

# Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

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## Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thurs: Cloudy	52 44
Fri: Showers	55 43
Sat: Cloudy	59 46
Sun: Rain	50 34
Mon: Cloudy	48 31
Tue: Showers	41 27
Wed: Sunny	40 23



Upstream Elevation Predicted 12/30/2015	
Lake Chatuge	1,926.12
Lake Nottely	1,773.49
Blue Ridge	1,687.66

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## Woods Grove Baptist Church hosts Health Screenings in Young Harris

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## Career Coach coming to Towns County January 14th

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## Active and Retired Federal Employees meeting January 12th

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## SPORTS BASKETBALL

Fri. Jan 8 @ Lakeview  
7 & 8:30 PM  
Sat. Jan 9 @ Prince Avenue  
6 & 7:30 PM

## Commissioner: Towns a 'local state of emergency'

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Towns County's first responders met for a called meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 29, to discuss the disastrous state of roads and culverts around the county due to flash flooding that occurred on Christmas Eve, stretching into the week of New Year's.

Based on the testimonies of the various first responder agency heads present in the meeting, Ricky Mathis, director of Emergency Medical Services and the Emergency Management Agency of Towns County, made a recommendation in the meeting that Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall declare the county as being in a local state of emergency.

"From what information that I've been presented with this morning, I think that

we definitely have met the criteria to become part of the declaration that's going on in the state right now," said Mathis. "I think that we have surpassed our resources as far as our county road department. I think that we have a limited number of personnel. I think that we have a limited amount of equipment."

"I don't know whether we have the appropriate equipment to fix what issues that I see here. I see this being a long-running recovery, and we're just very fortunate that we're not dealing with life safety issues this morning—that we're dealing with property issues and homeowner situations, and not life safety issues."

Mathis went on to say that the county will do everything in its power to repair the flood damage, not only for now, but for good.

"That's our objective, and that's what we want to go



Roads Superintendent Clyde Shook, left, addresses extensive flood damage to roads and culverts throughout the county, with EMA director Ricky Mathis

County Fire and Rescue, Towns County Sheriff's Department, Towns County Road Department, Towns County Water Authority and others.

An important part of the meeting dealt with the need for Roads Superintendent Clyde Shook and his modest crew to estimate road and culvert damage for 450 miles of county roads as soon as possible, so that GEMA Field Coordinator C.J. Worden, who is Towns County's contact for the Georgia Emergency Management Agency, can submit the county's application for assistance from the state.

Any assistance from the state, which is not guaranteed, will come in the form of equipment help, or possibly assistance from state engineers.

As Mathis pointed out, no loss of life or serious injury

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## Union General welcomes New Year's first baby

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Happy Birthday and Happy New Year to Kampton McKinney Hughes, born in County's first baby on Jan. 1.

Kampton came into the world at 3:36 p.m. on New Year's Day at Union General Hospital, to proud parents Evan and Kembra Hughes.

Dr. Kevin Davis of Women's Health of Blairsville delivered the baby boy, who weighed in at 6 pounds, 5 ounces, and was 19 inches long.

Kampton has a unique nickname, one he picked up before making his first appearance on Jan. 1.

"I told Kembra I wanted a name to start with K—she



Evan and Kembra Hughes are overjoyed to have welcomed their baby boy, Kampton, into the world on New Year's Day 2016

## TVA monitors water levels



Marty Roberts

around 1,926.

"That's usually the level they run it in the summertime, I think," he said.

"I don't know what it was before this started, but it's come up a tremendous amount in the last week because of all the rain," he said, adding that the level far exceeds the lake's winter pool.

He added that although the water was unusually high, that is not a cause for concern because the Tennessee Valley Authority carefully manages the reservoir.

"They control it, so it's not a problem. They're not going to let it flood. TVA controls that," he said.

Other places in Towns County aren't so lucky. Roberts said that, for instance, Bald Mountain Camping Resort experienced some flooding. Also, a small sinkhole opened up around a culvert near Towns County Schools, although the school will likely have it fixed soon.

"There's just spots all over the county," he said.

Scott Field of the Tennessee Valley Authority explained that the TVA is controlling reservoirs all around

See **TVA**, Page 10

## Colt Ford rocks The Hall



By Mason Mitcham  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

On Saturday, Jan. 2, Country Music artist Colt Ford came to Hiwassee.

For many, the concert was a belated New Year's party as loud and rowdy.

"No. 1 fans?" Cynthia Kerr and Michelle Abercrombie explained that they loved Colt Ford because he represents what "country" was all about.

"From Dirt Road Anthem to Dancing While Intoxicated

It goes from country to norm. It's real. It goes from the norm of country to down and dirty," said Abercrombie.

