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Three side streets to close at SR 66 for bridge replacement

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Georgia Department of Transportation will soon be closing the State Route 66 entrances to King Cove Road, Gumlog Road and Crooked Creek Road.

Construction on the project to replace Brasstown Creek Bridge, which has been in service since 1940, is expected to begin later this summer, according to a June 30 letter from GDOT to the Towns County 911 Dispatch Center.

"The SR 66 Bridge will be replaced west of the existing bridge, so SR 66 will not be closed during

construction," according to the GDOT letter. "However, the construction will require the temporary closure of three side roads.

"The purpose of this letter is to inform your department of these closures, how long the contractor is planning to close them, and proposed detour routes for your use in planning for continuing service to the effected residents.

"It is anticipated that the side streets will be closed toward the end of 2017 or beginning of 2018. Once the project construction is underway and the contractor provides GDOT a definitive schedule, you, along with effected residents, will

be notified of the detailed dates."

GDOT held a January 2012 meeting to discuss the bridge replacement project with the public and local government, and the day is finally close at hand for construction to begin.

In light of this letter, some local leaders and first responders have expressed concern over the impending street closures, which will add miles to round-trip detours in the event an emergency response is needed on one of the closed access roads.

The Towns County Herald will be following this story, including proposed detours, as updates become available.



Brasstown Creek Bridge, or SR 66 Bridge, has been in service since 1940. A new bridge will soon be erected nearby to act as a replacement. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Phillips resigns from EMC board for personal reasons

By Charles Duncan
Towns County Herald
Editor

The man who started the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC Board of Directors in 2014 has resigned.

Steven Phillips, a representative from Towns County and the vice chairman of the BRMEMC Board of Directors, has tendered his resignation from the board for personal reasons, BRMEMC Chair Mickey Cummings said Friday.

"This board is what it

is today because of Steven Phillips," Cummings said. "Steven simply stated that he was resigning for personal reasons, and he did not elaborate on that."

Phillips will replace Cummings as chair of the EMC's policy committee in the interim, Cummings said.

Phillips bested Incumbent Julie Payne with 69.1 percent of the vote to Payne's 28.1 percent in the September 2014 election at BRMEMC's annual meeting.

"This election meant

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Steven Phillips

67th Annual Georgia Mountain Fair off to the races

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Come one, come all, the 67th Georgia Mountain Fair is here with fun for the whole family at the Fairgrounds until Saturday, July 29.

With opening day on Friday, July 21, the Fair kicked things off with the Flower Show and performances from Neal McCoy and the Country River Band that filled up the Anderson Music Hall.

"Opening weekend has been very good," said Hilda

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Come enjoy the carnival at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds during the 67th Annual Georgia Mountain Fair. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Qualifying for Young Harris City Council

By Charles Duncan
Towns County Herald
Editor

The city of Young Harris has announced qualifying dates for the Nov. 7 General Election.

Mayor Andrea Gibby is up for re-election, as well as Post 4 Councilman Sam Leslie, and Post 6 Councilman John Kelley.

The city will also seek someone to fill the vacant seat of Post 5 Councilwoman Angela Smith, who recently resigned to take a job in Tennessee.

The terms for those seats expire on Jan. 2, 2018 at the Organizational Meeting.

The General Election will be held on Nov. 7.

Qualifying for the General Election will be held at Young Harris City Hall, located at 50 Irene Berry Drive, beginning at 8:30 a.m. on Aug. 21, and ending at 4 p.m. on Aug. 23. The qualifying fee for mayor is \$180, and \$36 for City Council.

Persons not registered to vote and who wish to register to vote in the General Election, may register to vote through the close of business on Oct. 10.

Polls will be open from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. on Election Day.

Emergency Management Agency meets to discuss eclipse concerns

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Towns County officials met on Monday, July 17, in the 911 Conference Room to discuss traffic throughout the county and points of concern during the upcoming Solar Eclipse.

"With the eclipse coming up, we really don't know what kind of traffic we're going to have," said Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw. "It could be a bad weather day, and it could be a good day. Or, it could be a good

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L-R: Towns County Fire Chief & Coroner Harold Copeland, Sheriff Chris Clinton, Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw and EMA Director Rickey Mathis. Photo/Lily Avery

Sens. Gooch and Wilkinson visit with Movers and Shakers

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

There was plenty of good news to go around at the July 21 meeting of the Mountain Movers and Shakers, featuring Georgia Sens. Steve Gooch and John Wilkinson.

The meeting, which took place at the Sundance Grill, gave residents a chance to hear from the state senators of both Union and Towns counties.

District 50 State Sen. Wilkinson, in introduction of his friend and fellow senator, emphasized what he said was key to getting things done down at the Georgia General Assembly.

"I've been in the State Senate for six years, and one thing I learned when I went to Atlanta is the importance in relationships in what you do," said Wilkinson. "The relationships you have with people are very important."

Wilkinson pointed to their varying areas of expertise in the Senate – himself with agriculture and noted that their work was always complementary in nature.

Gooch thanked Wilkinson for his introduction, and would go on to spend a few minutes looking ahead to the 2018 state races.



State Sens. Steve Gooch and John Wilkinson. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

"Next year is going to be a big change," said District 51 Sen. Gooch. "There's a governor's race, a lieutenant governor's race, secretary of state, insurance commissioner – all of those positions are going to be vacated ... so there's going to be a lot of opportunity there, a lot of turnover."

"There will be people in the House and the Senate that will be running for some of these seats, which means there will be changes in leadership in both of those chambers as well."

"There's going to be a lot of changes, and so, we want to embrace that and do the best we

can to bring those opportunities back to our district."

Sen. Gooch focused that Friday on his positive message concerning the current state of Georgia as he sees it.

"Our state is in good condition," said Gooch. "Fiscally, we're sound. We have a balanced budget – that's the one thing that we go to the General Assembly in Atlanta, which starts the second Monday in January."

Added Gooch: "We do balance our budgets, we're required to do so by the constitution. We wish Washington

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Recreation features big in July county commission meeting

By Todd Forrest
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Talks of a new county-operated park on Georgia 288, changes to the beer and wine ordinance, and a report from Towns County Recreation Department Director Matthew Youngblood highlighted the July edition of the Towns County Commission Meeting, held last Tuesday at the courthouse.

During the Commissioner's Report segment of the meeting, Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw gave an update on his recent meeting with Andy Baker of the Georgia Forestry Commission regarding a piece of property on Georgia 288 that once served as a lakeside campground.

"I wanted to know what they're going to do with the property because I felt like that's something the county could benefit from," Commissioner Bradshaw said. "He felt the same way so I asked him, 'what can we possibly do with that property that would benefit the taxpayers and citizens of Towns County,' and his idea was the same as mine, we don't



Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw pointing out features of the proposed county park on Sunnyside Road. Photo/Todd Forrest

want to cut down the trees and start tearing up the property to make it a campground. He believes that we could get funding through a grant for handicapped accessible fishing piers and handicapped accessible walking trails."

However, Commissioner Bradshaw made it very clear that this is only a proposal and

it's still in the early stages. "The paperwork has to be finished by November so this is a little bit early but I wanted to bring it out and let folks look at the ideas that we have," Bradshaw said. "None of this is in concrete, but it's what we're trying to do."

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