

Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

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Thursday, May 21, 2009

Local Weather and Lake Levels

| | | | |
|-------|----------|----|----|
| Thur: | Showers | 73 | 55 |
| Fri: | Showers | 76 | 57 |
| Sat: | Showers | 76 | 58 |
| Sun: | T-Storms | 76 | 58 |
| Mon: | T-Storms | 77 | 58 |
| Tue: | Showers | 77 | 57 |
| Wed: | Sunny | 75 | 59 |



| Upstream | Elevation Predicted 5/18/09 |
|--------------|-----------------------------|
| Lake Chatuge | 1925.40 |
| Lake Nottely | 1775.08 |
| Blue Ridge | 1687.06 |

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Memorial Day closings

The Towns County Courthouse, the Hiwassee City Hall, and the Young Harris City Hall will all be closed on Monday, May 25 in observance of the Memorial Day holiday. The Towns County Herald wishes you a safe and happy holiday weekend.

Chili Cookoff

Towns County Fire Chili Cookoff will be on Saturday, May 30. Chili winners will receive \$300—1st prize, \$200—2nd prize, and \$100—3rd prize, plus trophies for the best booth and People's Choice Chili Cooker. There is still time to be a part of this. For more info, go to the website, townscountyfirecorps.org, for an information form or call 706-896-6240 and leave a message.

Food Pantry

The Towns County Food Pantry will have a free food distribution for Towns County residents Tuesday, May 26 from 2-6pm. The pantry asks that you enter Jack Dayton Circle on the Funworld side for a more orderly distribution. If you are unable to pick up your food, please call the food pantry at 706-896-4783 prior to distribution day so arrangements can be made for food to be delivered to you. As always all clients and inquiries are confidential.

DDS closed

All Department of Driver Services (DDS) drivers licensing Customer Service Centers will be closed on Saturday, May 23 and will reopen on Tuesday, May 26.

OES Yard Sale

The Order of the Eastern Star will hold its Annual Fundraising Yard Sale on May 23 in the Eller's Tire Store parking lot.

Behrens: 'The future is bright' for Class of '09



Congratulations graduating seniors of 2009

Photo by Lowell Nicholson

By Charles Duncan
TOWNS COUNTY HERALD
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Dr. Richard Behrens' face becomes flushed with emotion every time he thinks about saying good bye to another graduating class at Towns County High School. Kids can certainly grow on you when you're a superintendent in a small town, especially on a campus as tightly woven as TCHS, Behrens said. "The thing about Towns County kids, basically, they're just good kids," Behrens said. "Their families are supportive of them and of the school system. The students here have a

very strong work ethic. These kids not only go to school, they hold down a job as well.

"They're all good kids. You watch them grow up and you not only know them, but you know their families as well," Behrens said. "The children in Towns County are a wonderful group of students to work with."

At 7 p.m. on Friday at the Bill P. Kendall Gymnasium, another outstanding group of TCHS seniors begin their life's adult journey.

It'll be hard for Behrens to wave good bye to the Class of 2009 as the group concludes a dozen years of academic achievement. Expect the veteran

educator to keep plenty of Kleenex tissue handy.

"Working in a system this small, you know most of the kids," he said. "This group was in the seventh grade when I first started here. You know their sisters and their brothers; their parents and grandparents."

"This is my 23rd year as an educator and it's never easy to say good bye," he said. "Each graduating group is like your best friend walking away."

The class of 2009 has raised the bar in terms of scholarship dollars. The 72 seniors leave with more than \$1 million to further their

See Future, page 5A

Mayor will recommend sewer service for Lowe's



By Charles Duncan
TOWNS COUNTY HERALD
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Mayor Barbara Mathis will recommend that the city of Hiwassee grant the necessary sewer capacity to Lowe's before a June 1 deadline, the Mayor said this week.

Mayor Mathis said she will ask the Hiwassee City Council to approve the necessary sewer allocation for Lowe's from the city's available reserves.

Mayor Mathis said her goal is to assure that the 75 permanent jobs and countless part-time jobs offered by Lowe's come to fruition in Towns County.

"I strongly believe that utilizing city reserves to bring jobs to Towns County is appropriate for the short term and for this project," Mathis

said. "Alternatives such as taking sewer from existing businesses or removing public facilities from existing sewer services are not permanent solutions."

Local officials have been working long hours trying to find a way to provide 1,100 gallons a day in sewer to Lowe's by June 1. That's the amount retail giant needs to operate its 96,000 square foot facility on 16 acres on Georgia 76 near The Junction. Lowe's has a June 1 deadline for finding enough sewer capacity to build its first store in Towns County.

A meeting of the minds was held last week as the Towns County Industrial Development Authority, Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall and Hiwassee City Manager Rick Stancil got together to discuss ways to provide sewer services for the Lowe's Home Improvement Center project.

