

Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

www.townscountyherald.net

Your Hometown Newspaper Since 1928

50 Cents

Publication Number 635540 Volume 85 Number 19

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thu: Clouds 57 44
Fri: Rain 61 50
Sat: Clouds 66 37
Sun: Clouds 70 41
Mon: Clouds 71 46
Tue: Clouds 71 49
Wed: Clouds 71 50



Upstream Elevation Predicted 03/26/14
Lake Chatuge 1,919.99
Lake Nottely 1,765.71
Blue Ridge 1,678.10

INDEX 2 Sections, 20 Pages

Arrests2A
Church/Obits.....5A,6A
Classifieds.....2B
Editorial.....4A
Letters.....4A
Legals3B

SPORTS Page 8A



**Family FUN
Airport Awareness
Day • March 29**

See page 9A



**Food
Distribution**

**Towns County
Food Panty
Tues. April 1st
2-5 PM**

See Page 9A

**Energy
Assistance
is STILL
AVAILABLE**

see page 6A

**T-Ball and
Farm League
Registration
at Rec center**

see page 8A



BASEBALL:

**Tues Mar 25 @ Athens Academy
5 PM
Thurs Mar 27 vs. Athens Academy
5 PM
Fri Mar 28 vs. Pinecrest
5 PM**

SOCCER:

**Tues Mar 25 vs. Lakeview
5 & 7 PM
Fri Mar 28 vs. Providence
5 & 7 PM
Sat Mar 29 vs. George Walton
1 & 3 PM**

Robinson named STAR Student

By Charles Duncan
Towns County Herald
cduncan.tch@windstream.net

Faithe Robinson has added another notch to her Towns County High School resume.

The senior is the 2014 STAR Student for Towns County High School.

Robinson earned the award for being the senior achieving the highest SAT score at TCHS.

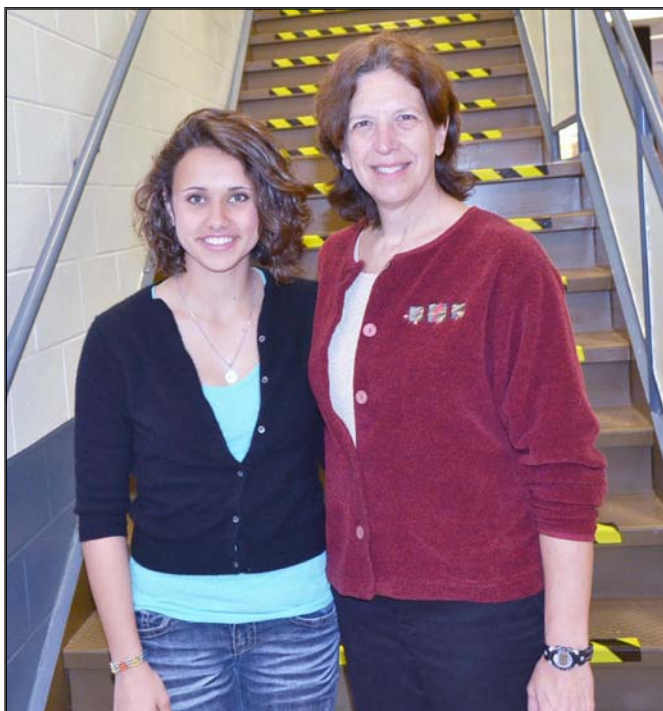
She selected Lynn Swanson as her STAR Teacher.

"We are so proud to have had Faithe be a part of Towns County Schools," TCHS Principal Jonathan Gibson said. "She truly is a gifted student-athlete and always makes Towns County proud."

Robinson is on her way to Lynchburg, VA in the fall after signing with Liberty University on Feb. 20 to take her soccer game to the next level.

Robinson has started all four years at Towns County High School where she scored 61 goals in three seasons, and entering her senior season, she has led the team in scoring for two of her three years.

"You can say a lot of things about Faithe, but one thing you can not say about her is, 'she does not work hard,'" Lady Indians' Head Coach Peter Byrne said. "She is the hardest worker that we have



Faithe Robinson, left, and Lynn Swanson, pose outside the Towns County Schools' Media Center on Monday. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

on our team, and she is a much different player than she was three years ago. She is a much better player this year than she was last year because she has worked each and every year to get better, and you have got to commend her for that."

Robinson said that she narrowed her decision to three schools with nearby Young Harris making it into her final two.

