

# Amendment...continued from page 1A

Georgia's local school systems are already taking tremendous financial hits, the Towns board took a stand against the proposed amendment by approving a resolution in support of quality public education.

The signed Resolution, declares that the Towns County school board members request that Gov. Nathan Deal and state lawmakers commit their support to adequately funding a first class K-12 public education for students in Towns County and across the State of Georgia.

The Board also asks that local voters turn out at the polls and vote 'no' regarding Resolution 1162, the constitutional amendment that allows the state to create charter schools without local school board approval.

A 'yes' vote on this pro-

posed constitutional amendment re-opens the door that restores the state charter schools commission, a group that would be empowered to establish charter schools in local communities, whether or not the local board agrees.

Advocates of the legislation say that state charters are intended to give families options for education, not obstruct local school boards.

One state lawmaker that disagrees with that mindset is Sen. Wilkinson.

"The citizens of Georgia will make the ultimate decision regarding the adoption of HB 1162," Sen. Wilkinson said. "I have great confidence in the collective wisdom of the Georgia voters and I urge everyone to study this issue, make an informed decision, and go vote."

# Drowning ...continued from page 1A

There had been a possible drowning in Tallulah Falls Lake and Rabun County officials were requesting the Towns County Water Rescue and Recovery's assistance through mutual aid, Moore said.

The team had 11 of their best certified First Responders trained in water rescue and recovery respond to the call including Safety Officer Leslie Moore, Operations Officer Captain Terry Parker, and Moore.

"Divers entered the water at 7:09 p.m. and went 'Down,' meaning going underwater, at 7:14 p.m.

"The divers completed one arc and expanded outward," Moore said. "Near the end of the second arc, the victim was found.

"The body was located at 7:35 p.m. as indicated by a marker float popping to the surface," Moore said. "It took a few minutes to get the body ashore,

which occurred at 7:40 p.m."

Towns County divers Jonathan Wilson and Cory Ledford simultaneously discovered the body, according to Moore.

"Lt. Edward Berrong and Lt. James Rosser raised the body to the surface," Moore said. "It required all divers to transport the body to shore. Stand-by diver/firefighter Rick Moss with assistance from stand-by diver/explorer Reed Moss, and shore support personnel Robert Munger and Blake Taylor were positioned to receive and move the body onto a stretcher for the trip up the steep bank to the awaiting Rabun County EMT personnel," said Moore.

At last week's simulated drill conducted to assess their response time and preparedness, they had no way of knowing that less than a week later they would have to put their skills to a test in an actual emergency involving a drown victim.

# LOST ...continued from page 1A

Based on findings and figures presented by Eaves, this recommendation is that the county should be receiving 86.88 percent of the sales tax revenue, which is 4.88 percent more than the county is currently getting.

He also suggested that Hiwassee should be receiving 9.08 percent as compared with the 9 percent they are currently receiving, and Young Harris should be receiving 4.04 percent, which would be a significant change from the 9 percent they are currently receiving.

"Those are just projected findings by Mr. Eaves and the county is willing to negotiate those numbers," Commissioner Kendall said.

Eaves' findings and suggestions are based on, "Population, Daytime Population, General Fund Expenditures, Tax Digest, Commercial/Industrial Digest, Tax Levied, and Tax Equity."

"I have appointed a negotiation team of Towns County citizens commissioning them to negotiate and recommend to me an agreement for adoption of a fair and equitable portion of the sales tax to continue rolling back the county portion of property tax bill for all citizens, whether they live inside Young Harris or Hiwassee or live outside the cities in the unincorporated county," Commissioner Kendall said.

Kendall clarified that the law that created LOST tax reads, "that property tax SHALL be rolled back, by the amount of LOST tax, the amount the county and cities receive."

"The county has followed the law and it is reflected on the citizens' county portion of their tax bill the amount of tax rolled back by the amount of revenue received from LOST sales tax," said Kendall.

"The county negotiating team and I have an important responsibility to all citizens and will work tirelessly and negotiate in good faith to come up with an equitable agreement that equally benefits all our citizens without going to mediation or baseball arbitration to be decided by a Superior Court Judge from outside our Judicial Circuit," said Kendall.

"We are prepared to do what we must to get it right for all our citizens which will determine the amount of this property tax that will be rolled back over the next 10 years,

beginning January 1, 2013," stated Kendall.

In the past, LOST distribution in Towns County has been exclusively based on population.

State law, however, requires LOST negotiations to take into account eight criteria, additional factors such as, service delivery, who provides what service such as water, sewer, police, court systems, and EMS; point of sales, where sales tax dollars are generated; daytime population and the value of central business districts, as well as other stated factors.

The law is explicit that population should not be considered as a primary distribution factor, Stencil said.

"Both the county and the cities must be prepared to work together, to openly discuss our differences, and to compromise," Stencil said. "In these important discussions, each government must place the needs of our citizens first."

"We are looking forward to productive negotiations," Young Harris Mayor Andrea Gibby said. "I am positive the commissioner will do what's right for both cities and for all citizens of Towns County." The next meeting will take place Aug. 23rd at the Towns County Health Department in Young Harris at 5:30 p.m.