"He is country and Georgia from the roots," Kerr said.

Ford, however, remains humble. At the meet and greet backstage before the show, he was more than happy to take pictures, talk to awed children, or sign memorabilia for soldiers overseas.

"I don't know any other way to do it. I don't understand an artist not signing an autograph or taking a picture. If not for the fans, what would you even be doing? They're the reason we exist. You can keep awards. That's great if you win some. That may be cool. But I play music for them and for me. To me, meeting all those people, saying hello and hearing stories, somebody's a soldier, or the little kids," he said.

"To me, I love people though. If you don't love the fans, I just don't understand what you're doing. I don't understand why you're making

music or that. If you want to do that, just stay at home or work in a cubicle or somewhere. Do something else. But it's all about them and always will be for me," he said.

It's no exaggeration to say that Ford sports a unique musical style that can be polarizing to fans of Country Music. But according to him, it's a simple matter of taste.

"Recitation records been around forever. People are going to call it what they want to. Everybody's put a label on something and say all this stuff. But really, at the end of the day, it's fairly simple. Do you like the song or do you not like the song? Is it a good song or not a good song? That's really what it boils down to," he said.

He said that he upholds traditions that started far before he was born. Charlie Daniels is one of Ford's heroes.

"He's one of my heroes. Matter of fact, this hat I'm

See **Ford**, Page 10

## Mayor Gibby, Council review SPLOST projects

By Mason Mitcham  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Young Harris City recently released its 2015 Special Local Option Sales Tax funding reports. The city has been involved in multiple projects over the past year, most of them using SPLOST money.

Projects have ranged from infrastructure upgrades to aesthetic upgrades.

"The first thing we did was Cupid's falls, and they did a lot of grading up there. The second one was City Hall, they completely re-did City Hall. The third one was the crosswalks. And the fourth one was the playground, but it hasn't been done yet. The fifth one was Maple Street, and the last one was the bridge," said City Clerk Shirley Jarrard.

The largest and most



Mayor Andrea Gibby visible projects that the city undertook were to upgrade the turn on Maple Street and to upgrade the bridge on Sunset Drive.

According to Young Harris City Clerk Shirley Jarrard, the largest and most

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## Towns County man sought for robbery

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

The Union County Sheriff's Office is looking for a black male by the name of Lazaro Oviedo after the two robbed the Food Heaven Convenience Store near the Union/Towns County line on Christmas Eve, according to UCSO spokesperson Detective Lt. Daren Osborn.

Lazaro Oviedo, 28, with an address in Enota Village Apartments in Young Harris, is 5-foot-11, 158 pounds, with black hair and brown eyes. He was last seen in a white, four-door sedan with a sunroof, with an as of yet unknown white male accomplice.

"On Christmas Eve day, approximately 12:30 p.m., a black male by the name of Lazaro Oviedo entered the Food Heaven Chevron Station at the Union/Towns County line at the Union/Towns County line, along with a white male," said Lt. Osborn. "Lazaro was a former employee there and had been terminated, and felt like he was owed money."

"The white male went in and bought a quart of oil, keeping the female attendant



distracted. And while he was distracting her, Oviedo went to the back office and got the key to the safe. He got \$416 out of the safe and went to leave. The attendant attempted to stop him. He wouldn't stop, and he went behind the counter to get his alcohol permit that the county issues.

"She tried to stop him, but he grabbed her arm, pushed her out of the way, and went out the door. We've taken warrants on Oviedo for robbery and simple assault. We do not know who the other male is that was with him. If anybody has any information on their whereabouts, please



Lazaro Oviedo notify us."

Anyone with information, call the Union County Sheriff's Office at (706) 439-6066.

## Burglary suspect nabbed in Clay County

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

The Union County Sheriff's Office has brought charges against a Hayesville, NC, woman for two burglaries that occurred in December, according to UCSO spokesperson Detective Lt. Daren Osborn.

At the time of her arrest, Soccorro Coffey, 27, was in the process of breaking into another residence on Fires Creek Road in Clay County, NC, according to Lt. Osborn.

Investigators with the Clay County Sheriff's Office contacted Lt. Osborn on Saturday, Jan. 2, to inform him that they had recovered a stolen Ruger .22 caliber pistol from Coffey's possession, and that they believed it to belong to a recent Union County burglary victim, according to

Lt. Osborn.

Lt. Osborn traveled to the Clay County Jail to ask Coffey about the stolen weapon, but she failed to give him any information, according to Lt. Osborn.

The Clay County Sheriff's Office took out a search warrant on her residence, enabling them to recover items related to another burglary that occurred in Union County around the same timeframe in December, according to Lt. Osborn.

During the investigation, Lt. Osborn said that he also found some items that turned out to be related to a burglary

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