"Young Harris was definitely in the running and that was probably my most prominent option, but other than that, I visited Charleston Southern University and other schools in the Southeast, but those were the three that stood out," she said.

She plans to major in

See Robinson, Page 10A

Good news at County Commission meeting

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The regular monthly Towns County Commission meeting on Thursday was full of good news, thanks in large part to recent Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax efforts.

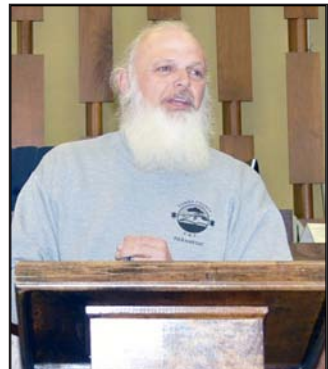
After Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall accepted the new Debris Management Plan and opted to renew the Hazard Mitigation Plan, the county received an update on the growth that recent SPLOST money has achieved.

Towns County EMS Director Ricky Mathis presented two new plans that have been produced in the wake of recent natural disasters.

The first was the Debris Management Plan, which consists of how Towns County will handle its debris in the event of a disaster situation.

Mathis called it a "very conclusive plan," and stressed that it took a lot of work and cooperation to create.

"This was by no means put together by only me," he said. "There were representatives from Towns County Fire & Rescue, 911, law enforcement, county building inspection,



Ricky Mathis

tors, just a different variety of people."

In addition to detailing the means by which Towns County will dispose of debris, the Debris Management Plan comes with federal money attached.

With this plan in place, if the federal government, for any reason, declares Towns County a disaster area, it will reimburse Towns an additional 5 percent for damages.

Commissioner Kendall made a resolution to adopt the plan.

Next up on the agenda was the renewal of the Towns County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation plan.

This plan is to be re-

See Commission, Page 10A

TCES' Walker takes District TOTY award



Lindsey Walker, the VFW Garrett-Owenby Post 7807 Teacher of the Year at Towns County Elementary School, is now the District VFW Teacher of the Year. Photo/ Lowell Nicholson

Towns County Herald
News Special

School VFW Teacher of the Year.

Congratulations to Towns County Elementary School teacher Lindsey Walker on her recognition as the District VFW Teacher of the Year.

Walker was recognized earlier in the school year as the Towns County Elementary

This honor puts Walker in the running for the State VFW Teacher of the Year.

Her nomination makes her a strong candidate for State VFW Teacher of the Year.

Walker represents Towns County Elementary School well and does an outstanding job in the classroom.

Sen. Wilkinson updates the final days of State Senate

By Sen. John Wilkinson
Towns County Herald
News Special

Atlanta - The 2014 legislative session officially came to an end on Thursday, March 20, as the Senate adjourned Sine Die.

The term "Sine Die" is Latin for "without assigning a day for a further meeting or hearing."

Therefore, when the gavel came down on Thursday night, the General Assembly adjourned until January 2015 and wrapped up the 40-day session.

Legislators and staff remained busy working until the midnight cut-off time to deliberate over 50 pieces of legislation.

On Tuesday, March 18, members of the Senate and the House came to a compromise during a conference committee on the \$20.8 billion Fiscal Year '15 budget.

The budget encompasses state spending from July 1, through June 30, 2015 and is a 4.6 percent increase from last year's budget.

It is a vast responsibility of legislators to construct the budget, a point of pride for our state as we are mandated to pass a balanced budget, unlike the federal level.

After spending countless hours in Appropriations meetings, the General Assembly carefully analyzes each line item to ensure each cent is spent responsibly.

The FY '15 budget allocates \$916 million of the new revenue for education expenses that will help finance enrollment growth, disseminate more funds to local school systems, and increase opportunities for



Sen. John Wilkinson

technical education.

A total of \$314.3 million funds the Quality Basic Education Program to offset the austerity reduction in order to provide local educational authorities the flexibility to eliminate teacher furlough days, increase instructional days, and increase teacher salaries.

The budget allocates a total of \$10 million towards Low Interest Loans for Technical Colleges to assist students with the affordability of a technical college education.

An additional \$7.3 million is established for the Zell Miller Grant to provide full tuition assistance for Technical College System students maintaining a 3.5 or higher grade point average.

The budget also adds \$500,000 to develop pilot programs for College and Career Academies or other dual enrollment high school students that will establish programs which

See Wilkinson, Page 10A

TOWNS COUNTY HERALD



One birthday at a time beats cancer

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Cancer affects millions of Americans each year, often leaving individuals and families with scars both physical and emotional.

