johnnie Irene Foster Charitable Trust went to Young Harris College for scholarships, Kendall said.

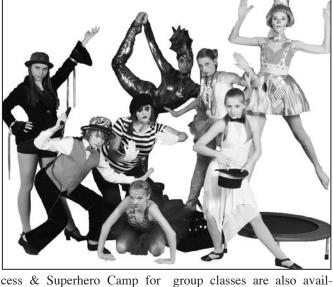
"The county money 'We needed it," he and grow our local athletic that we spent for that property will go toward future an outstanding meal and a scholarships for our children and our grandchildren," Kendall said. "It was a winwin for Towns County."

Come out to see "So You Think We Can Dance"

Brasstown Dance Academy will be presenting their Annual Spring Recital on Saturday, May 21, 2011 at 6 p.m. at Glenn Auditorium in the Clegg Fine Arts Building at Young Harris College. The theme this year is "So You Think We Can Dance," showcasing a variety of dance styles in the manner of the popular TV show. Dancers of all ages will be performing for their families and friends. The recital will also feature several pieces from The Fuzion Dance Company, a project of Brasstown Dance Academy, which has just completed an award-winning third season. We hope that you will be able to join us for this exciting program!

Tickets will be available at the door or in advance at the BDA Studio and Head 2 Toe Dance Supply, both located across the street from BRMEMC in Young Harris. The cost is \$12 for adults and \$5 for students.

If you are considering dance classes for your student, this is a great opportunity to preview what Brasstown Dance Academy has to offer. Summer is coming fast...call for information about our exciting summer programs; Prin-



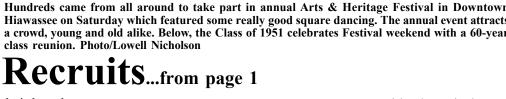
cess & Superhero Camp for ages 3-5 and Dance With the Disney Stars Camp for ages

able. Registration is now open for summer and fall classes at 5 and older. Private and small Brasstown Dance Academy.

Avita Board of Directors meeting

Avita Community Partners will hold the monthly meeting of the Board of Directors Tuesday, May 24, 2011 at 7 p.m. at the Avita Community Partners' Administrative Office at 4331 Thurmond Tanner Parkway, Flowery Branch,

The public is invited to attend. For further information or directions, please contact Regina Grisham at 678-513-5748 or 1-800-525-8751 or by email regina.grisham@avitapartners.org. N(May18,Z2)CA



their loved ones spent away from home," the chief said, adding that each firefighter will complete 200 hours of

'Tonight culminates a The bulk of the pro- long grueling process for these outstanding recruits," Chief Floyd said. "Here they sit tonight, ready to go to work."

The Towns County Fire Corps hosted the event at the Senior Center, providing the group of public servants with Graduation Class cake.

Commissioner Kendall did the honors of swearing in the new firefighters.

"I want to congratulate each and every one of you for your commitment to Towns County," he said.



Division Chief Doug Mills

cial for the group's lead instructor, Doug Mills, who was named Division Chief for the fire department.

"Doug is a state certified fire instructor," Chief Floyd said. "Without Doug's dedication and certifica-The night was also spetions, we wouldn't be able Towns County."

to provide these in-house certification programs in Towns County.

"Every night those classes were going on, there was a cadre of assistant instructors that were there helping Doug out," Chief Floyd said. "I want to say a well deserved thank you to

each of those folks." Commissioner Kendall said certified volunteer firefighters are necessary in

Towns County. "That's because we're not big enough to be able to have and afford a paid, full-time fire department," he said. "That's why the dedication of each and every one of these individuals should be greatly appreciated by everyone in

Superintendent...continued from page 1

and their families. I'll conbe superintendent."

Dr. Behrens has acwith Truett McConnell College in Cleveland.

The BOE has set a tentative goal of naming the next Superintendent of Towns County Schools by mid-June. The BOE hopes to have a new superintendent ready to begin work in July.

Qualifications and traits identified by the BOE include enthusiasm, strong leadership, and ability to work closely with the system's current employees. The BOE also seeks a superintendent who will function as a member of the local community and work closely with

Towns County parents and

business leaders.

tinue to do that, I just won't hopes to select a new supercepted a teaching position cational leader and who has sirable living environment of of curriculum and instruction.

The Board is particularly interested in a leader whose primary focus is continued improvement of student achievement.

The BOE has advertised the superintendent's vacancy across Georgia by posting notices with the Georgia School Boards Association, with the Georgia School Superintendents Association, and by mailings to all school systems and Regional Educational Service Agencies throughout the

These postings and mailings are typically moni-

Overall, the BOE tored by aspiring superintendents both within the state intendent who has a proven and across the nation. The track record as a strong edu- BOE believes that the dea strong working knowledge Towns County and the already strong school system will help to attract applicants from both the immediate area and from outside the region. BOE members have expressed that the board is proud of the achievements

> ministrators, teachers, and support staff members of the county. It is the BOE's hope that the next superintendent can build on the system's strengths and move Towns County Schools to even

> made under the leadership

of Dr. Behrens and the ad-

higher levels of student achievement.