

# Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

Your Hometown Newspaper Since 1928

50 Cents

www.townscountyherald.net

Publication Number 635540 Volume 88 Number 42

Wednesday, August 23, 2017

## Fairgrounds celebrates Total Solar Eclipse with tailgate

By Lily Avery  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Hundreds of onlookers gathered together at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds to witness a once in a lifetime cosmic event for the Great American Total Solar Eclipse on Monday, Aug. 21.

Though slowly growing dimmer as the partial eclipse set in at 1:06 p.m., at approximately 2:35 p.m. the sun met its match as the moon took center stage of the sky, completely covering the sun for two minutes and 20 seconds, resulting in the first total solar eclipse to cross the Continental United States since 1979.

It stretched from Lincoln Beach, Oregon to Charleston,

South Carolina. The path of totality is a relatively thin ribbon, around 70 miles wide, which crossed the United States from West to East.

Michael Covington of the Atlanta Astronomical Club drove to the Fairgrounds to partake in the tailgating celebrations and offered a play-by-play of the phenomenon throughout the afternoon.

While a total solar eclipse occurs once every 18 months somewhere around the globe, a total solar eclipse is very rare in any one location, occurring on average once every 375 years.

The last time Towns County saw a total eclipse was in 1506. And the next time Towns County will see another

total eclipse will be 2591.

"There will be shadow bands as it gets closer to totality," said Covington. "Then, it will become darker more quickly until totality is upon us. Then all too soon totality will be over."

And to add to the festivities and wonderment, local radio celebrity Stephen Phillips and his band, Midnight Express, offered up classic tunes as entertainment and there was plenty of family-friendly games and food to go around.

For some, Monday marked more than just a once in a lifetime cosmic event, but a major life milestone as well.

Trevorr Hibbs from  
See Eclipse, Page 6A



A crowd looks on as the moon begins to cover the sun's pathway in Towns County on Monday, Aug. 21, as the darkness of the Great American Eclipse unfolded over the Top of Georgia. More than 700 attended the first, and possibly only, Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds Great American Eclipse Tailgate Party. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

## Preacher Ledford's legacy lives on with DNR dedication



The Ledford Family. Front Row, L-R: Lori Ledford McClure, Orabelle Stewart, Viola Ledford, Morgan McClure, Julie Holcomb, Jayden Holcomb, Back Row, L-R: Maddie Thomas, Jack and Kathy Stewart, Bo and Gay Bramlett, Dodie Ledford Thomas, and Frank Raper.

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

The late Preacher Harold Ledford's family joined city

and county officials in a boat landing dedication ceremony conducted jointly with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources in Hiwassee Mayors Park on Monday, Aug. 14.

Also present were various members of the community, including several dozen parishioners of Preacher Ledford's home church,

See Ledford, Page 8A

## Authorities recover John Eller's body from Lake Chatuge

By Charles Duncan  
Towns County Herald  
Editor

HIWASSEE – The Towns County Water Rescue Recovery Team recovered the body of a 22-year-old North Carolina man from Lake Chatuge on Wednesday, Aug. 16.

Brandon Eller, 22, of Hayesville, was last seen alive in the parking lot of Hawg Wild BBQ, his place of employment, at 5:50 p.m. on Monday, Aug. 14, according to the Towns County Sheriff's Office.

Authorities discovered Eller's body in Lake Chatuge two days after he went missing, at approximately 2:30 p.m. on Aug. 16, Towns County Fire Chief and Coroner Harold



John Brandon Eller  
Copeland said.  
The rescue team recovered Eller's body from Lake Chatuge in 12 to 15 feet of

water, Chief Copeland said.

Chief Copeland, also Towns County coroner, added that Eller's body was sent to the State Medical Examiner for autopsy, to determine cause of death.

Formerly the Chophouse Restaurant, Hawg Wild BBQ is located adjacent to Lake Chatuge Lodge.

Video surveillance at the restaurant placed Eller walking behind the restaurant toward the wooded area that leads to Lake Chatuge, his sister Elizabeth Dills posted on Facebook.