At the forefront of the struggle against cancer is the American Cancer Society, which makes it its mission to "celebrate more birthdays."

The American Cancer Society is present in Towns County, which is home to nearly 100 registered cancer survivors.

Thursday, at McConnell Memorial Baptist Church, there was a celebration of survival.

The American Cancer Society hosted the Annual Survivors' Reception as it seeks to be active in communities in order to give survivors and caregivers a sense of community.

Every year, it puts on a dinner to honor the survivors and caregivers.

This year, Sherry Parramore, operations secretary for Blue Ridge Mountain EMC, was able to host the dinner at the McConnell Memorial Baptist Church with food provided by the local Georgia Mountain Restaurant.



McConnell Memorial Baptist Church was packed Thursday evening as the Annual Relay for Life Survivor Celebration took place. Photo/ Lowell Nicholson

"We want to put Towns County on the map as far as the American Cancer Society is concerned, because you know what? We are important," Parramore said.

The dinner featured live singing by none other than

Elvis (Roy Perren) and a door prize giveaway.

Everyone received something, since, in a real sense, this was a birthday celebration.

See Survivor, Page 10A

Warrior Hike stops in Towns County

By Wayne Roshaven
Towns County Herald
News Special

On Saturday, March 22, local veterans' organizations hosted a group of Appalachian Trail hikers.

The Unicoi Detachment of the Marine Corps League, VFW Garrett-Owenby Post 7807, American Legion Post 23 and Sons of the American Legion Post 23, provided lodging and dinner for 11 veterans who are "walking off the war" by hiking the Trail.

The dinner, held at Daniel's Steakhouse, was well attended.

In 2012, U.S. Marine Captains Sean Gobin and Mark Silvers, who had recently returned from deployment in Iraq and Afghanistan, decided to hike the Appalachian Trail to raise awareness of the plight of veterans who had suffered am-



Veterans "walking off the war" came to Hiawassee last week. Photo/ Lowell Nicholson

putation of limbs as a result of wounds received in combat.

They approached veterans' organizations in locations

along the Trail to raise funds to provide adaptive vehicle for

See Warrior, Page 10A

Kendall honored with state library award

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

There probably isn't a lot that can take Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall by surprise anymore.

However, he received some unexpected, and pleasant news at the Towns County Commissioner's meeting on Thursday.

For the final item on the Thursday Commission meeting agenda, Mountain Regional

See Award, Page 10A



Commissioner Kendall gets a surprise at Thursday's meeting. He's now the Friends of Georgia's Libraries "Best Friend" award recipient. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Survivor...from Page 1A

Of course, Parramore wasn't able to do it alone.

She said that LaRanda Mauldin was instrumental in making the dinner a reality, as well as all the sponsors who donated.

She also gave a special mention to Girl Scout troop 11501, which made all the centerpieces.

Parramore and the others who put in the time and effort to throw this dinner are working to fight cancer through fellowship, celebration, and community.

"All we want to do is grow it, because this is a time to honor the caregivers and survivors for their fight with cancer, because they fought the ultimate battle," she said. "Through the American Cancer Society, we fight the battle with them and try to help."

"We are so proud to celebrate all your birthdays, and it's on our agenda to keep on celebrating, so we're going to have events coming up," Parramore told the dinner guests.



Door prizes were abundant at Thursday's Survivor Celebration. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Next on the agenda is a Relay for Life bass tournament on May 10, at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds' boat ramp, and a relay scheduled for May 14th at Towns County Schools.

Relay for Life is in full swing as fundraising efforts are in go mode for 2014.

The American Cancer Society needs your help. Numerous persons have been impacted by cancer in Towns

County.

The Towns County Relay for Life efforts wants to raise money to fight back against a disease that has already taken so much.

The effort is calling out businesses, civic groups, churches and individuals to form teams to raise money for Relay for Life.

Contact Telida at telida.lovell@brmemc.com to register your teams.

Commission...from Page 1A

renewed every four years, and Mathis said it was as comprehensive as the first.

The information in the packet for this plan reviews the disasters that Towns County has faced, which include winter storms and tornadoes.

Although Towns has been rather fortunate in that area, Mathis said that the county is still susceptible to danger.

"Today's the first day of spring, and we are approaching that danger situation," he said.

The plan identifies the most dangerous threats, from tornadoes to wildfires, and addresses the ways in which the county can mitigate the damage posed by these threats.

