

Towns County Herald

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TCHS seniors to walk the stage on Friday, May 18

By Mark Novak
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Eighty-three students will graduate from Towns County High School on Friday, May 18, after which they will embark upon the next leg of their journeys in life.

Representing the Top 3 of the Class of 2018 will be Valedictorian Sarah Beth Hobbs, Salutatorian Zachary Davenport and Historian Lydia Moss.

The three top students learned of their achievements on Monday, May 14, and were not available for interviews by press time. Each will deliver a speech at the upcoming graduation ceremony, which is set for 7 p.m. at the Towns County Recreation and Conference Center on Friday.

On Friday, May 11, the high school held its annual 2018 Senior Class Awards Day inside the Anne Oliver Mitchell Auditorium on campus, where administrators and guests handed out hundreds of thousands of dollars in college scholarships.

TCHS Principal Dr. Connie Hobbs expressed how proud she was of the Class of 2018 that day, saying that these last moments are bittersweet, "but it's a great moment also - I hate to see them go."

During the awards ceremony, Dr. Hobbs took a moment to highlight the accomplishments of senior Chase Williams, who has

not missed a single day of school since he was enrolled in kindergarten at the Towns County Schools in 2005.

Also announced that Friday, three students will start their journeys after high school in defense of their country: Scott Cupit, Kaine Hoffman and Jeremy Mays will be serving in the U.S. Armed Forces following graduation.

The following 16 students are graduating with High Honors in Academics: Taralee Arrowood, Brooke Barrett, Sarah Bastian, Andy Chambers, Zach Davenport, Ben Edwards, Sadie Eller, Sara Beth Hobbs, Jordan Hyatt, Lydia Moss, Sara Perry, Caden Pylrik, Haley Stowers, Kyra Tallent, Hannah Whitehead and Chase Williams.

Nine students will be graduating with Academic Honors: Evan Berrong, Melissa Caldwell, Caleb Clark, Carly Dills, Antonio Hernandez, Alyssa Hunter, Jeremy Mays, Madison McClure and Breanna Stripling.

Of the 83 students graduating, 55 of them have received Georgia Business Ethics Student Training (BEST), giving the students the knowledge of how to be successful in the workforce.

Twenty students in the class have completed the Advanced Academic Pathways Program that will prepare them for career opportunities and many postsecondary options for studies and skills.

Many students

completed a variety of the Agricultural Mechanisms, Metal Fabrication, Forestry, Wildlife Management, Electricity/Electric Controls, Carpentry, Early Childhood Education, Junior ROTC-Navy, Allied Health, Sports Medicine, Band, Chorus, Spanish Language, Entrepreneurship, Accounting, and Business & Technology.

Four students will be going on to college to earn their degrees with the help of sports scholarships: Brooke Barrett, Andy Chambers, Logan Cowart and Harold Cox.

Six students will be pursuing careers in education: Taralee Arrowood, Bradley Benson, Zandra Churchill, Sadie Eller, Breanna Stripling and Megan Wallace.

The 83 students graduating as part of the Class of 2018 are: Liberty Armstrong, Gabriel Arotin, Angelina Arrowood, Taralee Arrowood, Mary Askeew, Alyssa Bantum, Brooke Barrett, Nicholas Barrett, Sarah Bastian, Bradley Benson, Evan Berrong, Jamison Boggus, Dylan Burrell, Melissa Caldwell, Andrew Chambers, Jay Chastain, Zandra Churchill, Caleb Clark, Kelaiah Clayton, Jenna Cole, Logan Cowart, Harold Cox, Lori Cox, Tori Cox, Daniel Crowder, Scott Cupit, Zachary Davenport, Emily Davis, Carly Dills, David Dyer, Benjamin Edwards, Mercedes Eller, Cara Galloway, Elisabeth Gilbert, Madison Grindstaff, Angel

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Sarah Beth Hobbs
Valedictorian



Zachary Davenport
Salutatorian



Lydia Moss
Historian



Photo by Lowell Nicholson

With graduating Towns County High School seniors like these, the future looks bright - Senior Class Awards Day on May 11.

EMC highlights fiber expansion, budget details

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Assistant Editor

YOUNG HARRIS - The Blue Ridge Mountain EMC will soon take steps toward expanding the reach of its fiber optic network.

BRMEMC General Manager Jeremy Nelms made the announcement during a presentation of the cooperative's upcoming FY19 Capital Budget in the May 8 regular board meeting.

The EMC will be spending roughly \$500,000 on new fiber distribution lines in the next fiscal year, which will constitute a modest expansion of new branches off the main system occurring between July 2018 and June 2019.

Engineering Director Daniel Frizzell described the upcoming expansion as a "pilot step" for the EMC, a step that will essentially allow the EMC to pressure test new marketing strategies in rolling out roughly 20 to 25 miles of new fiber installation.

However modest in scope initially, the new infrastructure will be the largest one-time

expansion since the original grant that got the main fiber system started over seven years ago, said Nelms.

"We want to dip our toe in before we go full gusto to make sure our efforts are a good investment for the membership," said Nelms after the meeting. "We want to make sure people know it's out there, because they don't know it's out there. That's what we've found."

Areas to receive fiber expansion have not yet been determined, but Nelms did say that the new fiber will be deployed in the "most dense, underserved areas of our system."

Furthermore, Frizzell said it's likely the EMC will sort out which areas are to receive FY19 expansions by engaging communities to see where the most interest lies, a strategy that Nelms said will allow the cooperative to be more competitive in the marketplace.

