

# Towns County Herald

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## New directors, rate increase from EMC meeting

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Two new directors emerged from the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC annual meeting of the membership – Gene Mason of Union County and Cory Payne of Clay County, plus the return of Director Ray Cook of Cherokee County.

The meeting took place on Saturday, Sept. 10, in Anderson Music Hall at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds.

Out of 41,452 eligible voters within the EMC, there were 4,973 paper ballots cast,

950 online votes and 90 ballots cast in person at the annual meeting, for a total count of 6,013 member votes in the election, or 14.51 percent of the membership.

Mason won in Union County with a plurality of 35 percent of the vote, stating after the meeting that he decided to run because he wanted to give back to his community.

"I just want to try to do what's right for the members, the employees and the company," said Mason.

Payne won his contest in Clay County with 42 percent of the vote. Payne runs the

Blairsville facility of Advanced Digital Cable, his family's business, and he hopes to bring his industrial manufacturing and business management expertise to the table.

"As far as the board, I hope to bring some stability to the situation that they've had going, and just make sure that they make decisions in the right direction, for the good of the members and the employees of the co-op," said Payne following his election victory.

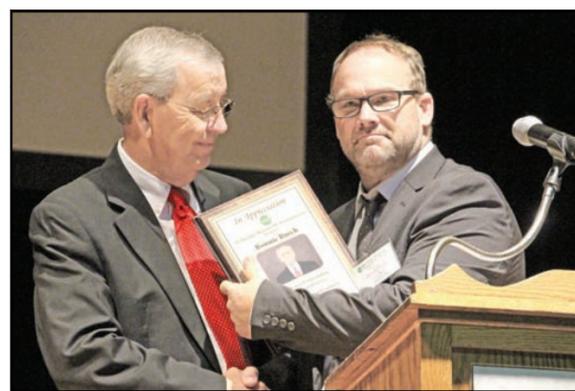
Cook returned to the board following his election at this year's annual meeting. He

was selected by the board last year to fill the seat of Kenneth Lance, who resigned at the 2015 annual meeting.

"I think everybody's long-term goal would be to either maintain the rates or lower them if possible," said Cook, speaking on what he'd like to accomplish in the next three years. "Keep a good environment for the employees, get the debt paid off – just try to keep everything going in the right direction."

Board Chair Steven Phillips emceed the annual meeting as promised, and he

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Ronnie Burch attended his last EMC annual meeting as a director on Saturday, which was just one of many meetings over the 22 years he has served as a director

## Regional 'Ride to Remember' commemorates September 11th

By Lily Avery  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Fifteen years ago, the United States suffered a horrific tragedy at the hands of terrorists who, acting unprovoked and as cowards, enacted their evil will by felling New York's Twin Towers with airplanes on Sept. 11, 2001.

Thousands of innocent Americans were murdered that day, and we will never forget.

That fateful hour hurled America into a war that would be the longest in her history, causing thousands more to lose their lives in the name of freedom and liberty.

The continuing sacrifice for the greater good of all American citizens will not soon be forgotten, and regional motorcyclists hope



Around 900 motorcycles, including first responders and veterans from around the region, took part in the 'Ride to Remember,' which began in Athens and ended in Blairsville on Sunday, Sept. 11

See Ride, Page 6A

## Missing Young Harris girl found safe, unharmed



The search for Cami Adams was a multijurisdictional effort that resulted in the best possible result – the 16-year-old runaway was found safe and sound. Photo/Chris Clinton

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

For more than three days, nobody knew where Cami Adams was – and that was a

problem, since she left home on foot and was only 16 years of age.

The face and information of young Cami could be

See Missing, Page 6A

## DAR promotes Constitution Week

By Lily Avery  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

The United States Constitution makes up the building blocks, the cornerstone and the entire foundation upon which this country stands, and it works to safeguard the basic freedoms and rights enjoyed by American citizens nationwide.

Daughters of the American Revolution wish to preserve the importance of this fundamental document and educate residents of its significance, even today.

In concurrence with the Old Unicoi Trail Chapter of the DAR, Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall once again affirmed the county's annual commitment to honoring the U.S. Constitution by participating in Constitution Week this year.

On Thursday, Sept. 8, Commissioner Kendall signed



Pictured left to right, Sarah Partain, Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall, Evelyn Lamar and Wanda Gibson. These Daughters of the American Revolution met with Commissioner Kendall to receive a proclamation for Constitution Week.

the official proclamation honoring the celebration for the week of Sept. 17 through Sept. 23.

"The week of Sept. 17 through 23, which

See Constitution, Page 7A

## Plenty of produce at the farmers market

By Lily Avery  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Homemade crafts, fresh locally all around were up for grabs at the Towns County Farmers Market during the weekly seasonal gathering on Saturday, Sept. 10, from 9 a.m. to noon.