"The security cameras at work captured an image of him heading from his work down to the lake behind it," she said. "He didn't clock out, he didn't say he

See Eller, Page 6A

## Shirley Miller honored by DAR's Old Unicoi Trail Chapter

By Charles Duncan  
Towns County Herald  
Editor

Shirley Carver Miller still looks and acts like the First Lady of Georgia.

The wife of Georgia political legend Zell Miller still remembers the first election her husband won. He became mayor of Young Harris in 1959, and a year later, ran for the Georgia State Senate.

He won that election also, taking the April 30 Primary in 1960. Zell Miller was one step away from entering the White House in the early 1990s, considered a frontrunner for

See Miller, Page 3A



Shirley Miller receiving the "Women in American History" award from the Old Union Trail Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution. L-R: Annette Hopgood, Shirley Miller and Ethelene Dyer Jones. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

## County EMA, first responders conduct emergency drill



Firefighters carrying one of their own during the drill. Photo/Lily Avery

By Lily Avery  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

For first responders and public safety officials,

preparation and knowledge on the job can mean the difference between life and death.

That's why, on Monday, Aug. 14, Towns County

Fire Trucks and emergency vehicles filled the parking lot of the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds' Anderson Music

See Drill, Page 8A

## Cagle pays visit to Movers and Shakers during 17-county tour

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Georgia Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle spent six days last week traveling to 17 counties, all for the purpose of getting out his positive economic message to his fellow Georgians.

Cagle, who is running for governor, stopped in to an exceptionally warm reception at the Sundance Grill in Hiwassee the morning of Friday, Aug. 18.

As gracious hosts, the Mountain Movers and Shakers had prepared for him a big welcome.

Towns County FFA students greeted him as he stepped off his tour bus, members of the Kappa Sigma

See Cagle, Page 8A



Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle shaking hands with Towns County High School FFA students outside Sundance Grill on Friday, Aug. 18. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

## School board sets millage, goes over Pioneer RESA results

By Lily Avery  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

The Towns County Board of Education voted in the August monthly meeting to approve the advertisement of the school system's 2017 millage rate, which will be rolling back from 7.957 mills to 7.956 mills.

The reduction of 0.001 mills over the 2016 rate will result in a collection of \$5,753,240 in property taxes toward the schools' budget.

An increase in property values in the county tax digest will result in the schools collecting \$84,507 more than they did last year toward the budget due to an increase in property values in the county tax digest.

In other BOE news, Towns County Middle School



Towns County Schools Superintendent Dr. Darren Berrong. Photo/Lily Avery

Principal Erica Chastain and Towns County High School Principal Dr. Connie Hobbs presented the past year's Pioneer RESA results, showing the comparisons to other schools within the RESA

District as well as across the state.

Along with Towns County, the Pioneer RESA District includes Banks County, Dawson County, Franklin County, Gainesville City, Habersham County, Hall County, Hart County, Lumpkin County, Mountain Education Center, Rabun County, Stephens County, Union County and White County.

Before presenting the middle school's RESA achievement comparisons, Principal Chastain praised her staff and students for a great start to the school year and shared equal enthusiasm for all that the year has in store.

"As of right now, we are at 242 students," said Principal Chastain. "We've had a great

See BOE, Page 3A

2 Sections 20 Pages

Inside  
Arrests 2A  
Church 6B  
Opinions 8B  
Classification 4A  
Legals 9B  
Obits 7B  
Sports 2B

Lake Levels  
Blue Ridge 1,681.42  
Chatuge 1,922.63  
Nottely 1,770.97



Softball  
Aug 22 @ Hebron 4:30 PM  
Aug 23 @ Banks Co. 5:30 PM  
Aug 24 vs. Athens Christian 4:45 PM

John Berry  
in Concert  
Granddaddy Mimm's  
August 26th  
See page 10A

Young Harris  
Art Fest  
Mayors Park  
August 26th and 27th  
See page 5A

Operation PUP  
Plant Sale  
Rabies Clinic  
Square in  
Hiwassee  
See page 7A