

Hydrants... continued from page 1A

found that their home was located 200 feet farther than the 1,000 ft. maximum required to get credit for a fire hydrant.

"Insurance companies have begun auditing how close homes are to a fire hydrant and increasing home insurance," Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall said.

Collection of SPLOST dollars for County projects began July 1, the day after the expiration of the Towns County Board of Education's ELOST.

The additional 150 fire hydrants will mean huge savings for local homeowners, said Towns County Assistant Fire Chief Harold Copeland.

"(The fire hydrants) will save homeowners a lot of money each year on their homeowners insurance," Assistant Fire Chief Copeland said.

Towns County Government will fund the fire hydrants from SPLOST pro-

ceeds and the Towns County Water and Sewer Authority, City of Young Harris and City of Hiawassee have agreed to install the hydrants.

Towns County Fire Chief Mitch Floyd, Assistant Fire Chief Copeland and Towns County 911 Mapping Coordinator Marty Roberts will designate the location for the installation of the hydrants, Commissioner Kendall said.

"Marty Roberts (911 Mapping) played a huge role in locating where the hydrants will best be utilized," Chief Floyd said. "It'll probably be 12 months before we get up to speed with the fire hydrants. This is going to mean a lot to us."

"These dedicated public servants have done an excellent job of providing bid documents for the procurement of hydrants and firefighting equipment," Commissioner Kendall said.

Once all 150 hydrants are installed, all residents in Towns County that live near 6-inch or larger water lines will have a fire hydrant within 1,000 feet of their home to keep their insurance rates from going up or to get a reduction, Commissioner Kendall said.

Only 2.6 points separates the county from a Class 5 fire rating. Additional phases will be handled through the implementation of the voter-approved SPLOST.

A target date soon will be designated to upgrade the county's Fire Department and water system to meet all requirements. Once that task is complete, the county will request ISO officials to conduct an onsite evaluation of Towns County's Fire Services in an attempt to reduce Towns County's ISO rating from a 9-6 to a 9-5 in order to aid Towns County homeowners' insurance rates from going up or to get allow for a premium reduction.



TCHS FBLA National Leadership Conference competitors in Orlando, Fla., Nora Sutton, Katie McConnell, McKenzi Moss, Ali Bleckley, Ashley Dodson, and Ryan Tallent.

FBLA...continued from page 1A

ited an informative packed exhibit hall, and attended motivational keynotes on a broad range of business topics.

Bleckley is no stranger to competing on a national stage. She competed last year at the 2010 NLC in Nashville in Word Processing I. This year she competed in Word Processing II in Orlando and placed second in the nation, achieving the highest rank in Top 10 anyone from TCHS has ever received.

According to Melissa McConnell, and Kelly Holloway, Towns County's FBLA advisors, the Word Processing II event requires a high level of word processing skill beyond entry level proficiency. The timed production test requires students to quickly produce industry appropriate documents formatted correctly and keyed accurately according to national guidelines. Beyond the production portion of the test, students also must complete a theory-based test which measures advanced word processing knowledge.

Bleckley was humble and ecstatic about her achievement.

"FBLA has always been a great experience for me, but competing takes my business skills to a whole new level," she said. "FBLA competitions are extremely intense yet tremendously rewarding especially when you hear your name called on stage as a winner."

Katie McConnell is no stranger to national competition, having taken home third place at last summer's 2010 NLC as part of the Emerging Business Issues team.

Katie McConnell set her

sites on winning another FBLA national event in 2011. Earlier this year, she placed first at region and state in the Client Service event and was able to represent Georgia FBLA once again at the national level.

Katie McConnell once again progressed through preliminaries to the final round in her event, bringing home seventh place at this year's conference.

The Client Service event is a role play scenario in which students are given an opportunity to develop and demonstrate skills in interacting with internal and external clients to provide an outstanding client service experience. The client service consultant engages clients in conversations regarding products, handles inquiries, solves problems, and uncovers opportunities for additional assistance. Participants develop speaking ability and poise through presentation as well as critical-thinking skills.