"We have the knowledge in place and the people in place," Mathis said. "The last winter storm was an exercise to see how our system functioned. It functioned very efficiently, like a well-oiled machine."

Commissioner Kendall adopted that one, too.

Mathis also wanted to say that with the SPLOST money, Towns County EMS has been able to equip their ambulances and Emergency Services with new lifesaving devices.

This includes the LU-



Commissioner Kendall signs the Debris Management Plan resolution. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

CAS device, a mechanical CPR machine that provides effective and reliable CPR when manual CPR may be dangerous or unreliable.

Thanks to these machines, Mathis said Towns has experienced a much higher resuscitation rate.

SPLOST has also helped the Towns County libraries, which are currently undergoing renovation.

Mountain Regional Library Director Donna Howell said that the renovation is going

smoothly and that everyone involved is excited about the progress.

"That local Towns County SPLOST money of \$200,000 has netted us \$900,000 for each project," she said. "So \$1.8 million has come back to Towns County because of that SPLOST money that you allocated for the library."

Thanks to SPLOST, the start of the year is certainly looking brighter, more literate, and altogether safer for Towns County.

Robinson...from Page 1A

Sports Ministry, and that was eventually one of the deciding factors in her decision to choose Liberty University.

"The Christian atmosphere at Liberty is what swayed me," she said. "I really like all of the involvement that I'm going to have with my specific major, and being able to play soccer there just tops it all off."

As for adjusting to the college game, Robinson admits that she has a lot of room to improve. When she gets to the Big South Conference, she will no longer be the strongest and fastest player on the field,

but she is prepared to up her game.

"I think there will be a huge difference in the level of physicality, especially in the women's game, because in high school, no one is quite as big and strong and physical, and that's going to be the biggest challenge," she said.

With her senior season at Towns County ongoing, she has a good feeling and has found new ways to improve her game. And when it came to offering her soon-to-be former teammates or any young player for advice on the recruiting process, she said you must ask

yourself one simple question.

"I feel confident about my senior year because I played on a great club team this fall and it was a tremendous privilege to do that," she said.

"I see aspects of my game improving that have been in a bit of a stand still for the past three years," she said. "Everyone has always told me to make sure the school you choose is one that you would be happy going to even if you were red-shirted your first year. And to me, that's what stood out about Liberty."

Staff writer Todd Forrest contributed to this report

Hemlock Help Available Clinic at YHC

On Saturday, April 5 from 9 to 10 a.m., attend a free Hemlock Help Clinic presented by Save Georgia's Hemlocks for information on the invasive insect that is killing our hemlock trees in north Georgia (including Towns County) and what can be done to save them.

Hemlocks are vital to the health of our forests and waterways, the economic vitality of local recreation and tourism industries, and the beauty and value of both private property

and the area in general. Please come and learn about the easy and inexpensive steps you can take to protect them.

Then, individuals wanting complete how-to instruction and volunteer training are invited to stay for the free Facilitator Training Workshop from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

This class will provide in-depth information about the trees, the bugs, assessing infestations, cultural controls, chemical treatments, biological controls, cost and safety,

assisting property owners, working on public lands, and more.

Registration and Clinic attendance are required for the Facilitator Workshop.

The classes will be held in Room 109 of the Goolsby classroom building on the campus of Young Harris College. For more information or to register for the Facilitator Workshop, call 706-429-8010 or e-mail donna@savegeorgiahemlocks.org. T(Mar26,J1)SH

Towns County Retired Educators say 'thank you'

The Towns County Educators would like to say "Thank You" to the following businesses who bought an ad for the Georgia Retired Educators web site and will also be published in a Newsletter that will be sent to 26,000 members throughout the state.

The following businesses will have spotlight ads list-

ed: Aspen Health and Home; Synergy Health; Hiawassee Animal Hospital; Blue Ridge Mountain EMC; Young Harris College; Carmelita Haney; Mountain Realty, Brenda Nelson Jackson, Mountain Realty and Young Harris Pharmacy.

Fifty percent of the money for the ads goes to TCRC Scholarship fund.

A TCRC Scholarship is presented to an education major each spring. He or she must be enrolled in a credited college and have declared education as their major. On behalf of the student who receives the scholarship and the TCRC members your help is much appreciated. T(Mar26,J1)SH

Wilkinson...from Page 1A

will assist high school students in post-secondary and career decisions.

A total of \$49.9 million is budgeted towards the Department of Agriculture.