# Schools ...continued from page 1A

administrators and staff that we have in our schools."

Parent pick-up at the end of the day was a little trying during the first few days of school.

"This year we seemed to have many more parents opting to pick their students up," Williams said. "That increase, coupled with rainy weather, provided us with longer lines and longer wait time in the afternoon parent pick-up than we like.

"Normally the rush diminishes after the first couple of days," she said. "We added more personnel to the afternoon pick up duty to ease the strain."

Williams begins each day at the schools, making sure that each school is ready to open its doors and welcome local students.

"The first few days of school are particularly exciting for me and the students, especially the elementary students," Williams said. "I love to have the opportunity to be in the morning drop-off line at the elementary school during the opening days each year.

"Greeting the parents and students provides me with an opportunity to make introductions that normally just wouldn't happen," she said.

"Walking a new Kin-



It was business as usual on Thursday at Towns County Schools. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

ergarten student to his or her classroom on the first day of school never gets old," Williams said. "Each time they take hold of my hand, they also grab my heart."

Principals at all three schools report a great beginning to the year and expressed their excitement to have school back in session.

Scott Hamilton, Towns County's transportation director, said everything went well with no transportation issues.

"Buses ran their regular routes and kids were picked up and safely transported to their schools," he said.

Some students got off the

beginning the first day of what will be an exciting and important part of the rest of their educational career.

What they have yet to learn is that they will have well-qualified teachers who will do everything they can to make this an easy transition as they mold and challenge their young minds while making learning fun.

They also will learn that they can expect this same transitioning with each new year as they walk boldly into their future at Towns County Schools, whether they be in Kindergarten or students preparing to graduate this school year.

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# Cruiz-In...continued from page 1A

Music Outlaw genre and has a tremendous following where ever he performs.

Most recently he lit up the stage at the Anderson Music Hall during the Georgia Mountain Fair.

Townsend and Waymore's Outlaws left the fans longing for more of his Waylon wailin'.

Townsend was also there to launch his Granddaddy Mimm's Authentic Corn Whiskey.

Free samples were given out and a lot of sipping was taking place.

Granddaddy Mimm's is not available for purchase at this time, but is expected to be on the shelves in Georgia by September.

"Despite the rain, another great turn-out for the Haulin' Mash Bash Kickoff," Hooper said. "It was great to see some of the same people and their cars that have been here all four years for the Cruiz-In.

"At about 6 p.m., I saw that we had no choice but to start parking the cars on the front lawn of the restaurant. I'm glad we did. We filled it up. The local community came out to enjoy the evening," bragged Hooper.

Additional entertainment included Towns County's very own Steven Phillips and Midnight Express.

They are always a crowd pleaser as they perform a good ole boy style of Bluegrass and Country Music with some amazing instruments.

The fans lined up in front of the stage hoping to get just a little better glimpse of their local boys.

The gates opened up at the Fairgrounds on Friday and Saturday with a huge turn out of folks from all over the Southeast.

Folks enjoyed walking through and looking at the huge 'Automotive Midway'



Tommy Townsend and Waymore's Outlaws attract a crowd

where the registered cars were on display for folks to admire. There were also top name parts, automotive vendors, as well as a huge used parts swap meet.

Many classics were on sale at the Car Corral and amazingly very reasonably priced. This event drew thousands of lookers, some just wishing to own one of those beauties and some very serious buyers who were looking for a great deal on an American Classic.

Event Promoter Rakes Parrish said that he was very pleased with the turn-out, especially with all the rain, as literally thousands of people attended the event both Friday and Saturday.

"We had 615 registered cars and this was the best attendance we've had so far," said Parrish. "The weather just didn't seem to be that big of a factor."

There were approximately 30 vendors set up in the Pioneer Village selling hand-made items. Vendors reported that sales were good and, in spite of the increase in the crowd on Saturday, were about the same both days. Even with the rain and threat of thunderstorms, folks showed up to peruse the crafts and look for treasures and souvenirs to take back home

with them.

Dana McKenzie of North Carolina said she was doing Christmas shopping early.

"There's some great finds here," she said. "I hate giving the usual expected gift of money, clothes or jewelry. I like unique gifts and I have found a gold mine here."

The parade of Classics and Muscle cars pulled out on time from the Fairgrounds on Friday evening heading Downtown to the Square for some good old-fashioned street dancing, live music provided by KingFish Blues Revival Band, good food, and the anticipation of just an eventful evening.

The event, however, was a literal wash-out due to a sudden downpour of heavy rain and light, pea-sized hail.

The two-man band made up of Charles Massingale and Bud Thomason continued to play in spite of the rain and the fact that everyone had cleared out. They had been paid to play a gig and they came ready to earn their money, so play they did. They provided a sweet sound of blues and southern rock. If you missed them, you will have a chance to hear them again as they will be performing Aug. 18th at Eagle Fork Vineyards in Hayesville.

Great music could be heard throughout the Fairgrounds. You can't have a Classic Car Show without classic music.

What a great addition to the overall theme of the event.