Like Bleckley, Katie McConnell also was humbled and thrilled by the experience.

"I have been so blessed to have had the opportunity to compete at the national level twice," she said. "Not only has it improved my speaking skills, but it is also very rewarding. There is nothing like being on stage and receiving an award for an event that you've practiced months to win. I've learned that hard work and dedication really does pay off in the end."

Tallent competed in Spreadsheet Applications and was called to the stage as part

of the Top 10 where he placed sixth in the nation. The challenging event consists of a production as well as an objective portion. In the production portion of the test, students use spreadsheet skills to convert data to useful information. Students use mathematical concepts and data organization concepts to create formulas, use functions, generate graphs, pivot tables, macros and filter and extract data. The objective test evaluates spreadsheet application knowledge when creating and using spreadsheets, formulas, functions, graphs, charts, reports and advanced spreadsheet tools.

Also from Towns County, Nora Sutton and Ashley Dodson competed as a team in the Emerging Business Issues event. The two seniors represented Georgia as they advanced from taking first at region and state level competitions to contend in Orlando. Teams in this event must research the topic and prepare both an affirmative and negative argument on a current emerging business issue.

Freshman McKenzi Moss began her FBLA competitive career with success as she placed first in state competitions and competed nationally in FBLA Principles and Procedures. The Principles and Procedures event is an online test which tests a student's knowledge about the FBLA-PBL organization including history, goals, creed, code of ethics, parliamentary procedure and organizational bylaws as well as common business principles and procedures.



Work began last week to install the first of 150 fire hydrants in communities throughout the county to help lower the county's ISO fire rating to aid local homeowners. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Fair... continued from page 1A

lanta Rhythm Section, the Georgia Mountain Fair Band, Mel Tillis, Pam Tillis and Joe Diffie.

This year's event also features the Water Ski Show and Bengal Tiger Encounters.

The event also features the ever popular carnival rides and the annual arts and crafts shows, held daily with real exhibitions of

old time craft making.

The Georgia Mountain Fair started with humble beginnings in 1950 as an agricultural expo that lasted three days at the Towns County High School Recreation Field. Only 2,000 or so attended the first Georgia Mountain Fair. However, no one could have predicted the meager event would grow

by leaps and bounds, adding rides and fun for children and arts and crafts for adults. By the mid-1970s, Hiawassee became a summer destination for more than 100,000 people looking to get in touch with rural roots and allowing their children to spend that hard-earned summer cash on 10 days of joyous pleasure.

Entertainment at Butternut Creek Festival



Cody Savage



FastGear to play both days at BCF.

FastGear has come together in the last few months to create a unique sound focused on vocal harmonies. Based out of Robbinsville, NC, the band performs mostly country with some bluegrass and rock in the mix. Small town beginnings and a shared obsession for music brought the four together and makes FastGear a group you will want to hear again!

FastGear will perform on Saturday, July 23rd at 10:30 a.m. and twice on Sunday, July 24th at 1:15 p.m. and again at 3:45 p.m.

Cody & Carlee Savage and the Backwoods Band will be on hand for the 13th annual Butternut Creek Festival to be held July 23rd and 24th at Meeks Park, Blairsville, GA.

Nineteen year old Cody Savage and his sixteen year old sister will bring to life their own brand of music at noon and again at 2:30 p.m. on Saturday under the gazebo in Meeks Park.

This pair began singing in church and at school events at a very young age. They enjoy singing classical country music. They love the songs by legendary artists such as Johnny Cash, Merle Haggard, and Gene Watson.

The group initially started with just Cody. Little sister Carlee joined a couple of years later. The group consists of Carlee Savage on vocal, Cody Savage on vocal and rhythm guitar, Kevin Savage on bass guitar, James Irvin on lead guitar, Tyra Cantrell on steel guitar, and Jerry McAndrew on drums.

