

# Towns County Herald

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## BOE hears 2017 CCRPI results; Towns County Middle is sixth in state

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Congratulations to the Towns County Middle School, which placed No. 1 in the Pioneer RESA in CCRPI results, and sixth in the state.

Elementary School Principal Eric Chastain reported to the Towns County Board of Education in the Nov. 13 regular board meeting that her school received 90 out of 100 possible points toward the College and Career Ready Performance Index.

"I feel like our RESA has the best schools in the state," said Chastain. "So, when we give you these scores and we're doing really well in the RESA, I just feel like we're doing super everywhere."

Added Chastain: "So very proud of these teachers and students for all of their hard work."

The CCRPI is a tool used by the state to offer a big picture look at the health of a school system and its culture, and each of the Towns County Schools performed admirably and above the state average on the CCRPI.

Towns County Middle scored a 90 against the state average of 73—a whopping 17-point difference to the good.

Elementary School Assistant Principal Shannon Moss presented his school's CCRPI results to the board. The elementary school scored a 76.8 on the CCRPI against the state average of 72.9, and enjoyed particular success in the progress portion of the

CCRPI.

Also in the meeting, High School Assistant Principal Jim Melton highlighted the high school's score of 83.2 versus the state average 77, which put TCHS solidly in Fifth Place among nearly 20 other schools in the Pioneer RESA.

Furthermore, the high school experienced a jump from 73.2 on the CCRPI in 2016 to its current score of 83.2, a solid 10 points higher in one year.

Of course, success on the CCRPI does depend heavily on student test performance, but it also considers the academic growth of students between school years, their attendance, the achievement of disadvantaged students and

See Education, Page 8A



Towns County Board of Education Chair Robert Williams with Superintendent Dr. Darren Berrong. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

## Hiawassee Police Chief Paul Smith talks annual Shop with a Hero

By Lily Avery  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Holiday shopping and the power of giving was the talk of town on Friday, Nov. 17, as Hiawassee Police Chief Paul Smith shared information about Towns County's Shop with a Hero with the Mountain Movers and Shakers at Sundance Grill.

Every year, as each family gears up for the shopping season with Christmas lists and abundant meals, there are some who are unable to buy the dozens of presents to pile beneath the tree, the money for whom won't even have the money for a nice Christmas dinner.

Almost a decade ago, Hiawassee Police Chief Jimmy Wright saw a need for the children in the community and



Hiawassee Police Chief Paul Smith spoke with the Mountain Movers & Shakers on Friday, Nov. 17, about the annual Shop with a Hero. Photo/Lily Avery

thus began the beloved local tradition, first known as Shop with a Cop, and then Shop with a Hero, to give to those who

go without during the holiday season.

Since Chief Wright See Hero, Page 3A

## EMC opens up November board meeting to the membership

By Charles Duncan  
Towns County Herald  
Editor

The Blue Ridge Mountain EMC Board of Directors opened EMC history and some policy changes at the cooperative's first board meeting open to the membership of the five-county cooperative.

One of the first moves at the open November meeting was to vote to do away with Town Hall meetings, a policy that required four open door meetings each year among the membership.

With the cooperative's directors voting to open the board meetings to the membership each month, the group did away with the four Town Hall meetings it approved to have each year, said Policy Committee Chair



BRMEMC General Manager Jeremy Nelms presents EMC Board Director Gene Mason with a certificate of completion for board training. Photo/Byron McCombs

Ray Cook.

Cook said the board reserved the right to hold a Town Hall meeting in the

future, should the need arise.

The board's secretary, Roy Perren, voted against See BRMEMC, Page 9A

## Towns County 4-H brings home 11 first place ribbons in competition

By Lily Avery  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

BLAIRSVILLE — Representatives of the Towns County 4-H program made their way to neighboring Union County to participate in the annual Northeast District Project Achievement competition on Saturday, Nov. 18, hosted at the Union County Middle School in Blairsville.

