

Indicted...from Page 1

with an uncle and cousins also serving in the law enforcement profession, including Union

County sheriff's Lt. Chad Deyton, and Union County sheriff's Deputy Adam Deyton.

County...from Page 1

The number of mills needed to maintain and operate county government was actually 7.416, but Commissioner Kendall arrived at the 5.535 rate by anticipating 1.881 mills coming from the 1 percent local option sales tax, or LOST.

Commissioner Kendall also presented the tentative county general budget for the 2015 fiscal year, which will begin Jan. 1 and run through Dec. 31, 2015.

The budget for 2015 reflects general fund expenditures of \$9,579,733, which is \$223,722 below the 2014 budget, or down 2.28 percent.

Included in the 2014 expenditures, however, is a watershed grant that will not be renewed for 2015, making the actual budget cut between 2014 and 2015 \$122,722. This translates into a budget for 2015 that will be 1.25 percent lower than in 2014.

And according to the tentative budget, "2014 expenditures are on track to come under budget \$250,000, or 2.5 percent without any unforeseen emergencies."

The county will be implementing a 25-cent raise for all county employees, as well as a 1.5 percent increase to departments for which the county is responsible for paying utilities.

One way Commissioner Kendall is able to give people raises is by supplementing the budget with savings, coupled with waiting until July of 2015 to start the pay increases.

Another cost-cutting measure comes in the way of a pilot juvenile court program.

According to a statement released by Commissioner Kendall, a "federal judge ruled in 2013 that each child (referred to court by Dept. of Family & Children Services) and his/her parents must be represented by separate attorneys and county taxpayers must pay for the cost of the legal counsel for all."

Further, Commissioner Kendall demonstrated the actual monetary impact of this ruling on taxpayers by highlighting budgetary information for the year preceding this judgment and the years since.

In 2012, Towns County's Juvenile Court budget was \$6,000. The budget remained the same in 2013, but the court wound up spending \$26,000 "due to the high costs of the legal fees involved in these cases because of the new ruling."

So, in 2014, the budget was increased to \$26,000, but projected costs are \$80,000 for the year.

"In 2015, the Juvenile Court budget will be set at \$55,000," said Commissioner Kendall's office in the statement. "Judge Murphy Miller has approved Commissioner Kendall's request to start a trial pilot program projected to save taxpayers approximately \$25,000 per year. The pilot project will consist of Judge Miller appointing a panel of retired lawyers and judges to select four attorneys to be paid by contract instead of by the hour."

Commissioner Kendall is set to adopt the 2015 tentative budget on Thursday, Nov. 20, at the next regular county meeting at 5:30 p.m.

Early...from Page 1

are in and counted, and total it and have the totals on the door," said Nichols. "We know nothing until after 7 on Election Day."

Preparation for elections is nearly a year-round affair.

"This is state and federal, most of it now, but if you have a local, you have to start off with qualifying your candidates first, and that happens a month or so before your primary starts," said Nichols. "We had a primary, we went through that. We had a runoff. We'll have the election in November, and if there is a runoff, it'll be January the 6th, 2015. So actually, we have had very little window from the time we started in the spring and come all the way around over into next year."

And while everything is electronic now and Towns County never dealt with hanging chads, having cast straight paper ballots at the time, it's still a good idea to get out ahead of the crowds.

"You might be sick or out of town, so just go ahead and get it done," said Young Harris resident Emily Appling, who went ahead and voted last week. "I like to do it early just in case, and to avoid the lines."

Hiawassee resident John Denton, who also voted early, echoed Appling's sentiments.

"Voting early is easier," said Denton. "It may be raining, pouring, snow - who knows. They've been trying to get retirees out here since the '50s, and now we've got them. Fortunately, there's early voting and good hospitals."

Some of the larger races this year include deciding between Republican Candidate David Perdue, Democratic Candidate Michelle Nunn and Libertarian Candidate Amanda Swafford for U.S. Senate; and Gov. Nathan Deal, Democratic Candidate Jason Carter and Libertarian Andrew Hunt for Governor of Georgia.

Other races include the offices of lieutenant governor, secretary of state, attorney general, commissioner of agriculture, commissioner of insurance, state school superintendent, commissioner of labor and public service commissioner.