While the market season is beginning to slow down with the coming of autumn, the weather has not yet stopped the patrons from indulging in all the market has to offer, nor has it gotten in the way of new faces trying the market for the first time.

One such vendor, Ms. Rose of Hayesville, North Carolina, visited the market for the first time on Saturday with her son and daughter. Rose typically sets up shop on the square in Hayesville every Saturday but decided to try something new, selling her



Sheleila O'Neal's Plant and Produce is a hot stop at the Towns County Farmers Market.

product in Hiawassee.

Rose and her children lined their table at the market with colorful, handmade cross-stitched tissue boxes. From college football teams to fall colors, there was a little

something for everyone at Ms. Rose's table.

"All of this stuff is created by my son, my daughter and I,"

See Market, Page 7A

## District attorney, students highlight weekly meeting

By Lily Avery  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

The Mountain Movers and Shakers heard from Enotah Judicial Circuit DA Jeff Langley on Friday, Sept. 9, as well as from the 2016 Speech Contest participants at the weekly meeting at Mary's Southern Grill.

DA Langley is no stranger to speaking with the Movers and Shakers, having spoken to the group numerous other times over the years.

At last week's meeting, DA Langley focused on going over the basic case law for his office, then held a Q&A with the audience.

DA Langley's office serves the judicial system of four counties in North Georgia



Enotah Judicial Circuit District Attorney Jeff Langley spoke on topics of ethics and personal experience at the weekly Friday meeting of the Mountain Movers and Shakers on Friday, Sept. 9.

See Langley, Page 7A

## Twin burglaries in Young Harris connected to organized group

By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Two convenience stores were burglarized in the early morning hours of Sunday, Sept. 11 – the BP at the Junction leading to Hayesville, along with the neighboring Sunoco station just up the highway from there.

Towns County Sheriff Chris Clinton has said that he believes the burglaries to be connected to a Union County burglary that took place overnight of Aug. 31, which Union County authorities in turn believe to be connected to an organized group that's hitting closed businesses for cash after hours, all across the Southeast.

"We've reached out to the FBI for assistance due to the multijurisdictional nature," said Sheriff Clinton Sunday. "Towns County Sheriff's Office has developed some potential leads and recovered some forensic evidence from the scene. The

evidence is being processed as we speak."

No further information on the Towns County burglaries was available at press time.

Following the Aug. 31 overnight burglary of a Marathon Station in Union County, in which five masked individuals disabled the store's security system before breaking in and removing the safe from the store, the Union County Sheriff's Office advised area businesses to keep no cash after hours.

After the recent burglaries in Towns County, both sheriff's offices have determined that the individuals are likely part of an organized group carrying out similar crimes all across the Southeast, from nearby counties to Mississippi and down around Florida.

"Their MO is basically what we have here," said UCSO Lt. Daren Osborn of the Marathon burglary. "They have a sledge hammer, a baseball

bat, one carries a backpack with tools in it. They have anywhere from eight to 12 members and are considered armed and dangerous."

Another trait of this organized group is that it usually return to a community for another burglary after some time has gone by, according to Lt. Osborn, and they seem interested only in stealing money.

"What we're encouraging businesses to do is, do not keep any money in their business overnight," said Lt. Osborn. "We're stepping up our patrols, especially at night, to businesses. If you need escorts to the bank (in Union County), call 911 and we'll provide that, no problem. We're going to do everything we can to keep you safe."

During the commission of the Aug. 31 Marathon burglary, the individuals involved were captured on camera walking about outside the store in their masks before breaking in. Once

inside the store, the criminals crawled around flat on the ground using their elbows and knees.

The Union County Sheriff's Office previously developed what they have called a "person of interest" concerning the case, a man named Julio Antonio Piloto, who is wanted for similar crimes out of Polk County, Tennessee.

"We have been in contact with more law enforcement agencies in and around the Athens area that have had the same problem, and it's a matter of time and they will screw up," said Lt. Osborn following the Towns County burglaries.

For more information on the "Crawling Thugs," check the "Union County - Georgia Sheriff's Office" Facebook page, and to follow updates as they're available in Towns County, follow the Towns County Sheriff's Office Facebook page.

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Lake Levels  
Blue Ridge 1,674.49  
Chatuge 1,919.57  
Nottely 1,765.50



Food Distribution  
N. Mt. Zion Church  
Thurs. Sept. 15th

See page 4B

Family Hiking Day  
Sept. 24th

See page 2A

Towns County Rabies Clinic  
Saturday September 17,  
On Square in  
Downtown Hiawassee  
1:00 to 3:00 P.M.

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Football  
Fri Sept 16 @ Riverside Military Academy 7:30 PM  
JV Football  
Thurs Sept 15 vs. White Co 5:30 PM