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Women veterans honored in Veterans Day Service on Nov. 10

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Veterans and residents of Towns County gathered on Saturday, Nov. 10, to participate in the annual Veterans Day Service at Towns County Veterans Memorial Park.

Usually, the event takes place on Veterans Day, which is Nov. 11 every year. This year, the event occurred the day before, out of respect for Sunday church worship.

This year's Veterans Day Service honored a very special segment of the veteran community – women veterans.

American Legion Post #23 Cmdr. John Harkins came up with the idea to specifically recognize women who have served their country, and he was glad to welcome everyone to the event.

"First of all, I wanted to thank you all for showing up today on this beautiful day," said Harkins.

Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw also offered a few remarks at the beginning of the ceremony, highlighting the importance of observing Veterans Day.

"I want to welcome everybody here and take the time to thank all the folks that put this program together," said Bradshaw. "It may be a breezy day out here, but I have to say it is a beautiful day to be an American."

"We thank God for the country that we have and thank God for the veterans that we have. We would not be here if it were not for the veterans. We would not enjoy the freedoms that we all know and enjoy each and every day, and we would not live our lives the way we want to live them."

The keynote speaker for the service was local U.S. Air Force Veteran Brandy Creel, who served her country honorably for many years and earned numerous medals and other awards during her military service.

Creel's speech focused on the importance of identifying and honoring the women who serve alongside the men of war and earn their place as veterans.

"Today, we recognize all of America's veterans who have selflessly gone to wherever they were called to serve, and you can tell that based on what's on this wall behind me and the other wall over there," said Creel. "In fact, if you look close enough, we have a woman on that wall right now."

"This year, 2018, Veterans Day has a special meaning. One hundred years

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U.S. Air Force Veteran Brandy Creel was the keynote speaker at this year's Veterans Day Service. Pictured here with Liz Brindales and Cliff Bradshaw. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

Voters approve liquor by the drink sales in Towns County

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

Thanks to a majority of Towns County voters, local restaurants in the county will soon be able to apply for licenses to sell liquor by the drink.

The measure carried with 3,953 YES votes to 1,976 NO votes, giving it a 66.67 percent margin of victory.

A few locations in the county have been able to sell liquor by the drink for years with their inclusion in local REAPs, or Regional Economic Assistance Projects.

With the passing of the General Election alcohol referendum, however, all restaurants in the county should be able to apply for liquor licenses.

"When I was campaigning, a lot of the restaurant owners felt like it wasn't fair because they couldn't serve liquor when other restaurants could that



were in the REAP," said Bradshaw prior to the election. "I told them that we would put it on the ballot so that the voters could vote on it and hopefully give them an equal playing field."

Moving forward, 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.

The county will be joining Young Harris and Hiwassee in allowing liquor by the drink sales, as voters in both cities approved similar measures in recent years.

Also part of the 2018 General Election, Hiwassee voters approved a referendum to move the start time of local alcohol sales by the drink from 12:30 p.m. to 11 a.m. on Sundays.

The measure is meant to accommodate Sunday brunch sales of alcohol at local restaurants, and it passed with 253 YES votes (61.41 percent) to 159 NO votes (38.59 percent).

All told, Towns Countians cast 6,167 ballots in the 2018 General Election. With 9,386 registered voters in the county, that's a local voter turnout of 65.7 percent.

In other General Election news, the race to elect the next Georgia governor had yet to be officially decided by press time Monday, with Republican Brian Kemp still leading Democratic challenger Stacey Abrams.

Hoping to initiate a Dec. 4 runoff, Abrams' campaign has

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BOE welcomes \$2.3 million reimbursement from state

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Members of the Towns County Board of Education had some welcome news worth \$2.3 million in their Nov. 5 work session.

The school system has finally received reimbursement for summertime school renovations via modernization grant funds promised by the state, much to the relief of Superintendent Dr. Darren Berrong and School Finance Director Myra Underwood.

"On Oct. 23, we received a payment of \$2.3 million," said Underwood. "There has been a lot of prayer going into this. Me and Darren were nervous of not ever knowing, because we didn't know the exact amount or exact day we would get this."

"With that, we should be seeing another payment, because there were two more deals that came in that were a little over \$500,000. They were



Dr. Darren Berrong

not on this first batch that we sent in, so if we get the same percentage, we will get another \$367,000.

