

Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

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Wednesday, January 9, 2013

Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thu: Rain	61 53
Fri: Rain	63 52
Sat: Clouds	68 52
Sun: Rain	64 45
Mon: Rain	54 38
Tue: Rain	51 38
Wed: Rain	51 29



Upstream Elevation Predicted 01/09/13	
Lake Chatuge	1917.94
Lake Nottely	1761.21
Blue Ridge	1673.14

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Sports Page 8

Ninth District has Emergency Funds Available for Agencies

Public or private voluntary agencies (not individuals) interested in applying for Emergency Food and Shelter Program funds must submit a request to: Brenda Dalin, Ninth District Opportunity, Inc., P.O. Drawer L, Gainesville, GA, 30501. The deadline to submit a request is January 14, 2013. See page 5

Historical Society meeting

TOWNS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Be sure to mark your calendar to come to the next Towns County Historical Society meeting to hear Hiawasse resident Bruce Sims talk about how the town looked when he was growing up. We will be meeting in the new year at the newly completed Senior Center on Hwy. 76 between Banister's and the Rec. Dept. at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 14th. Come early and enjoy light refreshments and get a good seat. See page 7

Towns County Basketball

Friday, January 11 vs. Athens Christian 7:00 p.m.
Sat., January 12 @ Athens Academy 6:00 p.m.

Towns County Wrestling

Friday, January 11 @ Hayesville, NC 5:00 p.m.

Recreation facility coming along

By Libby Shook
Towns County Herald
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Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall's vision of a new recreation facility for Towns County is getting closer to becoming a reality.

Friday, Jan. 4th, the R.W. Allen Construction team held a meeting in the construction site trailer at Foster Memorial Park to go over the progress of the facility and to discuss the proposed architectural plans.

The meeting was made up of Kendall, Marty Roberts, Architect Anthony Turpin, Project Superintendent Robin Akins, Project Administrator Mark Day, Project Manager Hal Hardin, and Consulting Engineer David Lovvorn.

Day noted that he comes up to the site once a week just to check on how the project is going and to make himself available to the crew.

"We already have several project items completed including in-ground utility rough in, elevator shaft, low roof area



Commissioner Bill Kendall gets a close up view of construction of the county's new recreation facility. Photo/Libby Shook

concrete slab, metal building structure, low roof steel structure, and the walking track framing," said Day.

"We are slightly behind schedule due to inclement weather. We had to shut down due to cold temperatures and the rain, but we will be back on schedule shortly," said Day.

Water is now in to the corner of the building and flows for two fire hydrants are on the road.

Rain has played a key role in delays in this process as well.

See Foster Park, page 9

Birdwatching on Lake Chatuge



Birdwatching is catching on in Towns County. The winter months attract dozens of bird species to Towns County and beautiful Lake Chatuge's shoreline.

By Libby Shook
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The Hiawasse River Watershed Coalition hosted its Fifth Annual Lake Chatuge Winter Bird Watch on Saturday, Jan. 5th, as they gathered at Mary's Southern Grill to put some hot food in their stomachs before heading out.

The nine participants left the restaurant and carpooled

as they braved the frigid temperatures to check out Towns County's feathered friends living around Lake Chatuge during the winter months.

"Most people are surprised to see all the unique waterfowl that spend the winter on our lakes," said outing leader and Young Harris College Professor Brenda Hull.

The participants were not disappointed during their outing this year either.

According to Coalition Executive Director Callie Moore, "Twenty species of birds were spotted, including the common loon, hooded merganser, bufflehead and the rare ruddy duck; other species of birds included gulls, bluebirds, a belted kingfisher, and an American kestrel.

"The group also saw several Eastern meadowlarks

See Fowl, page 9

Clubhouse donated to Friendship

By Libby Shook
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As 2012 was coming to a close, the Friendship Community Club and several members of Friendship Baptist Church met at the Towns County Courthouse for a deed gifting ceremony and title transfer of the Community Club clubhouse to the church.

The deed was signed by the Community Club's Board of Directors and recorded in the Towns County public records.

A brief ceremony was held to pass the recorded deed and the keys of the clubhouse to Steven Phillips, representative of the church and vice president of the Community Club.

Other club board members present included treasurer Ben Lilly, secretary Jan Kowalsky, immediate Past President Doug Shook, hospitality chair Jonni Marie Shook, and membership chair Ellen Pease.



Friendship Community Club members deeded the Community Clubhouse over to Friendship Baptist Church recently.

According to Kowalsky, last year the Community Club decided that it was no longer feasible to continue supporting its ranch-style building on U.S. Highway 76.

The property was donated years ago by Community

Club member R.E. Robertson, Sr.

"We discussed selling the property at one or more of our previous board meetings," said Lilly.

She explained that sev-

See Clubhouse, page 9

Collins rolls up his sleeves, already at work

By Charles Duncan
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It didn't take 9th District Congressman Doug Collins long to get his feet wet in Washington, D.C.

Just minutes after being sworn in as Georgia's newest Congressman, Collins, a Gainesville Republican, co-sponsored two balanced budget amendments.

Sponsored by Congressman Bob Goodlatte (R-VA), both pieces of legislation will ensure the federal government is held responsible for balancing its budget through a Constitutional amendment.



U.S. Rep. Doug Collins

The amendments prohibit Congress from spending more than it receives during the fiscal year.