Lowe's projects first year sales at its Towns

See Lowe's, page 9A

Seniors honored during scholarship ceremony

By David Seckinger
TOWNS COUNTY HERALD

On May 15, Towns County High School held its annual Honor's Day ceremony, where high school seniors who received scholarships were recognized for their academic and athletic accomplishments.

The auditorium was full of families who cheered as the seniors were called up to accept their scholarships and awards.



Perren with valedictorians Allen, Garrett, and historian Osborn.

Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Report shows unemployment rate improving

By Carl Vanzura
TOWNS COUNTY HERALD

The last Georgia Department of Labor figure on unemployment in Georgia shows that Towns County is improving slightly. With 5,848 citizens on the labor force, 5,362 are working with 486 unemployed, for an 8.3 percent unemployment rate.

The prior month, 513 were out of work for an 8.8 rate. Last year at this time, Towns County had 5,571 workers on the labor force, with all but 312 working,

for an unemployment rate of 5.4 percent. Since that time, it has gone up every month until this report. Local employers hope this is the beginning of better times in this area.

Our neighbor Union County has also seen an improvement in their labor report as they have 11,560 workers with all but 1,033 of them employed, for an 8.9 unemployment rate, down from 9.2 the prior month.

The state unemployment rate is 9.2 percent which makes it the first time in 20 months that it has not increased over the

previous months. State Labor Commissioner Michael Thurmond stated, "This does not represent the end of this recession. It is not even the beginning of the end. However, it may be the end of the beginning of the most severe economic down fall since the Great Depression."

Georgia with their 9.2 unemployment rate is ranked 36th of the 51 states. North Dakota is best in the country with a 4.2 rate. North Carolina is ranked 47th at 10.8. Last in the nation is Michigan with a 12.6 unemployment rate.

Veterans throw pizza party for 7th graders

By David Seckinger
TOWNS COUNTY HERALD

Members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7807 threw a pizza party for about 100 seventh graders from the Towns County Middle School last Thursday.

The event has been going on for at least ten years, said VFW quartermaster Glen Greenwald. The VFW purchased 40 large pizzas and nine cases of soft drinks for the middle school students, who enjoyed the beautiful weather at the park in the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds.

VFW members who helped throw the pizza party included Bob Henson, Stephen Smith, Joel Turpin, and Iona Greenwald. Middle school teachers Jenni Rogers, Tim Rosser, and Lisa Johnson also attended.



VFW quartermaster Glen Greenwald enjoys pizza with 7th graders from Towns County Middle School.

TCMS science teacher Jennifer Moss said the students were absolutely excited about the pizza party. "This turns out to be the best field trip day of the year," she said. "We appreciate the generosity and kindness of the VFW."

The students not only

enjoyed the pizza but also the chance to race, play ball, hang out, and catch a little sunshine, too.

Seventh grader Stratton MacDougald said he ate three slices of pizza and called the event fun.

See Pizza, page 5A

Oxendine: information needed on Towns County saw mill fire

Atlanta — Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner John W. Oxendine is requesting the public's assistance for information on a 2007 fire that destroyed a saw mill in Towns County.

The fire, which occurred on January 23, 2007, around 10:30 p.m., on Cynth Creek Road in Hiwassee, caused an estimated loss of \$100,000. No injuries were reported and the exact cause of the fire remains unknown.

Oxendine is asking anyone with information about this fire to call his Arson Hotline at 1-800-282-5804. Rewards of up to \$10,000 are given for information leading to the arrest and conviction of an arsonist. Calls are taken 24 hours a day; callers can choose to remain anonymous. The Commissioner's Office and the Georgia Arson Control Board, Inc., sponsor the Georgia Arson Control Reward Program and the hotline.

Memorial Day at Veterans Park



Butterworth

The Towns County veterans organizations will conduct their annual Memorial Day Service at Towns County Veterans Park in

front of Towns County Schools at 12 noon on Monday, May 25, 2009.

All interested patriots are cordially invited to attend. The service will be hosted by VFW District Senior Vice Commander Chris Swett and Hiwassee VFW Post Commander Joel Turpin. The guest speaker for the event will be State Senator Jim Butterworth.

The ceremony will conclude with a laying of wreaths and a rendition of Taps. Please come out and help honor the young men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country.

2009 Georgia Mountain Roots and Music Festival

Special to the Herald

Tickets are now on sale for the 2009 Roots and Music Festival at The Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds.

The Festival will celebrate the heritage and traditional music of our mountains as well as contemporary acts in the bluegrass, folk, and Americana genres.

Tickets are \$18 on Friday, \$27 on Saturday, and \$40 for a 2-Day pass. The Festival also provides an informal Picking Pavilion throughout the weekend.

The Festival line-up includes top local, regional and national acts.

On Friday, June 5 at 6 PM, catch Buck and Nelson, Irons in the Fire, 2007 and 2008 IBMA Female Vocalist of the Year Dale Ann Bradley and leg-



Headliner Dan Tyminski has won thirteen Grammy Awards as guitarist and vocalist for Alison Krauss and Union Station.

See Festival, page 5A

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