Within the amount funded toward the Department of Agriculture, \$724,781 of increased funds for personal services to reflect Food Safety Inspector salary adjustments and \$336,134 was allocated to fill eight vacancies.

An additional \$100,000 is provided for marketing funds for the Georgia Grown program.

The FY '15 budget also allocates \$35 million to complete the state's portion of the \$652 million Savannah Harbor project.

The next step in the legislative process is to transfer all passed bills to the Gov. Nathan Deal's desk for his review.

By law, once the bill is transferred to the governor, he may sign the bill into law or veto the bill.

During the legislative session, he has six days to deliberate the bill, after session, he is given 40 days from Sine Die to consider action on all passed legislation.

If the General Assembly does not agree with the veto, they may override the decision

with a 2/3 vote and the measure will then become a law.

If no action is taken with the bill, then it automatically becomes a law after the 40-day time period.

The following bills are just a few of the major bills passed through the Senate and House on their way to the Governor's desk:

HB 697 establishes the Zell Miller Grant and defines additional opportunities for taxpayer contributions towards educational assistance nonprofits.

HB 251 regulates alternative nicotine products and vapor products for minors.

HB 60 will allow places of worship to specifically opt-in or state that worshippers can carry in the sanctuary or on church grounds. Licensed carry holders who violate a church's gun carry policy will be subject to a \$100 fine. Individuals without Georgia gun carry licenses may be subject to a fine and misdemeanor charge. Additionally, permit license holders may legally carry firearms in bars unless otherwise stated by the property owner.

HB 773 creates exceptions to discharging a gun or pistol near a public highway or street for certain places and persons engaged in legal

hunting.

HB 914 requires the Department of Human Services ("DHS") and child protection agencies to acknowledge the receipt of a report made by a school employee of suspected child abuse and disclose to certain school personnel whether the suspected child abuse was confirmed by an investigation.

As always, I remain your faithful public advocate for Northeast Georgia. While the session is over, my door remains open to hear your concerns for our community.

If I can be of any assistance, please feel free to reach out to my office at (404) 463-5257 or by e-mail at john.wilkinson@senate.ga.gov.

Sen. John Wilkinson (R-Toccoa) serves as the Chairman of the Agriculture and Consumer Affairs Committee, Vice-Chairman of the Education and Youth Committee, and as a member of the Appropriations Committee. He represents the 50th Senate District which includes Towns, Banks, Franklin, Habersham, Rabun, and Stephens counties and portions of Hall and Jackson counties. He can be reached by phone at (404) 463-5257 or by e-mail at john.wilkinson@senate.ga.gov.

Warrior...from Page 1A

these amputees.

Their efforts raised \$48,500, which helped purchase three adaptive vehicles.

As a by-product of their hike, Gobin realized that the time spent out in nature, in the company of others who had experienced the same kind of stresses, provided a therapeutic effect in relieving the post-traumatic stress of combat.

The following year, Gobin organized a "Walk Off The War" hike of the Appalachian Trail for 14 veterans who had returned from deployment.

This hike was so success-

ful that he has expanded the program for 2014 to include the Pacific Crest Trail on the West Coast and the Continental Divide Trail that traverses the Rocky Mountains.

Since Hiawassee is located near the Southern Terminus of the AT, Towns County has become the first stop for the WarriorHikers. Local veterans' organizations, with the help of Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall, provided transportation to and from the Trail, and lodging, where hikers could take showers, do laundry, and sleep in warm beds.

In addition, dinner at Daniel's Steakhouse was provided, where hikers had an opportunity to chat and enjoy fellowship with local veterans.

Looking beyond 2014, Gobin has some other trails in the works. Currently, he is looking into a biking trail that runs across the country, and a kayaking trip down the Mississippi, specifically crafted for severely wounded warriors.

Anyone interested in more information, or in contributing to this effort can check out warriorhike.com.

Award...from Page 1A

Library Director Donna Howell revealed that she had nominated Commissioner Kendall for the Friends of Georgia Libraries "Best Friend" Award.

"The qualifications are that the nominee has substantially contributed to the development of a library or libraries in the state, and I certainly felt that Mr. Kendall qualified," Howell said.

Without Kendall knowing, Howell wrote to Kathy Ash, the Friends of Georgia Libraries president, to nominate him.

"Mr. Kendall is involved, caring, and committed to providing excellent services to Towns County," the letter read. "He understands the value of libraries and backs up his belief with concrete support and personal advocacy. He is truly the 'Best Friend' Towns County

Libraries and Friends of the Libraries of Towns County could ask for."

