

Towns County Herald

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Wednesday, January 13, 2016

Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thurs: Sunny	54 33
Fri: Rain	49 37
Sat: Showers	44 27
Sun: Cloudy	40 19
Mon: Sunny	43 21
Tue: Sunny	44 26
Wed: Sunny	45 29



Upstream Elevation Predicted 01/13/2016	
Lake Chatuge	1,924.17
Lake Nottely	1,770.79
Blue Ridge	1,681.58

INDEX

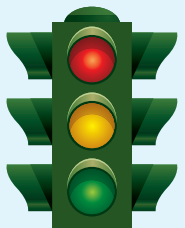
14 Pages

Arrests.....	2
Chamber.....	9
Church.....	6
Classifieds.....	12
Editorial.....	4
Legals.....	13
Obituaries.....	7

Sports

Page 8

Traffic Alert



What: Beginning Thursday, January 14, 2016 a traffic signal will direct traffic across the Bridge over the Hiwassee River, one lane at a time

Where: State Route 17/75 Bridge over the Hiwassee River 3.6 miles south of Hiwassee



Career Coach coming to Towns County January 14th

See Page 3



Kinship Care coming to Towns County

January 14th

See Page 5



SPORTS

BASKETBALL

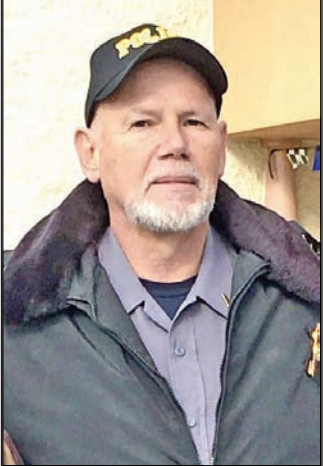
Friday, January 15th

@ Hebron

7 & 8:30 PM

Walls officially named acting Hiwassee police chief

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer



Arvel Walls

The City of Hiwassee announced on Tuesday, Jan. 5, that it had selected him to take over as Acting Police Chief of the City Council meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 5, and said that Arvel has served the city faithfully for many years. In fact, 2016 will mark his 32 years of service to the City of Hiwassee.

"He's been here longer than anyone, he's actually been here longer than Jimmy has, and he was Lieutenant, so he would have been the next in line to have this job anyway. He is very dependable and just a great officer, so automatically he was the one who was most appropriate right now for the job," said Mayor Mathis.

She said that traditionally, the lieutenant succeeds the police chief, so Arvel's succession required

Lieutenant, now Acting Police Chief.

Mayor Barbara Mathis announced that she had selected him to take over as Acting Police Chief of the City Council meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 5, and said that Arvel has served the city faithfully for many years. In fact, 2016 will mark his 32 years of service to the City of Hiwassee.

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She said that traditionally, the lieutenant succeeds the police chief, so Arvel's succession required

little contemplation. However, she said she would still feel comfortable naming him Police Chief in any regard.

"He had been here the longest and he worked close with Jimmy and he knew all the arrangements and all, so he has just fallen right in line. He was just the one who I felt like could pick up where we had lost Jimmy. We could pick up with Arvel," she said.

After a six-month period, the City Council will vote on whether to change his title from Acting Police Chief to Police Chief.

"What we're doing is we are appointing him for six months to let him get in and have a trial at it and all and let the people adapt to him, the council members and all of that, let them all get acquainted with him. He's been here all of these years, and most of them

know him and they don't have to have any acquaintance with him, but this is just the time frame that we have appointed him for," she said.

"And after six months we will bring it up for approval to appoint him as the Chief. So this is a trial period. And then Paul Smith is the next in line, and he has been appointed Lieutenant. So this is what Arvel's role was, he was Lieutenant before Jimmy's death, and that's the first step, as Lieutenant, if something happens then Lt. Smith would be the next one to step in line for the job," she added.

Walls confirmed regardless of the decision to be made in six months time, he was prepared to carry out his duties as Acting Chief to the best of his ability.

"That'll be in June, where they'll vote on me as to whether

I'll be the Chief or not. But until that time I'll be acting as Chief. Historically, the city's senior officer behind the Chief has got the position," he said. So far, the bulk of his responsibilities has included paperwork and supervising people.

"The Chief has the final say on the department employees and basically policies and procedures and control of the equipment," he said.

As far as the differences between him and Chief Wright, Walls said that he intends to run the department in a similar manner.

"It'll be basically the same, just keep an active department and keep all the good officers and good equipment and serve the public. Basically keep everybody safe," he said.

Herrin Estate gifts Bell Mountain to County

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Towns County made history on Jan. 4 by turning Bell Mountain, in private hands for 154 years, into a County Park and Historical Site.

Bell Mountain is a gift from the Hal Herrin estate to Towns County.

"Last year it was deeded back to Towns County, so it's public property now, and that's what we're here about tonight, to protect this for future generations," said Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall.

Commissioner Kendall noted that the high amount of Jeep traffic up Bell Mountain was eroding soil and clay and disrupting vegetation.

"You've got 15 or 20



Commissioner Kendall signs ordinance regarding Bell Mtn.

(Jeeps) at a time going up there in all kinds of weather. So we're going to look into trying to protect that along with other things. Some of them, they'll find a place on the mountain to get up. Once the vegetation is gone and the re-creation, especially like we had last

week, you've seen what it does to our mountains," he said.

He said that the county has big plans for Bell Mountain.

"I've got \$150,000 from state and local money appropriated. I think it could do the job."

See *Bell Mtn.*, Page 10

BRMEMC to hold town hall meetings for membership

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Young Harris - Mickey Cummings of the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC Board of Directors announced at the Mountain Movers and Shakers meeting on Friday, Jan. 8, that the EMC will hold a pair of Town Hall Meetings that will be open to the public.