Of course, voters may write in anyone of their choosing for each of these offices, but the important part is to show up and make a decision.

"Get out and vote early," said Nichols. "

Open...from Page 1

endum that allocated \$100,000 toward a local match incentive to secure the \$900,000 state grant to fund the rest of the renovation. He pointed out that 9 out of 10 people voted for the SPLOST, remarking on how well it spoke for the voters of the county.

"The Towns County Library Board worked hard on this," said Commissioner Kendall. "Chad Winkler's construction company did a great job. And Debbie Phillips was there, and one of them told some of our folks that, 'If Debbie wasn't there for every nail that we started, she was there when we finished driving it.'"

Towns County's Friends of the Library played an instrumental role in making sure the library transitioned smoothly between the old library and the temporary library in the former Senior Center, there and back again.

"And I saved the last for the best, Donna Howell, our regional director for the three-county Mountain Regional Library Board," said Commissioner Kendall. "Donna over the years has done a superb job working with these fellows in Atlanta, all the way up to the library board and the Friends of the Library - Donna, we just appreciate everything you've



done for us." The crowd gave Howell, who is retiring this year, a big round of applause for all of her hard work.

"I guess about six years ago, not long after I was elected, I first got to meet Donna Howell," said House District 8 State Rep. Stephen Allison. "And she told me, 'I have an adventure for you, and that is we need to remodel three aging libraries in your district over the next few years.' Little did I know that a lot of my political legacy would be wrapped around libraries."

Rep. Allison called that legacy "a blessing," and thanked both Phillips and Commissioner Kendall for their contributions in making the day possible.

Just before Rep. Allison

called on District 50 State Sen. John Wilkinson to speak, he lauded the senator's zealous pursuit of championing libraries in his district.

"I didn't carry Towns County, so I had to do something," said Sen. Wilkinson from the crowd, prompting laughter in the already high-spirited gathering.

"To me, in this project, there are a lot of winners and no losers," said Sen. Wilkinson. "Of course, ultimately, the winners are the citizens of Towns County who pay taxes."

Just before the ribbon cutting led by Towns County Chamber of Commerce President Candace Lee, Howell spoke on the meaning of the day.

"Today, we dedicate, or

rededicate, the Towns County Public Library on this 18th day of October, 2014, to the service of the citizens of Towns County," said Howell. "We thank you all for your support, and we hope you enjoy your new library."

Hiawassee Mayor Barbara Mathis, Towns County Library Board Chair Jounida Bradley, Rep. Allison, Sen. Wilkinson, Howell, Phillips, Shirley Stallings, Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris and Commissioner Kendall, along with the residents of the county, all filed into the building to enjoy the new space.

Guests marveled at the modern design of the interior, with its nice wood flooring, total LED lighting, roomy yet comfortable screened-in porch and brand new children and teen area.

A special plaque in the children's area read: "Towns County Public Library Youth Area Furnished in Loving Memory of Emory and Irene Coker Brown."

Those who attended the Open House seemed genuinely pleased with their new library, and the atmosphere was one of community and togetherness.

The Towns County Public Library opened its doors for normal operating hours Monday.

Nunn...from Page 1

to do is get some people from Blairsville and Clayton and White County involved in it, too," said Jones. "We're going to invite them if they want to come."

The Meet and Greet comes at a good time, as early voting is in full swing. The event could prove fortuitous for Michelle Nunn in the mountain counties, as attention from Democrats is seemingly trending upward in the area.

"We seem to be getting more (attention) this year than we have before," said Jones. "Normally, we're a small county, and they don't pay much attention to us. This year, we've gotten quite a bit of support up in this area - the 9th District has gotten quite a lot of support. Michelle's been over to Blairsville, I think, a couple

of times - I think she's been to Fannin County."

Jones, with fellow Democrat Jim Powell, has been putting out signs in support of Nunn as well as David Vogel, who is running for the 9th District Congressional seat.

"Dr. Vogel did his bicycle ride - he rode through every county in the 9th District, all the way back to Athens," said Jones. "And we seem to be getting some support for him, too. He's new to politics in Georgia."

"I think what's happening, a lot of people are tired of what's going on in Congress, and the people who are up there don't seem to want to talk to each other and do anything," said Jones.

Jones believes that change is necessary, and Democrats

Nunn and Vogel offer a good chance of that right now.

