

# Towns County Herald

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## Planning Commission to strengthen sign ordinance

By Mark Smith  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

The Towns County Planning Commission met last week to discuss the flood of recent sign permit requests that resulted in Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw implementing a 90-day moratorium on off-premises signs.

Bradshaw and the full planning commission attended the meeting, which was held on July 31 at the Towns County Civic Center.

County Attorney Robb Kiker was also present to consult on legal issues, and Shane Eddleman, owner of Rapid Outdoor Advertising, traveled from Coker Creek, Tennessee, to lend his expertise on the issues.

The work session focused specifically on off-premises signs pertaining to the current

county ordinance.

According to Bradshaw, the overriding concern is to strike a balance between businesses that want to advertise their products and the residents of Towns County who want to maintain the natural beauty of their county.

"We take it very seriously," said Bradshaw. "We want people to be able to advertise for their businesses. We want to promote business in Towns County. But at the same time, we don't want to have ... our streets and roads lined with signs."

"So, we're strengthening the sign ordinance to accommodate signs for advertising, but we don't want them stacked one behind another."

Of particular concern to Bradshaw and the commission is the spacing and size of off-premises signs.

Though the meeting was a session and no official actions were taken, it was agreed that the maximum size of off-premises signs on major thoroughfares in Towns County would likely be limited to 300 square feet, and on smaller roads to 75 square feet.

At 300 square feet, the county would be following the state limit on size for billboard signs outside a city limit or incorporated township.

It was further agreed that the spacing between signs would likely be set at one mile. The state minimum is 300 feet outside city limits or incorporated townships for billboard signs, and 5,000 feet for multi-message signs, said Eddleman.

When the question of wordage and graphics came up, Eddleman advised Bradshaw and the commission that

See Signs, Page 6A



The Towns County Planning Commission and Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw met on July 31 to discuss tightening up certain aspects of the county sign ordinance. Photo by Mark Smith

## Towns County and BOE to accept rollback millage rates

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Editor

Thanks to steadily increasing property values, both the Towns County Commissioner's Office and the Towns County Board of Education will be accepting their rollback millage rates.

Millage rates are used to determine how much money will be collected in property taxes, and both the county and school system determine their individual rates by weighing year-over-year budgetary needs against projected tax revenues based on the total value of property countywide.

Taxes collected this way are used to run county government and the school system; to build, repair and maintain public buildings, bridges and roads; to pay expenses of the courts, county jail and local law enforcement;



Cliff Bradshaw

and to provide for public health and sanitation.

On the county side, Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw plans to call the 2018 millage rate in a called meeting on Thursday, Aug. 23, at 5:30 p.m. in the Towns County Courthouse.

The rate will be decreasing from 5.375 to 5.19775, which will bring in \$3,919,757.

And because the total value of property has gone up in the county, even with a lower millage rate, the total property taxes to be collected countywide will be \$7,657 more than last year.

"I'm just glad that we're able to do accept the rollback rate," said Bradshaw. "We want to keep our taxes as low as possible without jeopardizing any of the services that the county offers, especially in public safety."

"So, I'm glad that we're able to do that. It makes it tight, there's no doubt, but it's supposed to be tight."

Towns County has a separate millage rate for its fire department that has historically been set at 0.500 mills, though the commissioner

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## Two alcohol referendums make ballot; no packaged liquor

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Editor

Two alcohol referendums will appear on the Nov. 6 General Election Ballot, one for Towns County and one for Hiawassee.

What won't appear on the ballot is a referendum calling for liquor sales by the package within Hiawassee City Limits.

Concerning the countywide referendum, Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw is putting liquor by the drink to a vote by county residents, which, if passed, would allow his office to issue licenses to sell liquor by the drink for on-premises consumption only.

Currently, both Young Harris and the City of Hiawassee allow restaurants to serve liquor by the drink, and the November referendum would bring the rest



The Towns County Board of Elections & Registration Office is located at 67 Lakeview Circle in Hiawassee.

of the county into the fold.

