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Bobcats host region tourney

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Pipeline extension work continues

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Times - Courier

Your Hometown Newspaper Devoted To The Progress Of Gilmer County

VOL. 138 • NO. 5 • U.S.P.S. NO. 630-280

January 31, 2013

EST. 1875 • CONSOLIDATED 1916 • 50 CENTS

Warning system in use

by Ryan R Rees
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The county's new emergency notification system got its first test last week during the brief ice storm that hit the area last Jan. 24-25.

Residents with a land-based telephone line received calls Thursday night before the storm hit and then some Friday morning.

However, the system wasn't perfect. One resident noted that when the emergency warning call came in, he was on another line and missed the call. When he returned the call, all he could get was the recorded message for the fire department.

See **Warning** page 3A

2012 Citizen of the Year



Contributed photo by Stacey Lanning

The Rev. James Holt received the 2012 Citizen of the Year award from the Gilmer County Chamber of Commerce at their annual banquet Saturday, Jan. 26. Lex Rainey noted Holt has served not only as a pastor in area churches but as a volunteer firefighter, advocate for youth and young mothers' homes, and as a counselor for those who are incarcerated and/or struggling with substance abuse. His wife, Betty Jo, is a retired schoolteacher. See 'Around Town' on 1D for story.

'Meth ring' raid nets 5 from Ellijay

by Mark Millican
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A woman who lives in the camper section of Coosawattee River Resort said traffic to a nearby address where illegal drug activity was allegedly taking place had gotten so frequent she had to block her own driveway to keep people from parking there.

"One day last week I got out in the road and actually stopped traffic and told them, 'That's enough!'" said the woman, who requested her name not be used in a news article. "It's been nonstop traffic."

Agents from the Zell Miller Mountain Parkway Drug Task Force and Gilmer County Sheriff's officers descended on 102 21st St. on Jan. 24 after a five-month investigation

into a "methamphetamine distribution ring" that was operating out of the gated community's camper section, said Commander Brandon Owens of the task force.

Five Ellijay residents were arrested.

Richard Norman Mitchell, 47, of 102 21st St., was charged with possession of meth with intent to distribute and possession of hydrocodone. Owens said on Monday (Jan. 28) Mitchell would be charged with distribution of meth.

Danja Anne Turley, 40, also of 102 21st St., was charged with possession of meth and possession of xanax.

Vickie Aaron Frady, 54, of 98 Savannah Lane, was

See **Meth** page 3A

Sheriff's gun control vow goes viral

by Mark Millican
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When Gilmer County Sheriff Stacy Nicholson replied to a question about firearms on his agency's Facebook page he had no idea his remarks would go "viral" — meaning around the world via the Internet.

"I simply answered a question that was posted on the sheriff's office Facebook wall a week or so ago," he explained. "It was regarding, 'What are you gonna do if the federal government passes a law and

y'all gotta come collect guns?' Basically, something like that. And I answered the question geared toward that and it went viral."

For that reason the post got attention from major media outlets.

"I've got phone calls from ABC News, they were wanting to interview me — I mean up in New York," Nicholson said. "CNN wanted to come get me and bring me down and interview me (on Jan. 23) ... of course, I declined all that. I'm not interested

in none of that. That's how it came about, but since then there have been several sheriffs in Georgia that have put out statements."

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution noted Nicholson was one of around 60 sheriffs around the country who have also posted remarks on the Constitutional Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association webpage.

"I took an oath to uphold the Constitution of the United States of America," Nicholson said in an AJC

article on Jan. 22. "We would not be a part of going door-to-door and rounding up weapons. I am firmly against it, would not be a part of it, nor would I permit it to be done — if within my power to prevent it."

Nicholson released a statement clarifying his position later last week.

"Within the last couple of weeks, I have been asked countless times my position on gun control and the government

See **Sheriff** page 3A



Photo by Mark Millican

This residence in the camper section of Coosawattee River Resort was the center of a "methamphetamine distribution ring," according to authorities.

Overcrowding on BOE docket

by Whitney Crouch
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Gilmer High School had an enrollment of 1,211

students as of last Wednesday, but as director of operations Erick Hofstetter told the Gilmer County Board of Education during a called meeting Thursday, Jan. 24, the building's capacity is about 1,000 students.

"We are at or over capacity (at GHS) ... and that's been that way for quite some time," Hofstetter noted, explaining how factors such as creative scheduling, dual enrollment opportunities, portable classrooms, gym courses and the Christian Learning Center have

helped to alleviate some of the short-term pressure on the facility.

"We have been able to manage classrooms situations OK. Where we are struggling and seeing massive wear and tear is in infrastructure," Superintendent Bryan Dorsey added, explaining the high school's cafeteria, rest rooms, stairwells and hallways are ill-equipped to deal with the level of congestion created by the facility's current and projected student body.

See **BOE** page 5A

Ice storm causes havoc



Photo by Whitney Crouch

A mishap at the intersection of Highway 52 West and Boardtown Road on Friday, Jan. 25, resulted in a truckload of pipes being spilled onto the roadway, said Ellijay Police Chief Edward Lacey. "There was ice on the pipes, and it caused them to slide out from under the retention straps when the driver attempted to pull onto Highway 52 off Boardtown Road," he said, adding the driver was unharmed and no one else was injured. It took a backhoe three hours to reload the pipes onto the Atlanta Gas Light truck, Lacey said.

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Final day to save on paper rates

Subscribers to the *Times-Courier* are reminded that the deadline for renewing their subscriptions at current rates is today (Thursday, Jan. 31).

Due to the rising costs of materials, publishing and postal mailing rates, the *Times-Courier* is increasing subscription rates, and the price of a single copy to 75 cents.

The new price will go into effect with the Feb. 7, 2013, issue. See page 3A for the new rates by subscription in print and online.

2013 "Parade of Sweethearts"

Coming soon in the February 14, 2013 edition.
See page 5A for more info.

Get your Sweethearts in today! This year as a bonus, pictures will be in full color!

