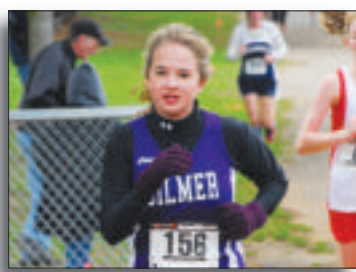




Breast Cancer 3-Day concert event Saturday

See Gilmer Living 1B



Kelly named GPTV's Scholar Athlete

See Sports 1C



Reece to perform at next GAHA coffeehouse

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Times - Courier

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BOE discusses shorter school calendar options

by Ryan R Rees

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School calendar proposals for the 2010-2011 school year were the main topic of discussion by the board of education at its meeting Oct. 13.

Board Supt. Randy Parson presented the board members three different ideas to consider. One would reduce the school

year to 160 days from the present 180 while another option would be a 170-day year.

Parson noted to the board that the proposed calendars were only for their consideration and not fully developed.

"I want to hear what you have to say before we start real planning," he said.

He added that if the current 180-day schedule is main-

tained he could have a working calendar in place by the end of the year.

"If we decide on another course, then we need to get started planning right away," he added.

The board tabled the topic for a month after much discussion and hearing from substitute teacher Melinda Chambers, who has two children in

Gilmer schools.

"While I'd like more time with my children in the summer, education comes first," she told the board. "Going to a shorter calendar may cause many parents problems with child care. I feel the teachers need more time in the classrooms. Education is very important to all of us. Keep our kids in school."

Board member Ronald Watkins asked for a schedule that would start later in August. The current school year began Aug. 6.

The 180-day preliminary calendar would begin Aug. 17. If 10 days were trimmed, the term would start two days later. A 160-day plan would delay the start until Sept. 7.

If the calendar is changed to

fewer days, that could have complications for the high school testing schedule, which is set by the state, and classes would have to be extended longer in the day.

Murray County went to a 160-day calendar this year but that system runs two separate bus routes, something Gilmer

See **Calendar** page 4A

Apple Festival 'good, considering ...'



Erin Grizzle delights the crowd as Grand Marshal of the 2009 Apple Festival Parade.

by Al Summers

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Organizers of the 38th Annual Georgia Apple Festival have deemed the event "good, considering ..."

The main thing they were considering was the weather, which kept attendance down by about 25 percent of what it was last year. Festival manager Scott Sharp told the *Times-Courier*, "We had right at 34,000 visitors this year and about 45,000 visitors last year."

The manager said the weather for the first Saturday of the festival, Saturday, Oct. 10, was rainy and kept a number of people away. But, he said Sunday, Oct. 11, was a pretty good day, and "we made up some lost ground as

far as attendance goes." The crowd estimate for the first weekend was 17,000 attendees.

Weather had an effect on attendance the second Saturday of the festival, Oct. 17, with chilly temperatures and strong gusts of wind. Some vendors had their tents blown away and goods damaged. Sharp said, "We had a few vendors to ask if they could pack up and leave after the wind Saturday, but a large majority of them stayed for Sunday."

Sunday saw pleasant weather and a good crowd. "Our Sundays saved us this year. Normally, the Saturdays are our big days, but Sundays were the big days this year."

The annual Apple Festival Parade, held on the 17th,

drew a good crowd, but it was down due to the temperatures being in the 40s. The 45-minute parade featured a former Miss Apple Queen and current Miss United States, Erin Grizzle, as the grand marshal.

Entrants in the parade included The Gilmer High School marching band, local beauties, antique cars, fire trucks, floats, a dog rescue unit, an equestrian unit and politicians.

The Apple Arts festival on the square also saw heavy traffic, as did the downtown businesses. One merchant told the *Times-Courier*, "We were pleased (with the weekend). We did about the same amount of business we did last year with fewer people this year due to the weather."

Sheriff expresses concern over Highway 282 traffic

by Al Summers

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Gilmer County Sheriff Stacy Nicholson admits he is down to asking motorists to be more careful on Hwy. 282 near the entrance to Mountain View Elementary School, Gilmer Head Start and Pre-K and the Gilmer County Library.

After some recent accidents, a couple of which were seri-

ous, he said his office had fielded a number of calls about what can be done to curtail accidents from happening. Nicholson said, "Motorists are just going to have to be more careful and more aware as they approach that area. It is that simple."

The sheriff said some people point to excessive speed, but that is not the case. "If speed was the problem, we would write tickets. Speed is not the

problem. The accidents we have recently worked have been due to people just not paying attention. People are wanting us to put an officer out there to direct traffic, but that is too dangerous a proposition when people are not paying attention to operating their vehicles," he said.

The speed limit is 45 m.p.h. in the school zone which is state law. There are signs with flashing lights on either side of the intersection that mark the school zone.

Lt. Mike Gobble of the sheriff's department said he will sit down with representatives from the school system and the Georgia Department of Transportation (DOT) and try to work out a solution to make that stretch of highway a little safer.

It has been suggested that

flashing lights spanning the highway might be more visible to motorists as they approach the area.

Gobble said, "That is a state route and DOT has the say-so over speed limits and signage. Right now, until a solution is found, we are asking people to slow down to a lower speed than 45 m.p.h. and to pay extra attention to their driving in that area."

That sentiment was echoed by Nicholson. "The other day, we had a pretty serious accident out there that almost resulted in two or three more serious accidents and somebody getting run over by a truck. It is a dangerous area. We are asking people to drive extra slow for right now and until we can come up with an answer to this serious problem."



This sign is one of two flashing signs that mark the school zone on Hwy. 282.

Two dogs euthanized after exposure to rabid raccoon

North Ga. Health District

www.nghd.org

Gilmer County Environmental Health officials have reported two dogs that recently fought with a raccoon that later tested positive for rabies had to be euthanized. The

incident occurred around the Lake Paul area in the vicinity of Old Hwy. 5 South and Hwy. 382.

According to Andrea Wheeler, manager of the local environmental health office, "On

See **Rabies** page 4A

Times-Courier launches food drive

The publishers and staff of the *Times-Courier* are jumping into the giving season early by hosting a canned food and goods drive. Those who donate two or more canned food items or other necessary staples when they come in to the *Times-Courier* office, will be given a free copy of the newspaper.

Collection baskets are located just inside the front door and donations will be accepted during business hours Monday through Friday.

The donated items will then be given to the Gilmer County Community Food Pantry.

The food pantry is in dire need of canned meats, canned vegetables and fruits and soups. They also need canned pastas and other meals, as well as canned juices.

Boxed meals such as Hamburger Helper and instant potatoes are needed, as is dried milk, cocoa mix, coffee and tea. Cereals, dried beans, rice and

cooking oil are also appreciated.

The food pantry also accepts toothbrushes, toothpaste, bar soap and shampoo.

The pantry also takes cash donations to put toward buying goods in bulk and at reduced prices. A donation jar is also located at the *Times-Courier*.

Times-Courier publisher and general manager George Bunch and his sister,

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