But what of the prospects of the Democratic Party in Georgia, a state which has seen overwhelming support for the Republican Party for many years now?

"I think they are very good, and much better than they have been," said Jones. "It's going to be a tight race, and what it's going to depend on is how many people come out to vote. If we can get the people that we have registered to turn out and vote, I think we could get the state back blue again, as far as governor and senator goes, and maybe some of the other state offices, too."

It's still too early to tell who the front-runners are. One weakness in polling data as it is currently collected, Jones

points out, is that it omits a large number of an important demographic.

"They keep getting polls all the time, and these polls are close," said Jones. "But how many polling people do you have call you on your cellphone? The young people, they don't poll them, because they now have all got cellphones - a lot of them don't even have a landline."

Regardless where one stands, Jones urges all eligible residents of Towns County to do one thing.

"Get out and vote," said Jones. "Whether you vote for our party or vote for your party - vote. It's your right to vote, and you need to exercise that right. And if everybody did it, we'd have a much better government."

Fiddle...from Page 1

King title.

DeJarnette faced off against Laughlin, a wiry veteran of the fiddle to determine who would wear the 2014 Fiddle Crown.

Earlier, Laughlin claimed the title of Senior Fiddler and DeJarnette had claimed Junior Fiddler. Last year's Senior Fiddler Chuck Nation finished second behind Laughlin.

As the judges listened to both DeJarnette and Laughlin, and took score, they arrived at a final decision once the music had ceased.

If the Devil had made it down to the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds on Saturday,



Tim Laughlin

he certainly would have found himself without a chance against the competition in this year's event.

As the judges rose from their seats and handed their final call to Emcee Barry Palmer, it was announced that

DeJarnette, a 17-year-old from Snellville, was once again, the best they'd ever seen.

Many of the musicians at this event knew their opponents, even playing with them in the other's accompaniment. Instruments were borrowed and used again in each other's songs as if sharing the honors in the end.

While it was a serious championship, good spirits were in abundance.

As for DeJarnette, her musical roots run deep. She credits her parents with encouraging her to feel out her musical talents.

"My parents kept the music all around," she said.

In other events, Rob

Pearcy, and Brian Stephens took home the majority of the hardware.

Pearcy, of Smyrna, Tenn., claimed first place in harmonica, dulcimer, Dobro, and Old Time Banjo.

Stephens, of Monroe, claimed first place in finger-style guitar, banjo, mandolin, and second place in flatpick guitar behind Maryville, Tenn.'s Matthew Taylor.

Stephens' Bluegrass band, Lost Horizons, finished second to Bogart's Archer Grass.

Other winners included Ivy Phillips, of Chappansboro, Tenn., who claimed the state title of Beginning Fiddler, and also, a state title in Buck Dancing.

Crystal Gayle returns to Fall Festival

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Festivities may be over, but memories from this year's Fall Festival at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds will surely last until next go-round.

Tremendous musical talent graced the stage during the too-short, nine-day event. From Country Music and Bluegrass legend Ricky Skaggs to the multi-Grammy nominated Dailey & Vincent, there was something for everyone throughout the festival.

Famed Country Music entertainer Crystal Gayle regaled audiences Thursday dressed all in black, her sable hair flowing down her back to her ankles.

Festival Emcee and Georgia Mountain Fair Band Member Barry Palmer had a little fun with Gayle when explaining the rules of the venue.

"If you've got a cowboy hat on, you need to take it off, put it in the seat next to you or put it in your lap, because the little lady behind you is going to say, 'I want to see just how long Crystal Gayle's hair really is, and I can't see anything, you've got a big cowboy hat on,'" said Palmer.

Gayle's band performed a huge instrumental welcome, with "Blue Jay" Patton finessing only the finest of notes from his saxophone.

The audience lit up when Gayle at last took the stage, starting off with *Half the Way*, followed shortly by Country Music classic *Green Door*.

"It's always great to be



Country music legend Crystal Gayle sings a duet with Blue Jay Patton on Thursday at the Fall Festival. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

here at the Georgia Mountain Fair," said Gayle. "This is such a beautiful place, and it was a beautiful day."

She dedicated the next song "for all the friends I've made through the years, as well as all the new ones I'm making," before giving a rousing rendition of *Those Were the Days*.