If voters approve the measure, the establishment of liquor licenses will be regulated by county ordinance, which will determine the hours and other parameters of liquor

by the drink sales, excluding Sunday sales altogether.

A few locations in the county have been able to sell liquor by the drink for years with their inclusion in local

See Alcohol, Page 6A

## Ordiales discusses PlanFirst, franchise fee and more

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Editor

More than two dozen residents and guests attended the July 30 work session of the Hiawassee City Council, where plenty of discussion was had.

In her Mayor's Report, Liz Ordiales touched on a variety of topics that evening, starting with an update on the strategic planning being done for the city by the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government.

"They put together all of the input that we had from seven one-on-ones, five focus groups, and about 60 folks that were at the town hall meeting," said Ordiales. "It's really nothing strangled new from what we already knew about."



Hiawassee Mayor Liz Ordiales handing out strategic planning information in the July 30 council work session.

The executive summary provided by the Carl Vinson Institute highlighted areas thought to be working well,

including a strong sense of community with a small-town

See Ordiales, Page 6A

## Perren talks school safety with Movers and Shakers

By Mark Smith  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Roy Perren is the Facilities Director and Federal Programs Director for Towns County Schools, as well as the Union Site Director at Mountain Education Charter High School.

He brought his expertise in education to bear during a visit with the Mountain Movers and Shakers at Sundance Grill on Friday, Aug. 3.

Perren began with an abbreviated review of how the schools plan to utilize state modernization grant money to reimburse the system for recently completed facilities improvements.

"It wasn't the things that you can see, it's the things that



Roy Perren

you can't see that were causing some problems up there at the school," he said. "It's been a win-win for the community and for the taxpayers and for the state."

The first phase, completed

over the summer, was to replace the roof, the heating and air units, and update some of the wiring, he said. The updated wiring is necessary because the building was designed in a different era, before computers and modern electronics.

The new heating and air units will be significantly more energy efficient and less centralized, allowing for better levels of comfort in each classroom. Perren said he is confident that the new units will in fact lower the power bill on campus.

"I'll actually be able to control (the heating and air units) from my cell phone," he said. "I'll be able to turn everything off at the house on a snow day when ... the building

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## March for Jesus coming to Fairgrounds

By Mark Smith  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

The March for Jesus will be a truly unique event in the North Georgia mountains, and it's coming to the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds on Saturday, Aug. 25.

The March for Jesus is a nondenominational event and will start at 9 a.m. that Saturday inside the Anderson Music Hall.

This event is scheduled to last through 4 p.m., and there will be featured music entertainment and concessions available.

The march itself will begin at 10 a.m., as folks start out on a 1.2 mile round-trip walk from Anderson Music Hall to Friendship Road US 76 and back.

Water will be available along the route.



Terry Rathmann started the March for Jesus, which takes place on Saturday, Aug. 25, at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds.

Photo by Mark Smith

So, why March for Jesus?

"Because He can save all lives," according to www.MarchforJesus.love. "It does

not matter what gender you are, or if you are a student or a person who is retired.

"It does not matter

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## Local HOSA kids attend International Conference

News Special  
Towns County Herald

Students with Towns County High School HOSA recently attended the 2018 International Leadership Conference in Dallas, Texas.

HOSA stands for Health Occupations Students of America, and the students of Georgia HOSA joined countless others for the conference, which took place June 26 through June 30.

Towns County's youthful representatives came together with kids from Puerto Rico, Italy, Mexico, Canada and beyond to celebrate the success of members from around the globe at the leadership conference.

Four Towns County HOSA members were lucky

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Towns County High School HOSA members Carly Dills, Sara Perry, Melissa Caldwell and Chase Reece in Dallas Texas for the 2018 International Leadership Conference.

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Lake Levels  
Blue Ridge 1,687.45  
Chatuge 1,925.42  
Nottely 1,775.53

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FOOTBALL  
Fri Aug 10 7:30 PM  
vs. Lumpkin County  
Scrimmage

Towns County  
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Basketball registration:  
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CHASE ELLIOTT  
WINS AT  
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