

Towns County Herald

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Fall Festival returns to the Fairgrounds starting Friday, Oct. 12

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

For over 45 years, the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds, with help from the Towns County Lions Club, has hosted a festival in the fall for community members to enjoy, and running Friday, Oct. 12, through Saturday, Oct. 20, the Georgia Mountain Fall Festival will return to Hiawassee.

When the event first started, it was only a weekend festival, but over time, the festival developed into a nine-day event with plenty of activities for families to enjoy. And each day offers attendees the chance to browse the 65 vendors for seasonal, handmade crafts.

"We have a live working Pioneer Village with authentic mountain demonstrations,"

said Fairgrounds General Manager Hilda Thomason. "This includes soap making, board splitting, quilting, a sawmill, moonshine making. And down in the Exhibit Hall, we have canned goods and fresh vegetables.

"We also have exhibits down there, a Georgia Mountain History Museum, and a huge display of (antique reed) organs dating back to the 1800s, and we will have Jerry Taylor down there playing them."

Much more music will also be available during the festival, like Mickey Gilley, Jim Wood and the Georgia Mountain Fair Band, Pam Tillis, Justin Terry, The Lovin' Spoonful, Lorrie Morgan, Wyatt Espalin, and many other performers to entertain audiences at Anderson Music Hall.

"We are bringing in artists

who play Gospel, Bluegrass, Country and other mountain music to enjoy during their time at the festival," said Thomason. "Guests will be able to go to the Music Hall and enjoy the day's performances with no extra charge."

Every day will hold a honeybee judging, with vendors to sell Hives, and the one-of-a-kind Wolves of the World will hold three shows a day during the event.

"This show is the only travelling wolfpack left in the world," said Thomason. "This is a wonderful experience for the whole family."

A Holiday Favorites Cooking Contest is set for Saturday, Oct. 13, which invites amateur contestants to bring their best holiday recipes to compete for a monetary prize.

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A past Fall Festival at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds.

Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Early voting begins Oct. 15, runs three weeks through Nov. 2



By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

Early voting for the Nov. 6 General Election begins on Monday, Oct. 15.

Every weekday between Oct. 15 and Nov. 2, during the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., registered Towns County

voters will be able to walk into the Towns County Board of Elections and Registration Office to cast their votes.

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

There is one weekend day set aside for voters at the board office, which will be Saturday, Oct. 27, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., for those who find themselves too busy to vote during the scheduled weekdays of voting.

Election Day will be on Tuesday, Nov. 6, 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.

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

A sample ballot can be obtained at the board office and at www.mvp.sos.ga.gov, which also features valuable voter information personalized to each resident.

"Georgia law requires registered voters to show photo identification in order to vote in person," according to the Georgia Secretary of State's Office. "When you vote in person, you must show one of the following photo IDs:

"A Georgia driver's license, even if expired; any valid state or federal

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Sen. Wilkinson reads to local children during Georgia Pre-K Week

By Mark Smith
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Young Harris native and former Gov. Zell Miller launched Georgia Pre-K in 1992, a pilot program funded by the Georgia Lottery.

In 2016, "the program has laid a solid foundation for academic excellence and future success in the lives of approximately 1.6 million children," according to the advocacy group Voices for Georgia's Children.

However, when the Georgia Legislature nearly cut the program because of funding limitations in 2010, the group decided to act.

It partnered with



State Sen. John Wilkinson reading to Towns County preschoolers during Georgia Pre-K Week on Tuesday, Oct. 2.

Photo by Mark Smith

Ingram joins Young Harris City Council; city addresses stolen signs

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

YOUNG HARRIS – In the Oct. 2 regular meeting of Young Harris Mayor Andrea Gibby and City Council, Terry Ingram swore in to the council seat vacated by Jared Champion last month.

Ingram is a longtime employee of Union General Hospital and former member of the council, and after expressing interest in the empty seat, he was appointed by the council that Tuesday.

The returning councilman joins newcomer Steve Clark on the council, who swore in during the September regular city meeting to the seat vacated by former councilman Stuart Miller.

As for his vision for the city, Ingram said he hopes to help the council further maintain the small town feel of Young Harris.

"It's a good, small, college town, really," said Ingram, adding that he encourages



Young Harris City Councilman Steve Clark, Mayor Andrea Gibby and Councilman Terry Ingram. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

residents to be engaged with the goings-on of the city. "If we can ever help them, feel free to call. Whatever we can do – we want to be fair and just to all."

Also in the meeting, the council discussed the ongoing problem of street signs having been stolen from the Young Harris area for years.

Currently, there are

several signs missing that will take the time and effort of city employees to replace, not to mention the danger of missing road signs that could prevent first responders from finding the correct location in the event of an emergency.

As pointed out by city hall, signs are city property

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Towns County BOE receives financial update in work session



The Towns County Board of Education with Superintendent Dr. Darren Berrong.

Photo by Mark Smith

By Mark Smith
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The amount of money in the general fund of Towns County Schools is about \$121,000 more than last year, up from roughly \$3.59 million to \$3.71 million.

School Finance Director Myra Underwood reported the increase in the monthly work session of the Towns County Board of Education on Monday, Oct. 1.

The increase is due partly to revenues from property taxes, sales taxes and ESPLOST overperforming budget estimates.

Another contributing factor in the increase is the FY17-18 budget coming in at 94 percent, "so we're at 6 percent under budget for the year," said Underwood.

Also in the meeting, which occurred at BOE headquarters, Underwood informed the board she was waiting to hear back

from the Georgia Department of Education to learn more about the school system's expected modernization grant reimbursement.

Subsequent to the meeting, Underwood said she had spoken with the department and was told that the reimbursement would be approximately \$2.3 million.

However, it is still in process and must go through

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Towns County Fire prepares for fire season with training

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Fire risks tend to increase in the colder months, as external fuel sources such as falling leaves become more prevalent and people start to warm their homes with a variety of heat sources like fire and electricity.

Of course, when fire does break out, it's the local firefighters who will be responding to save lives and property, which is why the Towns County Fire Department gathered at the old Recreation Center to train on Monday, Oct. 1.

"We are going to practice



Towns County Firefighters training with the ladder truck at the Old Rec Gym in Hiawassee. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

Search warrant results in arrests and \$27,000 marijuana seizure



Chris Lee Brooks

News Special
Towns County Herald
On Monday, Oct. 1, Towns County Sheriff's Deputies and Investigators executed a drug search warrant



Ronald Christopher Smith

at a residence in the 7500 Block of Gumlog Road.

During the course of the investigation, officers seized marijuana plants with a street



Thomas Dexter Shook

value of \$27,000.

Investigators arrested Chris Lee Brooks, 64, of Young Harris, Ronald Christopher

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