Gayle also sang several duets featuring her sister Peggy Sue Webb, and teamed up with Patton to sing his original tune entitled *There's a Rainbow Around the Corner*.

Peggy Sue and Gayle paired up to deliver their other sister's famous hit, "Coal Miner's Daughter," and the crowd delighted to hear Gayle's own *Don't It Make My Brown Eyes*

Blue.

The atmosphere was lively and exciting, with a healthy dose of audience interaction and comedic relief in interchanges between Gayle and Peggy Sue about the latter's husband.

Gayle performed a menagerie of classic Country songs, espousing that "I just love those older songs - they don't write them like they used to."

She received a standing ovation at the end of the show, at which point she and sister Peggy Sue took a bow before departing to thunderous applause.

To kick the whole show off, however, Aaron Thistle of Blue Ridge and Dave

Campbell of Snellville took to the stage before Gayle with a demonstration of their On the Edge 2-Wheel Action Show, highlighting the extreme skill and trust involved in doing what they do, in order to give people a preview of their show toward the front of the fairgrounds.

Thistle, who practices the sport of motorcycle trials, got flat on his back and allowed Campbell, who specializes in bicycle trials, to hop around his various body parts while balanced on one wheel the entire time.

"Because this is not BMX and it's not freestyle Motocross, we're kind of like the black sheep of the sports world, almost," said Campbell. "People don't really know what the sport of trials is - it's really about using technique to get over obstacles rather than hitting ramps at super high speeds."

Following this amazing feat of trust and discipline, the Steve Jordan Band of Andrews, NC, went on, and rocked the packed crowd as if George Strait himself had appeared.

"George Strait's one of my favorite singers," said Jordan after performing several industry standards. "We're going to do another one here if I can catch my breath."

Merle Haggard felt the love, too, as the band played *Silver Wings*.

The Steve Jordan band was gracious and played a terrific Country Music set, setting the mood and stage perfectly for Gayle Thursday night.

"If we had to move anywhere in the United States, Hiawassee, Ga., is where we'd move," said Jordan.

TVA hosts Parcel 52 Public hearing

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Tennessee Valley Authority has formally invited the public to attend and submit public comment at a meeting at Hiawassee City Hall on Tuesday, Oct. 28, from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

"TVA is considering a request by the City of Hiawassee for a 30-year public recreation easement to develop about 6.1 acres of land for a public park that would include walking trails, picnic tables, restrooms, a children's playground, a fishing pier, and a boat-launching ramp with paved parking for vehicles and boat trailers," according to a statement issued by TVA.

"Mayor Mathis has wanted a Mayor's Park ever since she became mayor," said City Manager Rick Stancil. "We were limited, because within the city, there's not that much property that would be a suitable size in order to have a park. So, we turned to TVA, and TVA's been very good to us over the years."

TVA, founded by Congress in 1933, is a U.S. government-owned corporation that sells power to produce revenue instead of relying on tax dollars. TVA aids states within its region with various concerns, and the mandate concerning the City of Hiawassee is recreational in nature.

"TVA is interested in receiving comments regarding the action's potential to affect the environment or historic

properties, and to identify any other issues associated with this request," according to the TVA statement. "Any comments received, including names and addresses, will become part of the administrative record and will be available for public inspection."

The 30-year easement is renewable, and partnerships with TVA and DNR would allow Hiawassee to spend as little taxpayer money as possible developing the park. Current estimates for costs to be incurred by the city are around \$125,000, which will come from six-year SPLOST funds approved by county voters in 2011.

As it stands, the Mayor's Park project is looking to come in three phases: one, DNR to fund and build parking, boat launch and boat dock; two, construction of the actual Mayor's Park; and three, somewhere down the line, connecting Parcel 52 via a floating sidewalk of sorts to Parcel 51, which is another piece of property just across the land bridge on which the City of Hiawassee has an easement as well.

"DNR hopefully could actually begin work in 2015 if we can get our lease with TVA this year and sublease with them," said Stancil. "Then, the timing may work out, budget may work out, that they could actually start turning ground in 2015."

For more information, residents can attend the Oct. 28 meeting and/or contact Keri Chartrand at 865-632-1308 or kjohnson@tva.gov.