Commissioner Kendall has for some time now supported the Towns County Libraries financially through SPLOST and county funding.

Further, he gives his personal support, serving as an "ex officio" member of the county and regional library board, where he attends meetings regularly.

He has participated in planning meetings for the current Towns County Library construction project and ensures that "the Library always has a place at the table" in Towns County.

He was awarded a Lifetime Membership of the Friends of Georgia Libraries two years ago.

After Howell's nomination, Commissioner Kendall won the Best Friend Award by unanimous vote.

"Your unwavering commitment to, and critical support for, Towns County's public libraries is a shining example of an understanding of the value of libraries to our Georgia communities," President Ash wrote him.

"When everybody can work together, you see what we can do," Commissioner Kendall said. "The SPLOST that people passed has really helped this county, and nothing can help people more than a library."

Kendall is scheduled to accept the award on April 25th at the Athens-Clarke County Library in Athens.

Riley talks IAFC and Fire Adapted Communities

This week, I am representing the Chestatee Chatahoochee RC&D Council and our Towns County Fire Adapted Communities (FAC) project at the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) conference in Reno, NV.

Our highly successful FAC program has attracted national attention from the agencies and organizations that promote and fund the FAC concept and they asked me to present our program at their WUI conference and the international audience was very interested in what we are doing here in Northeast Georgia to educate our citizens about the threats of wildfire. The opening session of the conference featured our Public Service Announcement that the IAFC filmed here in Towns County back in December. The fact is that we can no longer assume that a wildfire won't happen here in our backyard... the tragic fire in Yarnell, AZ last year that killed the 19 Hotshot Firefighters was the first wildfire in that community in 45 years.

Homes near natural areas, the wildland/urban interface (WUI), are beautiful places to live. These pristine environments add to the quality of life of residents and are valued by community leaders seeking to develop new areas of opportunity and local tax revenue, but these areas are not without risk. Fires are a part of the natural ecology, living adjacent to the wilderness means living with a constant threat of fires.

Fire, by nature, is unpredictable. The concept of fire-adapted communities (FACs) holds that, with proper community-wide preparation, human populations and infrastructure can

withstand the devastating effects of a wildland fire, reducing loss of life and property. This goal depends on strong and collaborative partnerships between agencies and the public at the State, Federal, and local levels, with each accepting responsibility for their part.

The "2005 Quadrennial Fire and Fuel Review" promoted a strategy of fostering FACs rather than escalating protection of communities at risk in the WUI. It highlighted that the ultimate objective is to enable communities to create their own fire-safe environment, lessening the need for Federal protection, which will free up Federal dollars for ecological restoration and reducing risk to residents and firefighters alike.

The subsequent "Quadrennial Fire Review 2009" took the concept further, explaining that implementation should include strategies for increasing knowledge and commitment that will build a sense of responsibility among landowners, homeowners, the insurance industry, fire districts, local governments, and other key players in WUI communities for wildland fire prevention and mitigation.

Supported by an integrated fuels management portfolio, these strategies include building community defensible space and fuel reduction zones, and recalibrating public expectations in the FAC area. Yet, the concept is not just illustrated in defensible space techniques and preparedness. It seeks to explain how a community can coexist with wildland fire and, ultimately, reduce large fire threats and eliminate the need for a large and expensive fire-suppression response. This is achieved through the under-

Executive Director of RC&D



Frank Riley

standing of the role of fire on the traditional environment that a community is now located in and the subsequent impacts of land development and introductions of nonindigenous vegetation.

The commonly held definition of FAC states that: A FAC is a community of informed and prepared citizens collaboratively taking action to safely coexist with wildland fire threat. A FAC has, or is striving to achieve, the following characteristics: It exists within or adjacent to a fire-adapted ecosystem. Adequate local fire suppression capacity is available to meet most community protection needs. Structures and landscaping are designed, constructed, retrofitted, and maintained in a manner that is ignition resistant. Local codes (building, planning, zoning, and fire prevention codes) that require ignition resistant home design and building materials are adopted and enforced. Fuel treatments are properly spaced and sequenced, and are maintained across the landscape. A community wildland fire protection plan is developed and implemented. The community has a defined geographic boundary.

For more information on FAC, IAFC, and RC&D contact Frank Riley, Executive Director, Chestatee/Chatahoochee RC&D Council at: frank.ccrd@gmail.com.