"The project was about \$3.7 million, and it looks like we will get back a total of \$2.7 million, meaning we will be out about \$1 million."

Initially, renovations at

the schools were planned in two phases. The first phase was completed over summer 2018, and the school system hopes to complete the next phase this coming summer.

What has been somewhat harrowing for the board because of all the waiting for reimbursement.

In their October regular meeting, board members approved a resolution to move forward on a tax anticipation note with United Community Bank in the amount of \$1 million.

They did so in case they needed the money to cover school system expenses until the reimbursement could arrive from the state.

Fortunately, with the arrival of the reimbursement funds later in October, the school system didn't have to rely on that money, but the note is good for a year, meaning that the schools will be able to use the funds should a similar

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Towns County FFA attends National Convention in Indianapolis



Towns County FFA students accepting a donation from Frank Riley of the Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D Council.

News Special
Towns County Herald

Every year, members of the Future Farmers of America travel from all over the nation to converge in one place to celebrate their accomplishments and find inspiration for their next steps.

Motivational keynote speakers, energetic concerts, fulfilling workshops and a sweeping expo floor bustling with agricultural education and industry opportunities – 10 Towns County FFA students experienced all this and more at the 91st National FFA Convention & Expo in Indianapolis between Oct. 25 and Oct. 27.

More than 450 exhibitors representing agriculture, colleges, fundraising, U.S. Armed Services, and auto and truck manufacturers packed the Indiana Convention Center for the 2018 National FFA Expo.

And there truly was something for everyone, as

students discovered numerous agricultural careers and explored opportunities in postsecondary job training and education, and chapter advisors gathered ideas and new material for their classrooms.

FFA study programs were broken out into eight distinct career focus areas that are aligned with the Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources Career Cluster Content Standards. Each pathway is designed to help FFA members focus on their area of interest.

The 10 Towns County High School and Middle School FFA members who made their way to Indianapolis received the opportunity to learn about agriculture jobs and opportunities, and to see one of their own receive FFA's highest honor.

Justin McCray, a 2017 graduate of Towns County High School, was one of 4,255 FFA members nationwide to receive an American FFA Degree.

The American FFA Degree is the highest honor a member of FFA can receive, with less than 1 percent earning this distinctive award. Requirements to earn the honor are lengthy. In addition to their degree certificate, each recipient receives a gold American FFA Degree key.

Congratulations to Justin McCray for achieving such a high honor.

In addition to the Convention and Expo, some FFA members had the opportunity to see and hear greetings from President Donald Trump.

As the President laid out his future plans for American agriculture, he praised the FFA members.

"You are amazing people," said President Trump. "Your time in the FFA, in the field, in the farm, in the land and in the classroom has not only prepared you for a stellar, great career in something you

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City Council approves 45-day moratorium on sign permits

By Mark Smith
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Hiwassee City Council members approved a 45-day moratorium on sign permits in their regular city meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 6.

Mayor Liz Ordiales said the purpose of the moratorium is to give the city a chance to review the recently amended Towns County Sign Ordinance in order to make changes to the city's own ordinance if need be to better align with the county.

In a recap of this year's Halloween in Hiwassee, the consensus was that it was attended by a record number of people, the majority of whom were moved away from Main Street.

Ordiales estimated over



Hiwassee City Council members Kris Berrong and Anne Mitchell at their Nov. 6 regular city meeting.

Photo by Mark Smith

500 parents and kids came out to enjoy the festivities, costume contest, Old Rock Jail haunted house and the dance exhibition, not to mention the candy.

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TCSO files attempted murder charges in domestic situation

News Special
Towns County Herald

On the night of Wednesday, Sept. 26, deputies with the Towns County Sheriff's Office responded in reference to a shooting at a residence east of Hiwassee on U.S. 76.

Upon arrival, deputies located a male subject in the residence who was suffering from a gunshot wound.

The male subject was identified as Jason Rewis of Hiwassee.

Towns County EMS arrived on the scene and transported the victim to a medical facility with a trauma unit.



Ginger Rewis

Separately, an officer with the Hiwassee Police Department responded to



Jacob Bowman

Chatuge Regional Hospital, where a female gunshot victim

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