They have performed at lots of festivals, school events, and at the Anderson Music Hall in Hiawassee. Cody and Carlee have performed in front of thousands of their peers at the Georgia State FFA Convention as well as local area FFA

banquets. Their first CD with Sound Wave Recording Studios of Warne, North Carolina was released this past April 2011. The group can't wait to share the CD with their fans!

Mark your calendars now for this free, family oriented festival with live entertainment. Named one of the Top 20 Events by the Southeastern Tourism Association, the Butternut Creek Festival (with over 65 juried fine

craftsmen and artists) is sure to please. Look for demonstrations, live music, and good food beginning at 9 a.m. under the shady trees along Butternut Creek! There's something for everyone at the Butternut Creek Festival.

For more information visit www.butternutcreekfestival.com, call 706-781-1221, or email butternutcreekfestival@gmail.com. See you there! NJU13.A45H

Park... continued from page 1A

The sneak peak is scheduled from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Thursday at the Fairgrounds.

"Everyone pitched in," Thomason said on Monday. "This truly has been a community effort. From financial donations, to volunteer labor to even the Cub Scouts (Pack 407) coming out to become a part of this historic occasion."

The committee that organized the Anderson-Paris Day at Anderson Music Hall last November found a way to pay a lasting tribute to two community icons with the development of Anderson-Paris Pioneer Park.

City Hall...continued from page 1A

square feet of space, the building at 50 River Street once remembered for its longtime association with the Bank of Hiawassee, was a perfect option.

When the bidding ended, the city's \$255,000 tender was a winner. It was a victory not only for the city, but for its residents.

The Hiawassee City Council unanimously approved the purchase at last week's Council meeting.

With four internal vaults, the city now has plenty of storage space for city records and city police

The idea is to make the newest pioneer project at the Fairgrounds a focal point of the entire facility for tourists. It's also to remember the many years of unselfish community service given to Hiawassee and Towns County by Anderson and Paris.

"We'll have some refreshments for everyone," Thomason said. "It's right before the Fair opens and it will give folks an opportunity to enjoy all the hard work and effort that has gone into this project."

The park's design, which features walking trails, a picnic area, an outdoor amphitheater, a gor-

geous fountain and panoramic native plant life, was the brainstorm of The Plant Stand's Catherine Hansen.

"This is literally a park with benches and picnic tables in it," Hansen said. "It has an outdoor stage with a complete sound system. We've got a water wheel, a giant fountain, two pioneer houses and trails."

"I think what Anderson-Paris Pioneer Park will be is a place to remember what Elois and Dick have really meant to this community," she said. "At the same time, I believe it will provide a little enjoyment for folks who come to visit the Fairgrounds."

department records. "Storage space for our government records was becoming a serious issue. Eventually, this will be a resource that we will call City Hall from now on," Mayor Mathis said. "It will take some renovations, but we'll get there and we'll have something to be proud of for years and years to come."

Residents can rest easy about the purchase price. The building was valued at more than \$1 million and better yet, it's now paid for. "We'll use a CD (Certificate of Deposit) to pay for

the building," she said. "It will be paid in full with nothing owed on the property."

Mayor Mathis said the city won't make the move to 50 River Street anytime soon. She said the council wants to take its time, gets some architectural renovation designs and complete the move when the time is right.

"There is no rush," she said. "We've completed the biggest hurdle with the purchase of the building, and we'll take our time and make everything right before we make the move."

Fireworks...continued from page 1A

Independence from England, the most powerful nation on earth at the time.

"By doing so they risked everything they and their families owned including their lives, with the results being a hard fought war which our freedoms and private property rights were eventually won

against all odds," he said.

Commissioner Kendall said the best he could tell, almost everyone had a wonderful time enjoying themselves celebrating our Nation's freedom and independence.

"I certainly will not consider any local ordinance to take away or re-

strict these private property rights from our citizens," he said. "On July 4, we saw many private fireworks displays on private property all over the county with everybody having a good time and no one being harmed. That is the way it should be and should stay."