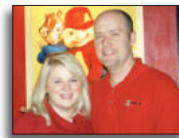




**H1N1 vaccine still available, encouraged**  
See Gilmer Living 1B



**GHS takes first at Creekview Invitational**  
See Sports 1C



**East Towne Cinema survives with new owners**  
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# Times - Courier

Your Hometown Newspaper Devoted To The Progress Of Gilmer County

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The Defoor home on Lucille Ave, aka Ho Ho Lane, is decked out in holiday splendor, awaiting the arrival of Santa next week.

## Water board discusses phosphorus removal, Coosawattee project

by Michael Andrews  
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The Ellijay-Gilmer County Water and Sewerage Authority (EGCWSA) Board of Directors held its monthly meeting Monday, December 14.

During the meeting, board members discussed whether or not to hire Reid Engineering, an engineering firm that specializes in wastewater nutrient removal plans, to work on a solution that would help to reduce the high phosphorus content of wastewater now being processed by the EGCWSA treatment plant. "The plant's current design is based on an influent value of 12 parts per million of phosphorus. Current conditions show an influent level of 24 parts per million with an upward trend. The existing plant process can remove about 6 parts per million biologically and it is unrealistic to remove the balance with chemicals," EGCWSA Director Emory DeBord

told board members.

The board later voted to run a proposed computer treatment model not to exceed \$20,000. "We hope that this will give us a realistic model of how much more phosphorus can be removed," said DeBord.

DeBord added that it is believed a large increase in marinating activity at the Pilgrim's Pride facility is adding to the increased level of phosphorus in the wastewater.

Board members also discussed the matter of Pilgrim's Pride paying part of the cost to find a solution to the problem. As of the EGCWSA meeting date, Pilgrim's Pride had not offered any payment toward additional phosphorus removal.

"Bottom line is that they need to pitch in on the cost or we will have to surcharge them greatly," said DeBord.

"This is Pilgrim's Pride's

See **Water** page 4A

## BOC to adopt \$17.5 million budget

by Ryan R Rees  
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The Board of Commissioners is expected to adopt a \$17.5 million budget for fiscal 2010 at a special called meeting this Thursday at 6 p.m.

The proposed budget is nearly \$1 million less than the 2009 budget of \$18.2 million, which was revised downward from an original plan of \$18.7 million.

The budget has been under discussion for several months and at a public hearing Dec. 10, several citizens questioned the commissioners about a proposed plan to privatize trash disposal in the county.

At a work session earlier

See **Budget** page 4A

## Deputies have busy week with beating, stabbing and standoff

by Al Summers

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There is a saying, "Save the best until last." The year 2009 decided to save its most serious until last.

Over the past week, deputies from the Gilmer County Sheriff's Department have dealt with a domestic dispute that involved a beating with a hammer, a stabbing and an incident that involved a standoff with law officers.

Gilmer County Sheriff Stacy Nicholson said, "The month of December has been a very busy month for law enforcement so far. After a shooting at the Pour House Bar and Grill in East Ellijay Dec. 4, the sheriff's office has dealt with three serious 'domestic related' incidences."

In the evening hours of Dec. 4, deputies responded to a domestic dispute in the area of Old Miller Rock Rd.

It was discovered during the investigation of the dispute that Mark Andrew Brock, 43, had been beaten with a hammer. Brock was transported to North Georgia Medical Center where he was treated and released. Brock, Christopher Adam Smith, 30, and Jodie Laurie Edens, 30,

were arrested in connection with the incident.

Brock was charged with battery and third degree cruelty to children. Smith was charged with battery, violation of probation, third degree cruelty to children and drugs not in original container. Edens was charged with battery, aggravated battery and cruelty to children.

The second serious incident occurred in the Bushy Head Road area of Boardtown Community Tuesday night, Dec. 8. According to the sheriff, "An ongoing domestic situation led to an 'all-out brawl' and stabbing."

Nicholson told the *Times-Courier*, "Dennie Maxwell was transported to North Georgia Medical Center, initially, with life-threatening stab wounds to his back. Maxwell was subsequently transported to Hamilton Medical Center in Dalton.

