

# Towns County Herald

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## Tornado touches down, uproots trees on Haigler property

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

A tornado toppled more than 20 large pine trees on the property of Richard and Willene Haigler on Wednesday, March 1, when a massive thunderstorm moved through the area.

The Haiglers live in the south end of Towns County, off Georgia 180, and just prior to the bad storm, the two were outdoors feeding their six peacocks. When the sky began to turn, they decided to move inside for shelter.

With characteristic force, the tornado snapped some trees off near the ground while uprooting others. Trees fell on and damaged a fence on the property, and fell across



Bad weather moved into the mountains on Wednesday, March 1, causing damage to area trees. That evening, a tornado knocked about 20 trees on the Haigler property. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

one side of their circular driveway.

Fortunately, neither they, their peacocks, nor their two dogs were hurt in the tornado, which touched down right next to the house, but kept its whirling fury localized to one side. Their home remained unscathed.

"On the other side of the house (from where the tornado hit), I have ornaments out in the yard – it didn't even blow them away," said Willene Haigler. "I've heard about these people and storms that'll get one house and leave another one."

"Well, I saw that, I saw that. I got the trees on one side of my house, and the other side it didn't do anything."

Unfortunately, they lost more than 20 trees and experienced some damage

to their property, and their peacocks' favorite roosting tree was one of the arboreal casualties.

"You really don't have time to think, it happens that quick," said Mrs. Haigler, who hid in the crawlspace of her home with her husband for safety during the storm.

As for why the tornado came and went the way it did, without hitting the house or injuring either of the Haiglers or their pets, Willene gives credit where she says it's due.

"I guess the good Lord was just taking care of us," she said. "We're safe and sound, and thank the Lord. And whatever it will be, if it takes us six months to get the trees up, we'll get them up when we've got to get them up."

See Tornado, Page 6A

## TCHS students perform in Young Harris College Honor Band

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

YOUNG HARRIS – Four Towns County students were selected to perform in the Young Harris College High School Band last month, after rigorous auditions landed them spots.

More than a dozen other schools participated in the Feb. 4 musical event, resulting in a rather large honor band this year of greater than 100 musicians, and all four of the students who auditioned from Towns made it.

Senior Tori Bradshaw played the tuba, senior Chloe Spears the clarinet, junior Miranda White the trombone and sophomore Chase Crawford the alto saxophone.

Following the tryouts See TCHS, Page 6A



L-R: Chase Crawford, Chloe Spears, Tori Bradshaw, Miranda White and TCHS Band Director Derrick Nolen, following the Young Harris College High School Honor Band performance last month.

## Whitt discusses Capstone Requirement for graduating seniors

By Lily Avery  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

YOUNG HARRIS – Towns County High School teacher Brooke Whitt explained the ins and outs of the senior capstone project with residents at the Mountain Movers and Shakers weekly meeting at Mary's Southern Grill on Friday, March 3.

Whitt is an English teacher at the high school as well as the senior capstone coordinator for all capstone projects at TCHS.

Seniors at TCHS are now required to complete what is known as a capstone project before graduation, an assignment that utilizes multiple research and communication skills to better prepare students for post-



Brooke Whitt, TCHS English Teacher

secondary education and the workforce.

"We require a capstone See Whitt, Page 6A

## Communities receive Firewise certification



Residents from the Autumn Ridge community in Hiwassee accepted their community's designation as Firewise

By Lily Avery  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Two new names were added to the Towns County list of Firewise communities

during the Towns County Firewise Citizens Coalition regular meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 21.

See Firewise, Page 6A

## Steve Holmes honored for years of service to county

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Towns County native Steve Holmes has retired after 28 years of service to the county, and he did so among family and friends in the Feb. 21 Towns County Commission Meeting.

Holmes, who will turn 94 this month, received a plaque in recognition of his long commitment to the county, presented by Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw in the meeting.

"Mr. Holmes, you don't know how much you have meant to this county," said Bradshaw. "You have no idea the affect you've had on so many people in this county – it's amazing."

Added the com- See Holmes, Page 8A



Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw with Steve Holmes and Sharon Payne, Holmes' daughter.

## Union General's Young Harris Clinic open for business



The Towns County Chamber of Commerce assisted Union General Hospital in conducting their March 1 ribbon-cutting ceremony to officially open their brand new Young Harris Clinic.

By Lily Avery  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

YOUNG HARRIS – For the residents of Young Harris last Wednesday, March 1, was a big day as the Union

General Hospital Young Harris Clinic opened its doors to the public for a preview of the new area healthcare facility.

Members of the community and county officials, such as Young

Harris Mayor Andrea Gibby and neighboring Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris, gathered to participate in the open house event, sharing

See Clinic, Page 6A

## Deputy Henderson receives warm welcome home

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Welcome home, Deputy Henderson.

After a long and trying ordeal that started with a Sept. 19 car accident that took him first to Northeast Georgia Medical in critical condition, then to Atlanta's Shephard Center in October, Union County Sheriff's Deputy Mitchell Henderson is finally home.

"Mitchell is continuing therapy in Blairsville and is doing very well," the family told the North Georgia News and Towns County Herald. "Please continue to pray for him as he continues down the road to recovery. Thank you to the community and officers for such a warm welcome home."

Henderson's journey home began the afternoon of



"Welcome Home Deputy Henderson!"

Wednesday, March 1, when he headed out of Atlanta to meet with about 10 patrol cars from the Union County Sheriff's Office.

His fellow deputies waited for him at the top of the mountain, near the Union

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GEORGIA MOUNTAIN FAIR

Wynonna Judd

Chatuge Regional Auxiliary Book Sale

March 13 & 14

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Swapping Seeds

Historical Society

March 13th

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Baseball

Thur Mar 9 @ Johnson Savannah 4:30 PM

Fri Mar 10 2 Brantley 3:45 PM

Soccer

Tues. Mar 7 vs. Lumpkin 5:30 & 7:30 PM