The first meeting will take place on Monday, Jan. 25, at the Clay County Courthouse's multi-purpose room in Hayesville, NC. The second meeting will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 26, at the Union County Schools Fine Arts Center. Both meetings will begin at 6 p.m.

"We're trying to move on from what has happened in the past, and we want to move on to the future," Cummings said. "We want constructive criticism, we want your comments. If something is

going good, we want to hear about it. If something is going bad, we want to hear about that as well."

Cummings, speaking to the Mountain Movers and Shakers during their weekly meeting at Mary's Southern Grill, told the audience that transparency within the BRMEMC was an area in which he looked to improve upon following his election.

"When I came to talk to you guys in August, I told you that one of the things I thought was important concerning the EMC was transparent communication and listening to members," Cummings said. "Regarding communication, when I was elected to the EMC, I was appointed to chair the Policy Committee. In the Policy Committee, we've talked about things we could do to improve our transparency and allow us to listen to our members. What we'll be doing is setting up a



Mickey Cummings

venue where people can come and give us their ideas, or if they want to gripe, we'll listen to them and then go back to the board meetings and try to make the BRMEMC better for all of us.

"I promise that our lawyer won't be there answering questions, it will be the Board

See *BRMEMC*, Page 10

Young Harris City Council meeting

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

On Tuesday, Jan. 5, Young Harris City Council swore in its newest councilman.

Jared Champion joined fellow councilmen Matt Miller, and Stuart Miller as the three were sworn in by City Clerk Shirley Jarrard.

"Do you solemnly swear or affirm that you will well and truly demean yourself as councilmen of the city of Young Harris for the ensuing term, and you will faithfully uphold the Constitutions of the United States and of the state of Georgia, and enforce the charter and ordinances of Young Harris to the best of your skill and ability, without fear or favor, so help you God?" she recited, to which each of them answered a resounding, "I do."

Later, Jarrard went over the financial reports. It was revealed that since it has spent over \$1 million in federal funds, the City will have to have a comprehensive audit this year.

"The audit will start on Feb. 1. It's about four weeks.



City Clerk Shirley Jarrard swearing in new council members Jared Champion, Stuart Miller and Matt Miller

It's always good. We've got great auditors," said Mayor Andrea Gibby.

It was Jarrard's recommendation that the city continue to use Park-Sterling Bank. The City Council voted to allow Park-Sterling to carry the city bank accounts and also to allow United Community Bank to hold the city's Capital Replacement Fund.

Once again, Matt Miller was unanimously voted to be Mayor Pro Tem.

"It has been Matt before. I've had to recuse myself a couple of times, so the Mayor Pro Tem has to step in," said Mayor Gibby.

A number of new committees were formed. Council members have spots on the Water and Sewer Committee, the Administrative Committee, and the Street and Tree committee.

The city engineers, after the flurry of projects in 2015, have said that there are no new projects as of yet.

"There's one project that is under construction, which is your sewer line project, which is ongoing, I think has been doing very well, especially with all the rain we had over the Christmas Holidays," said

See *Young Harris*, Page 10

Cherokees once owned Bell Mountain

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

In preparation for Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall to sign the ordinance turning Bell Mountain into a park, Towns County Historical Society members Jerry Taylor and Jason Lee Edwards presented a compiled history of Bell Mountain.

"What's a better start to the new year than for Towns County to begin this year by meeting like this to preserve our most recognizable landmark in the Hiwassee Valley, the summit of Bell Mountain," said Taylor.

"From the days when our ancestors arrived here, it's been a destination point from the picnics on Sunday afternoon to sightseeing and bands of



Jerry Taylor presents history of Bell Mountain

youth making merry. Its name, 'Bell,' is a mystery. But one thing we're certain of is that it was 'Bell' in the days when the Cherokee Indians inhabited the area, for it's so documented in old records. And it was like

See *History*, Page 10

Anne Mitchell speaks to Movers and Shakers

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Young Harris - Newly elected Hiwassee City Councilwoman Anne Mitchell spoke to the Mountain Movers and Shakers during their weekly meeting on Friday at Mary's Southern Grill, where she made it clear that halting the recent decline of downtown Hiwassee is at the top of her to-do list.

When asked what would be the most difficult problem that the city council would have to tackle in 2016, Mitchell didn't hesitate.

"The downtown area is the big one," said Mitchell. "Our sidewalks are a disgrace. You can't walk there without fearing for your life. But with so many businesses that have closed, where would you walk?"

Mitchell supports fellow Hiwassee City Councilwoman Liz Ordiales' plan to start a Merchants Association



Anne Mitchell

among the businesses located downtown.

"Liz has jumped right in and is going to start an initiative with the merchants to form a Merchants Association," Mitchell told those gathered. "In numbers, there is strength, so we need for the merchants to band together to see what we can do about the revitalization of downtown Hiwassee. It's sorta sad. The merchants who

See *Mitchell*, Page 10

Hiwassee City Council meeting



City Clerk Cenyla Galloway swears in Liz Ordiales and Anne Mitchell

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

At the Hiwassee City Council meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 5, City Clerk Cenyla Galloway swore in newly elected city council members Kris Berrong, Anne Mitchell, and Liz Ordiales.

"I solemnly swear that I will faithfully perform the duties of councilman of this city and that I will support and defend the charter thereof as well as the constitution and the laws of this state of Georgia and

the United States of America so sworn under penalty of law this fifth day of January 2016," they recited, before taking their places on the council.

One of the first acts of the new council was to revise the meeting time of the council itself.

The first order of business was to change the 2016 City Council Meeting time from

See *Hiwassee*, Page 10

TOWNS COUNTY HERALD



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