Special guests included Dennis Gage of Speed TV who was eager to talk cars, hand out flyers, and autograph whatever folks put in front of him. Many folks were very eager to have their picture taken with him and he was very accommodating.

Gage was very personable and made all his many fans feel welcome. "I just enjoy talking about cars with folks when they stop by," said Gage.

He was very humble and did not present a 'star image' as he personally welcomed each person that stopped to chat about cars or just to meet the TV icon. Another special guest was Linda Vaughn who is known to fans as Miss Hurst Golden Shifter.

She was out and highly visible and very readily available to chat with folks as well as allowing them to snap pictures.

This California gal was very much at home here in the mountains of North Georgia.

Parrish expressed his gratitude to the following sponsors for their role in this year's very successful event: the City of Hiwassee, Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds, Towns County Tourism Association, Ramada Inn at Lake Chatuge, Ridges Resort & Marina, Brasstown Valley Resort, Holiday Inn Express, O'Reilly Auto Parts, Jackie Jones Auto Plex, Men on the Move, Turpin's Wrecker Service, and all of Towns County.

"This was our fourth year and it has been a huge success each year and it just keeps growing. We are already looking forward to next year," said Parrish.

# HWRC addresses poor water quality in Chatuge

By Libby Shook  
Towns County Herald  
libby.tcherald@windstream.net



Scarlett Fuller

Are you aware that the ecological health of Lake Chatuge is deteriorating?

Callie Moore, Executive Director of the Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition, "hopes that many of you are aware of the Coalition's efforts to address poor water quality scores in Lake Chatuge as measured by the TVA since 1998."

The HRWC is a local, non-profit organization dedicated to sustaining good water quality in streams, lakes, and rivers that flow into the Hiwassee River. The Coalition works with local property owners, governments, schools, and businesses to recognize and address threats to our water source.

After an intensive study undertaken by the Coalition from fall 2002 to spring 2005, the Lake Chatuge Watershed Action Plan was created in March 2007.

The Action Plan is an active document that all watershed stakeholders can use for facilitating water quality improvements in Lake Chatuge over the next 5-15 years.

Moore and Scarlett Fuller, coordinator for the Lake Chatuge Watershed Action Plan, are working coopera-

activities like applying too much fertilizer to lawns, gardens, golf courses, or crops, and not properly maintaining or repairing septic systems can cause excess nutrients to run-off from the land into adjacent streams, rivers, and ultimately Lake Chatuge.

"Storm water run-off also provides quick avenue for nutrients to find their way into our waterways," said Fuller.

Storm water is the run-off after a rain event from all our "impervious" (hard) surfaces like roof tops, roads, and parking lots. When it rains, the water can not penetrate these hard surfaces and it runs off the land faster and usually directly into a culvert or stream.

"This does not allow for natural absorption through the soil which is nature's way of removing contaminants and preventing them from entering surface waters," Fuller explained.

Animal sources of nutrients can come from the waste of livestock or populations of Canadian geese, according to Fuller.

"Although these critters are cute, they are not native species and their large populations along the shores of Lake Chatuge allow nutrients from their waste to run off into the lake.

"Cattle and other live-

Health Department, and local governments.

Projects will be voluntary, however, "the grant advisory committee will establish high priority areas where nutrients are known to be the highest within the watershed, based on data collected for the Action Plan," said Fuller.

Moore and Fuller hope to provide community awareness regarding the good work that is taking place and gain support in returning Lake Chatuge "back to good ecological health which will also reduce algal blooms and preserve aesthetics in the watershed," said Fuller.

An Algal bloom is a rapid increase or accumulation in the population of algae in an aquatic system.

Their priority is to implement "on the ground" solutions to the water quality issues outlined in the Lake Chatuge Watershed Action Plan.

"The Coalition has a staff of knowledgeable professionals who plan and implement volunteer-powered projects to solve problems before water quality is beyond reasonable recovery," Moore said.

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stock that are allowed direct access to streams also contribute to animal waste that increases nutrient levels in our streams and lake," said Fuller.

What does all this mean and how can you help? It's been a long time in the making, but funds are finally in place to help address water quality issues within the Towns County portion of the 189-square mile Lake Chatuge watershed.

"The Coalition will be using funds to implement the Lake Chatuge Action Plan over the next two years," said Moore. "This funding was secured by Towns County and the Coalition from Georgia's Section 319 Non-point Source Pollution Program and is comprised of both local match and grant funds.

"Our three program areas, outlined in the Action Plan, will focus on projects that will reduce nutrient loading into the Lake Chatuge watershed," said Moore.

Moore was referring to projects like: agricultural BMPs (best management practices); residential and commercial storm water BMPs; and septic tank repairs. Individual projects will be implemented with assistance from partnering entities such as the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Towns County

# Georgia Boot Reunion

A reunion for all Georgia Boot Employees and families will be held Aug. 25 at the Senior Center Pavilion, Meeks Park, Blairsville at 11 a.m. Bring a covered dish. Meat and paper products will be furnished. For details call (706) 745-6015, (706) 896-1654, or (706) 897-6952.