"I think when we originally did our initial builds, it was, we'll build it first and then they'll come," said Nelms. "That's the way it worked from an electricity standpoint in the



Blue Ridge Mountain EMC Lineman Chase Hemphill with General Manager Jeremy Nelms. Hemphill attended the May 8 board meeting to talk about winning Third Place for an event in the 2018 Georgia Lineman's Rodeo.

1940s and '50s. "But with broadband being such a competitive market, you can't just build it and they will come. You've got to be very intentional with your marketing and show people the real value in it."

Fiber marketing strategies the EMC will be looking to implement run the gamut, said Nelms, including "mailouts,

phone calls, door knockers, maybe a community event ... just whatever it takes."

Fortunately for future fiber customers, the adoption rate of the EMC's existing broadband services is at a point where "we feel that now is a good time to start the next initial phase of new fiber rollouts."

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Last week to vote early ahead of primary

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Assistant Editor

Early voting for the May 22 General Primary and Nonpartisan General Election ends Friday, May 18.

This week, during the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., registered Towns County voters can cast their ballots at the Towns County Board of Elections and Registration Office.

The board office is located in Suite A of 67 Lakeview Circle in Hiawassee, and it will be open to voters even during lunchtime.

As of Saturday, May 12, there were 379 people who had voted early in Towns County. Since this is a primary, voters will need to declare a political party to receive a ballot, otherwise, voters will only be able to vote in the Nonpartisan General Election.

Election Day will be on Tuesday, May 22, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., and that day, voters should report to one of the four

pre-assigned Towns County voting precincts: Hiawassee, Young Harris, Macedonia and Tate City.

The Macedonia Precinct has changed from the campus of Towns County Schools to Macedonia Baptist Church.

Voters are not required to bring their mailed precinct cards, but they must show a photo ID to vote.

Towns County has 9,534 total registered voters, and Tuesday, April 24, was the voter registration deadline heading into the election.

For more election information, stop by the board office next to the Towns County Courthouse, or call (706) 896-4353.

Each of the following candidates appears on the ballot of his or her respective political party:

For Governor, L.S. "Casey" Cagle, Eddie Hayes, Hunter Hill, Brian Kemp, Clay Tippins, Marc Urbach and Michael Williams, all Republican; and Stacey

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Suspect in high-speed chase damages patrol vehicles

News Special
Towns County Herald

While on patrol on Tuesday, May 8, at approximately 3:15 p.m., Hiawassee Police Department Det. Brandon Barrett observed a subject known to have an active arrest warrant driving eastbound on S. Main Street.

Det. Barrett and the Towns County Sheriff's Office initiated a traffic stop on S. Main Street near Chatuge Way.

After initially stopping for the officers, the driver of the vehicle made a U-turn and struck the front of Det. Barrett's patrol vehicle.

The driver, Angela Capozzoli, of Hiawassee, then fled westbound on S. Main Street at a high rate of speed.

Hiawassee PD and the sheriff's office pursued the fleeing vehicle to Bugscuffle Road, where Capozzoli struck both patrol vehicles with her vehicle, disabling one.

HPD continued to pursue

Capozzoli to Bugscuffle Spur, where she turned onto a dirt road and was no longer able to proceed in her vehicle.

She exited the vehicle and fled on foot into a heavily wooded area, where officers lost contact with her.

At approximately 9 p.m., Capozzoli was located and apprehended after a short foot pursuit by HPD Sgt. Tracy James and Officer John Carter.

"I am incredibly thankful that no one was injured during the pursuit," said Hiawassee Police Chief Paul Smith. "Acts of aggression towards law enforcement officers of this extreme are rare in Hiawassee, but obviously not impossible."

"Working together with the Towns County Sheriff's Office, we were able to apprehend and bring charges against Capozzoli."

The sheriff's office has obtained arrest warrants for Capozzoli. She has been charged with two counts of



Angela Capozzoli

aggravated assault on a law enforcement officer, felony fleeing and attempting to elude, willful obstruction of a law enforcement officer, and two counts of leaving the scene of an accident.

She is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

Drug suspect arrested following extensive investigation

News Special
Towns County Herald

On Thursday, May 10, Towns County Sheriff's Office Investigators concluded an extensive joint investigation with assistance from the Union County Sheriff's Office and personnel from the Enotah Judicial Circuit District Attorney's Office.

The investigation concluded with the execution of

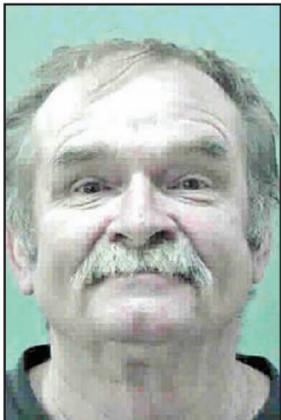
a search warrant at a residence located off Sims Road in Hiawassee.

Numerous drug purchases were made during the course of the undercover investigation.

The search warrant executed yielded a substantial quantity of drugs seized, the total street value of illegal drugs seized being over \$7,000.

TCSO Investigators arrested Samuel Dwayne Hedden, 63, of Hiawassee.

Hedden was arrested on the following charges: five counts Violation of Georgia Controlled Substance Act involving the sale of marijuana; four counts Violation of Georgia Controlled Substance Act involving the sale of Xanax; three counts Violation of Georgia Controlled Substance Act involving the sale of methamphetamine; one count Violation of



Sam Hedden

Georgia Controlled Substance Act possession of drug-related objects; and one count Violation of Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act.

The investigation is active and ongoing, and additional charges are likely.



A search warrant executed for a home on Sims Road yielded illegal goods worth over \$7,000 in street value, according to the Towns County Sheriff's Office.

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