A former girlfriend of Maxwell's and her father have been charged in connection with the case. Erica Judon Baker, 31, was charged with aggravated assault, battery and conspiracy to commit aggravated battery. Baker's father, Keith Hawkins, 55, was charged with conspiracy to

commit aggravated battery, battery and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon."

The third incident occurred Friday evening, Dec. 11, at a residence on Yukon Court just off Yukon Road. Gilmer County deputies responded to a neighbor dispute at the Yukon Court address. Said Nicholson, "When our deputies arrived they learned that John Faulkner had just fired a shot inside his residence and was in a very irritable state of mind. Deputies secured the area and called for back-up from the Special Weapons And Tactics (SWAT) team and crisis negotiators. During a four-hour standoff, Faulkner fired several rounds from a shotgun. Ultimately, crisis negotiators were able to talk Faulkner into surrendering to deputies. This situation was very intense for a while. I'm very thankful it ended with no one getting injured."

Faulkner was arrested and will be charged with making terroristic threats.

Nicholson concluded, "This has been a very busy year, but the events of the past week have by far been some of the most serious."

## BOE may consider mascot change

by Whitney Crouch

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The Gilmer County Board of Education held its monthly meeting Tuesday, December 8. After last month's sobering look at current economic conditions, the session ran smoothly and held few surprises.

The meeting began with a delightful selection of holiday songs performed by members of the Classy Cat Chorus from Ellijay Elementary. The audience's toes were soon tapping along with the beat as the talented students spread a bit of holiday cheer.

Frankie Rigdon of the Clear Creek School Council brought the next order of business to the table. He

reported that a number of students have requested the opportunity to select a new mascot for Clear Creek so that it can have its own identity. Ever since the middle school opened in December 2007, it has shared the Bobcat mascot with Gilmer Middle School and Gilmer High School, which makes for some interesting situations when the schools face one another in competitive events.

The school council recommended to the BOE that a poll be conducted to see what percentage of students would be interested in changing the mascot. If a majority favored the change, a group of parents and teachers would compile a selection of suitable alter-

natives and would present them to the student body. Using a democratic selection process, the current sixth and seventh graders at CCMS would then select a new representative for the school.

If the change occurs, CCMS would not be the only school in the system without the Bobcat mascot. Oakland Elementary School's colors are blue and yellow, and its mascot is a tiger.

Several board members expressed concerns about this proposal. Ronald Watkins noted that if one school is allowed to change, the opportunity to make a similar decision might need to be extended to the other schools in the system. He also stated that the honor of choosing a new mascot should be reserved for the

students that will attend the county's proposed second high school.

Similarly, board member Kathy Jones was worried that allowing a new mascot might cause disunity when all of the middle school students from across the county are reunited as Bobcats at the high school.

At this time, the BOE is considering the proposal and will make a decision in a future meeting.

Mike Schlabra, director of secondary curriculum and federal programs, reported that end-of-course testing at Gilmer High School has gotten off to a smooth start. For the first time, the test for economics was conducted online instead of in paper format.

See **BOE** page 4A

## Times-Courier holiday schedule

In observance of the Christmas holiday, the *Times-Courier* will be closed Thursday and Friday, Dec. 24 and Dec. 25 and will reopen Monday, Dec. 28 at 8:30 a.m.

For the New Years holiday, the *Times-Courier* will close at noon, Thursday, Dec. 31, and remain closed through New Years Day, Friday, Jan. 1. We will reopen Monday, Jan. 4, at 8:30 a.m.

The real estate advertising deadline for the Thursday, Dec. 31, edition of the paper will be Wednesday,

Dec. 23, at 5 p.m.

The real estate advertising deadline for the Thursday, Jan. 7 edition of the paper will be Thursday, Dec. 31, at noon.

Regular deadlines for all other advertisements and editorial submissions will remain at Tuesday noon.

We hope you have a safe and merry Christmas season with your family and friends.

Look for our annual Christmas edition next week along with the winners of our annual Christmas Story Contest.

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## Guess what!

by Al Summers

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The year was 1834. The United States of America was only 58 years old and there were only 24 states that comprised the country.

"Old Hickory" Andrew Jackson, the country's 7th president, was in office. Present day Atlanta was in the woods.

And, on Dec. 20, 1834, Ellijay became the official county seat of government of Gilmer County.  
Happy 175th birthday, Ellijay.