District Project Achievement, commonly known in the 4-H world as DPA, is a subsector of the 4-H project achievement program, one of the four core programs of the Georgia 4-H association. And, along with Towns County, more than 300 students from Banks, Dawson, Hall, Lumpkin, Pickens, Rabun, White and Union counties were represented at last Saturday's event.

According to the Georgia 4-H website, project



The awarding of ribbons inside the Union County Middle School gym. Photo/Lily Avery

achievement is a way for the 4-H program to help implement Georgia Performance Standards through the educational materials produced for in-

classroom use. And one of the ways that 4-H accomplishes this is through its public speaking program, which is See 4-H, Page 9A

## Hiawassee to hold public hearing on franchise fee ordinance Nov. 27

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Hiawassee City Hall will hold a public hearing on Monday, Nov. 27, concerning the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC Franchise Fee Ordinance.

The public hearing will take place after the Hiawassee City Council Work Session scheduled for 6 p.m. the same evening, and all Hiawassee residents are encouraged to attend both the work session and public hearing.

Per a notice from the City of Hiawassee, "the city council and mayor pro tem will conduct a meeting to explain and clarify the franchise fee ordinance for the city going forward."

As previously reported, a majority of the council has had a change of heart concerning the ordinance, which was adopted in August.

Hiawassee Council-



Hiawassee City Hall

members Jay Chastain Jr. and Rayette Ross voted to repeal the ordinance in the Nov. 7 regular city council meeting, with opposition from fellow Councilmember Kris Berrong.

A second reading of an ordinance to repeal the

franchise fee ordinance is expected to be held in the Dec. 5 regular council meeting, according to city hall. If adopted, the newer ordinance would mean the end of the franchise fee ordinance passed in August.

See Franchise, Page 8A

## Schools announce Teachers of the Year in regular monthly meeting

By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

What do Debi Williams, Chris Vardo and Brooke Whitt have in common?

They're all Teachers of the Year for Towns County Schools.

All three teachers received honors in the Nov. 13 meeting of the Towns County Board of Education, where Williams was also named System Teacher of the Year.

Williams teaches at the elementary school, Vardo at the middle school and Whitt at the high school, and all three have expressed gratitude to their fellow teachers for choosing them as teachers of the year.

"This is one of my favorite meetings that I have every year, because we have so many tremendous



L-R: TCHS Assistant Principal Jim Melton, Brooke Whitt, Debi Williams, TCES Principal Dr. Sandy Page, Chris Vardo and TCMS Principal Erica Chastain. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

teachers in our schools," said Towns County Schools Superintendent Dr. Darren Berrong. "The process of choosing these teachers every

year is, their peers in each of the schools pretty much choose that individual teacher.

"And I have to say that See Teachers, Page 8A

## 'Mountain Country Christmas in Lights' to open on Thursday

By Lily Avery  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Grab your coats, hats and mittens and a little holiday spirit, because Christmas is coming early to the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds this year for the second annual Mountain Country Christmas in Lights.

Officially debuting on Thanksgiving night, Thursday, Nov. 23, the show is a unique affair to the North Georgia Mountains, and the only one of its kind in the area.

To celebrate the impending kick off of the festivities at the Fairgrounds, the Towns County Chamber of Commerce brought out the yellow ribbon and giant scissors for a ribbon cutting at the Fairgrounds on Wednesday, Nov. 15, along with Fairgrounds General Manager Hilda Thomason,



The Towns County Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon cutting for the Mountain Country Christmas in Lights with the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds and friends on Wednesday, Nov. 15. Photo/Lily Avery

Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw, Hiawassee Mayor-elect Liz Ordiales and several invested

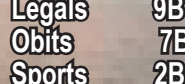
GMF volunteers, all excited for the first walk-thru of this year's light show.

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Lake Levels  
Blue Ridge 1,671.54  
Chatuge 1,918.12  
Nottely 1,762.10



Basketball

Nov. 21 vs. Union County  
JV 4 PM Varsity 7 PM  
Nov. 28 vs. Fannin County  
JV Boys 4:15 PM Varsity 6 PM

