

## **COUNTY GETS BACK STATE ROAD CREW AND 8 MILLION DOLLARS OF PROJECTS**

Commissioner Bill Kendall received some good news for our citizens last week. The State Department of Transportation (DOT) was immediately reinstating the State road maintenance crew in Towns County. The crew which had been in the county since the 1940's was eliminated July 1, due to state budget cuts.

The Commissioner expressed his appreciation to Towns County citizens for their courteous and sincere concerns about losing the maintenance crew, which he passed on to DOT officials. Many citizens who work across the mountains and begin their morning commute by 4 to 5 a.m. expressed their concerns that Towns County's DOT road crew always had the roads clear of snow and ice and once they reached the mountain top at the county line the ice and snow had not been removed. **(The old adage – we don't appreciate or miss something until we lose it rings true here.)** We want to express our appreciation for the excellent job the DOT crew of 4 men do in maintaining the 56 miles of state roads in Towns County.

Commissioner Kendall expressed his appreciation to the DOT officials for listening and responding positively by bringing back our DOT crew and assurances that the crew would not be taken away again. The old state maintenance barn on route 76 at Lower Hightower will probably be eliminated and all operations moved to the newer state maintenance barn near Presley and Streak Hill going toward Helen.

### **8 million dollars of road improvements for Towns County**

Eight million dollars of road improvement projects, most that had previously been eliminated due to State DOT budget problems have been reinstated due to Federal funding. Listed below are some of the projects which consist of right of ways, widening and constructing new bridges. Resurfacing and maintenance of State Route 75 from McDonalds in Hiawassee to the North Carolina line has just completed. Also funded but not on the list are LARP resurfacing of (2) county roads.

These old bridges which are narrow and unsafe will take much longer to rebuild because of right-of-ways acquisition and engineering. The bridge over Brasstown Creek going out of Young Harris will be raised 10 ft. in elevation due to the present bridge being in the flood plain.

These projects and funding are granted on needs established by DOT studies for the State Transportation improvement program. When these projects are completed Towns County's State road program, especially outdated bridges, will be modernized and up to date.