"It's not a hard concept to understand, we simply can-

not continue to spend money we do not have," said Collins. "Actively supporting a balanced budget amendment is one of the best ways to move our country toward fiscal stability. If American families and business are required to balance their checkbooks, why should the federal government be any different?"

"I campaigned on creating a better future for my children and the rest of the youth in the 9th District, and that won't change during my time serving this great area regardless of what leaders in Congress may want. I am looking forward to

See Collins page 9

Sen. Wilkinson comes to town on Friday

By Charles Duncan
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Towns County's state senator is coming to town to talk with locals about the upcoming session of the Georgia General Assembly.

State Sen. John Wilkinson, (R-Toccoa), who represents Towns County in the 50th Senate District, will be at Mary's Southern Grill, 1615, Highway 17 North, in Tower Plaza at 8 a.m. on Friday, Sam Fullerton, co-founder of the Mountain Movers and Shakers said.

Wilkinson will be speaking to a conservative group of men and women that make up the group that reaches out to serve its community's many needs and attempts to raise voter interest and political awareness.

Wilkinson is at the start of his first full term as District 50 senator.

A Toccoa Republican, Wilkinson is a member of the Georgia State Senate committees that include Agriculture and Consumer Affairs, Economic Development, Education and Youth, and Health and Human Services.

Wilkinson was elected in December 2011 to fill the vacancy created when State Sen. Jim Butterworth resigned from his post to accept an appointment as Adjutant General of the Georgia National Guard.

Wilkinson is very familiar and knowledgeable in the field of education having served 22 years as the executive secretary of the Georgia Future Farmers of America at the Georgia Department of Education and almost four years as program manager in agriculture education at the state Department of Education.

As executive secretary of Georgia's FFA, Wilkinson worked 30 years preparing young leaders to grow jobs in



State Sen. John Wilkinson

Georgia. Today, Sen. Wilkinson promotes legislation that creates a business friendly environment to bring good jobs to Senate District 50.

In other business, the Movers and Shakers will hear from Towns County High School student Adam Penland, a contestant in the State Public Speaking Contest being held Jan. 15.

Penland will present his speech to the group on Friday morning.

The group also will meet Sabrina Garrett from Towns County High School. Garrett, Towns County's STAR Teacher in 2011, has been working with Penland, preparing him for his contest quest.

In other news, the "Welcome to Towns County" sign at the intersection Georgia 515 and Georgia 75 has been completed.

Fullerton says thanks to Shane Haney for his hard work getting the sign up and ready.

This spring, the Movers and Shakers will complete the landscaping at that site, and the other sign coming into Towns from Union County on Georgia 515.

For more details about Mountain Movers and Shakers, contact Fullerton at (706) 994-4658.

Commissioner Kendall adopts 2013 county budget

By Libby Shook
Towns County Herald
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Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall held a special called meeting on Monday, Dec. 31st, for the purpose of adopting the 2013 Fiscal County Budget of \$9,386,321 which reflects no increase from the 2012 budget.

This was an open meeting and the public was invited to attend.

This was an exciting way to start off the new year for Towns County as Kendall announced, "I am pleased to be able to pass on to the taxpayers of Towns County a \$275,050 tax cut for a 6.32 tax decrease.

"This comes at a time when Towns County families and families statewide are having to watch spending in order to balance their budgets," said Kendall.

"We are glad to be able to do this for our citizens when federal and state governments nationwide are struggling with budget shortfalls," said Kendall.

"We are adopting the budget verbatim as it was advertised in the newspaper," said Kendall. The budget includes \$1.137 million for the Towns County Sheriff's Office, a little more than \$1 million for Towns County Ambulance Service, \$940,300 to the Towns County Road Department, and \$921,700 for the Towns County Jail.

Other sizable allotments provided for in the budget include \$692,260 for County Administration, \$44,650 for Health and Human Services, \$440,900 for Public Safety, \$380,000 for the Towns County Transfer Station, \$370,443 for Parks Development, \$370,000 for the Towns County Fire Department, and \$294,000 for the County Recreation Department.

Commissioner Kendall had previously promised county taxpayers that there would be no increase in county millage rate.

He kept his word. Commissioner Kendall said that the county would use spending controls and operating reserves to meet any



Commissioner Bill Kendall

revenue shortfall for the 2013 budget.

In this time of economic recession, many counties dealing with budget shortfalls are passing that burden along to taxpayers. Commissioner Kendall is committed to holding true to his word in making sure that Towns County residents' best interests are a number one priority in budget planning and expenditures.

A glance at the state millage rate lists show that Towns County has the lowest combined millage rate in the state of Georgia.

The county/school board combined millage rate is almost 8 mills lower than its nearest competitor, Rabun County.

The combined millage rate for Towns County is 11.760 mills, Rabun County ranks second with 17.059 mills, state records show.

Putnum County is third with a combined millage rate of 17.150 mills, Union County is fourth with a combined millage rate of 17.208 mills and Fannin County is fifth with a combined millage rate of 18.060 mills.

Commissioner Kendall has worked studiously to keep county spending levels at a minimum during his tenure in office.

He's stayed on top of the county budget issues and made sure county taxpayers aren't suffering from excessive tax burdens during today's economic hardships.

The 2013 County Budget reflects that hard work and leadership in an effort to survive today's economic fiscal crisis.

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