

Towns County Herald

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BOE to adjust 2018-2019 school calendar for construction

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Towns County Board of Education will be making changes to the upcoming school calendar due to summer construction.

The board discussed these changes during the regular work session on Wednesday, Feb. 7.

Over the last two years, Towns County Schools have been working on renovating and modernizing facilities, from academics to athletics and everything in between.

These renovations have included work on the tennis court, baseball locker room, the purchase of a school system

tractor, handicap parking spaces for football, baseball and soccer games, a sign for the middle school gym and auditorium, the purchase of Chromebooks and textbook adoptions – all of which have been funded through SPLOST.

This summer, the school will be pursuing a replacement of the roof of the middle and high school.

During the renovations, all desks, computers, smart boards and any other valuable or non-expendable item will have to be removed from the classrooms and either taken home with the teachers, if personal items, or moved to the

Towns County Middle School and Towns County Elementary School gyms until construction has been completed.

“They’re taking the roof off, but it’s not like there’s not going to be anything above you when they do it,” said Dr. Darren Berrong, Towns County Schools Superintendent. “There is a metal roof, but it’s not waterproof. If it rains, it is going to drip and leak.”

“So, if we leave electronics in these classrooms, they’re probably going to get destroyed, so teachers are going to have to take all of their personal stuff home.”

“This is going to be a huge endeavor, and it’s going

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The Towns County Board of Education during the rescheduled Feb. 7 work session.

Photo by Lily Avery

Mayor Gibby discusses need for planning in Young Harris city meeting

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Assistant Editor

Young Harris Mayor Andrea Gibby said she’s looking forward to working with the Young Harris City Council on some strategic planning in the near future.

Her comments came in the Feb. 6 regular city meeting, after acknowledging that the latest renovations to the city sewer plant were almost ready for public debut.

“I think we’re in a good place, I would love for us to have some kind of planning retreat,” said Mayor Gibby. “It could be a morning, an afternoon, a full day.”

“I think it’s time for us to sit down together and have

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The Young Harris City Council with Mayor Andrea Gibby. L-R: Matt Miller, John Kelley, Donald Keys, Andrea Gibby, Lynne Nation and Jared Champion.

Photo by Shawn Jarrard

Notice: King Cove Road & Gumlog to close on March 12

News Special
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King Cove Road and Gumlog Road will be closed for construction for a period of 210 days beginning March 12, 2018, to Oct. 8, 2018.

Contact the Towns County Commissioner’s Office for more information on a detour route by the Georgia Department of Transportation.

Path cleared for Hiawassee Franchise Fee Ordinance

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Assistant Editor

Hiawassee Mayor Liz Ordiales introduced a revised version of the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC Franchise Fee in the Feb. 6 regular meeting of the Hiawassee City Council.

The council voted unanimously to hold the first reading of the ordinance, though Councilwoman Anne Mitchell was ill and could not make the meeting.

Mitchell has expressed support for the measure in the past.

As previously reported, the mayor has been looking for a fee to lessen the impact of the fee on the hospital and other large electric customers within the city limits, and she recently suggested a potential cap on the amount to be collected.

In order to avoid complex decoding issues, Ordiales decided that, instead of a cap, she would decrease the fee from 4 percent to 3 percent of gross electric sales based on kWh usage.

The franchise fee for cable and fiber services will be 5 percent of gross sales.

Should the council hold a second reading and adoption of



Hiawassee Mayor Liz Ordiales

the ordinance in an upcoming council meeting, the fee will go into effect sometime this summer and will appear as a line item on the EMC utility bills of Hiawassee customers.

The money collected by the EMC and turned over to the City of Hiawassee will be used to improve lighting and other infrastructure around the city moving forward, according to Mayor Ordiales.

Originally, the city passed a similar ordinance in August of last year, though public opinion swayed a majority of the council to repeal the ordinance in December 2017.

In light of the recent franchise fee public hearing held in November, the council declined to schedule another

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Students continue to raise money for national championship trip

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Assistant Editor

For those few who haven’t heard, the Towns County High School Academic Team has made it to Small School National Championship.

The championship is sponsored by National Academic Quiz Tournaments, and it will take place between April 27 and April 29 in Chicago.

Team members are hoping individuals and businesses within the community will want to partner with them so that they can meet their March 1 fundraising deadline ahead of the big trip.

“We’ve won 25 matches over the last two seasons, so that did enough to get us a bid,” said Academic Team Coach



L-R: Chase Crawford, Coach Becky West, Kendall Floyd, Coach Ken Camp, Connor Kelley and Chase Rogers.

Photo by Shawn Jarrard

TCHS seniors Barrett, Cowart celebrate National Signing Day

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Assistant Editor

Congratulations to Towns County High School seniors Brooke Barrett and Logan Cowart, who committed to the schools of their choice as student athletes on National Signing Day.

Their signing ceremonies took place on Wednesday, Feb. 7, in the Media Center of Towns County Schools, where friends and family of both students gathered to witness this next step in their lives.

Barrett received a scholarship to play soccer for Georgia Southern University, and Cowart signed on with Tusculum College to play football, also on scholarship.

For Barrett, soccer has been a major part of her life since she was 6 years old.

She has played in Towns County during soccer season, driven countless miles for club soccer practice and games, and even traveled internationally with the Olympic Development



TCHS senior Brooke Barrett with her family and soccer coach, John Cornett, signing to play soccer for Georgia Southern University.

Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Team. And not only is Barrett a stellar athlete, she’s also a stellar student. She will graduate with honors and nearly a year of dual enrollment college courses under her

belt, and she did much of her homework for those classes while traveling for soccer.

“I want to thank my family for helping me,” said Barrett. “Me and my dad

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Texana Community Club welcomed by Movers and Shakers

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Mountain Movers and Shakers welcomed representatives of the Texana Community Club on Friday, Feb. 9.

Coming all the way from Murphy, North Carolina, Friday’s guests shared information on their organization and some of the club’s goals for the future.

Zula Cox, Vice President of the Texana Community Club, and Euriel Turner, President of the Texana Community Club, spoke on behalf of the community last Friday, sharing the ins and outs of the center and recent projects that have been completed in the area since the tornado tragedy of 2012.

“It’s amazing what you can do with just a few committed people,” said Turner. “We average about five to seven members at our meetings. We meet once a month. We get a lot done,



Euriel Turner is president of the Texana Community Club of Murphy, North Carolina.

though, even with just a small handful of people.

“For example, after the tornado came through, we had some needs in the community. We raised enough money at our community center selling food and such that we raised about \$25,000 to help those in the community who were in need.

“We took that money and put it back into the community. That’s what we do.”

Geographically speaking, Texana is a small community within Murphy, but the heart and soul of the community is equal to that of a city three times its size, with

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