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Team Zyvax a national racing power

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Joy House offers healing for hurting teens, families

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Times - Courier

Your Hometown Newspaper Devoted To The Progress Of Gilmer County

VOL. 135 • NO. 28 • U.S.P.S. NO. 630-280

July 15, 2010

EST. 1875 • CONSOLIDATED 1916 • 50 CENTS

Two murdered, one survives in shooting

by **Al Summers**
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Gilmer County was rocked late Sunday evening, July 11, with the murder of a man and a woman and the shooting of another man. The incident happened around 11:30 p.m. Sunday evening in the Whitestone area of the county.

According to a release from Appalachian Judicial Circuit District Attorney Joe Hendricks, a call was initiated by Robbie Payne, 49, and received at the Gilmer 911 center reporting a shooting. Payne had been a victim of the shooting and had fled to a neighbor's house to contact authorities.

Deputies from the Gilmer County Sheriff's Office arrived within 10 minutes to the scene and secured the outside of the premises. Deputies had received information from Pickens County authorities that Charles William Givens, 32, the suspect in the case, had turned himself in to Pickens County authorities and that there were casualties inside the residence.

Once inside the residence, law officers discovered the body of Wayne Poole, 46, who was pronounced dead at the scene. He had been shot in the head.

They also discovered Laura Schell, 24, critically injured and barely alive.



Charles William Givens

She had also been shot in the head.

Schell was transported to Grady Memorial Hospital in Atlanta where she died as a result of her injuries early

Monday morning, July 12.

Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) Agent Dustin Hamby said Payne, the survivor, was transported to Grady in Atlanta, where he remained at press time Tuesday. He is expected to survive and recover.

All three victims lived in the same general Whitestone area as did Givens. He is being held in the Gilmer County Detention Center.

Gilmer County Sheriff Stacy Nicholson said Givens has had warrants taken against him for two cases of murder and one count of aggravated assault.

The GBI and the sheriff's department are investigating the murder and assault.

County facing revenue shortfall

by **Ryan R Rees**
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At a special called meeting July 12 by the Board of Commissioners to discuss a possible millage rate increase, a surprising discovery was made.

The county has been short-changed the past 18 months because efforts have not been made to fully collect unpaid property taxes.

Tax Commissioner Melba Bennett revealed that some \$8 million in unpaid property taxes are outstanding. The unpaid taxes go back to 2003 but most are from 2008 and 2009.

While discussing its options to offset a deficit in revenue this year, Post 2 Commissioner JC Sanford asked Bennett how much in tax bills are owed.

"I figured it up the other day. The county portion, for the last seven years, there is a million something dollars," she replied.

County Commission Chairman Mark Chastain noted, "I am showing it is more like \$1.9 million."

The other unpaid taxes go to the board of education.

The millage rate discussion will be continued this Friday at 9 a.m. Bennett and other constitutional officers have been encouraged to attend the meeting, which may affect their departments. Another special meeting will be held Monday, July 19, at 9 a.m. to finalize the millage rate so it can be advertised.

Chastain called the special meeting last Monday

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News Briefs

Stay back 150 feet

The Georgia Secretary of State's Office is reminding all political candidates and political organizations to stay back at least 150 feet from polling places during all elections, including next Tuesday's Primary elections.

State law prohibits campaigning and campaign materials within 150 feet of polling places.

Poll workers will have to enforce this law on election day.

Political Forum tonight

The Gilmer County Political Forum will be held tonight, Thursday, July 15, at 6 p.m. in the Gilmer County Courthouse Jury Assembly Room. It is open to the public. ETC3 will tape the event, and it will air Saturday, July 17, at 4 p.m., Sunday, July 18, at 4 p.m. and Monday, July 19, at 10:30 p.m.



Ellijay Lions Club Donor Appreciation Blood Drive
Thursday, July 15 • 12-6pm
Ellijay Lions Club
1729 South Main St. • Ellijay, GA



Health & Fitness Month

For the month of July the *Times-Courier* is celebrating Health & Fitness. If you would like to place an ad or article, please come by our office or contact Aby or Kathy at 706-635-4313.

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Primary races set for next Tuesday, July 20

by **Al Summers**
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Gilmer countians will head to the polls next Tuesday, July 20, to begin the process of selecting a new county commission chairman and a new Post 2 commissioner.

On the state level, voters of each party will begin the process of selecting a new governor, state senator, secretary of state, attorney general and state school superintendent just to name a few of the positions up for grabs.

At the national level, Republican voters in the Ninth District will make a choice for U.S. Representative, and Democratic voters statewide will make a choice for U.S. Senator.

Republican commission chairman candidates include:

- JC Sanford
- Jack Smith
- Tony Whitaker

Republican commission Post 2 candidates include:

- Greg Altman
- Randy J. Bell
- Danny R. Hall
- Don Murray
- Joe Waldrop

Democratic gubernatorial candidates are:

- Thurbert Baker
- Roy E. Barnes
- Bill Bolton
- Carl Camon
- Randal Mangham
- DuBose Porter
- David Poythress

Republican gubernatorial candidates are:

- Jeff Chapman
- Nathan Deal
- Karen Handel
- Eric Johnson
- Ray McBerry
- John W. Oxendine
- Otis Putnam

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Watkins seeking re-election to school board

Special to the *Times-Courier*
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Ronald Watkins

Ronald Watkins has announced his candidacy for re-election to Post 5 of the Gilmer County school board. He is a lifelong resident of Gilmer County and graduated in 1978 from Gilmer High School.

He has been married to local Tina Weaver Watkins for 23 years. They have two children, Hope and Chad who attend Gilmer High School and Gilmer Middle School.

The candidate is self-employed as a chicken farmer and has owned a sanitation company since 1984.

"As a resident, taxpayer and business owner I definitely have concerns about our current economy in Gilmer

See Watkins page 4A

Graves outlines plans in Ellijay visit

by **Ryan R Rees**
rees@timescourier.com

Newly installed 9th Congressional District Congressman Tom Graves made a brief visit to Ellijay last Friday morning during a whirlwind tour of the district to pitch his idea for an Economic Advisory Council.

Speaking to the Gilmer Economic Development Authority, Graves said, "There's a lot of work to do (in Washington, D.C.). And the first thing is the economy. Every segment is impacted."

Addressing the unemployment situation here and nationwide, Graves said, "If just one of every three businesses in this country would hire just one person in the next 12 months, unemployment would be cut in half" he

said. Graves' council will consist of 70-75 members, mainly business owners from the 15 counties in the 9th District, who Graves called "the risk takers."

Graves, who was sworn in two weeks earlier, said his staff had asked senior members of Congress when he arrived in Washington, what the problems are and what the solutions might be. "None of their staff could come up with anything."

"For too long, Washington hasn't been listening. That's why it isn't working," he noted.

"We are going to come up with ideas to move forward as policy. We want to get government out of the way

See Graves page 4A



U.S. Congressman Tom Graves outlines his future plans before the Gilmer Economic Development Authority last Friday.