Mayor Reports on Town’s Progress & Plans

The Town of Highland Lake provides a lake and recreational area for the community and others. In the past few years, many improvements have been made to the town, with the addition of a new library, fishing pier, gazebo, additional landscaping, and a walking trail. This trail has allowed the citizens of the town, as well as visitors, to have a place to exercise, along with adding beauty to our landscape. Last year, the restrooms in the Anchor were remodeled, making them handicapped accessible. The Anchor was also painted, both inside and outside, and minor remodeling was finished.

During the 2013-2014 fiscal year, plans were studied for the dredging of the lake. Our Special Committee on dredging met several times, and we had a meeting with an engineer and the Council in January. The Council authorized a hydrographic survey and sediment thickness evaluation of Brasher and Sand Creek bays ($12,500) as well as a lake wide hydrographic survey ($8,500), establishing a baseline for the lake. We met in August to review these reports, which are very informative. Unfortunately, because of the tornado damage in April, we decided to place any further work on hold until our clean-up obligations with the county have been determined.

On April 29, 2014, the town took a direct hit from a tornado, causing over 1 million dollars’ worth of damage to homes, roads, and the lake. Many of our citizens either lost homes or had major damage to homes or property. Several of the town’s roads were damaged, requiring major repair to be done during this fiscal year. Because of a “Memorandum of Understanding” that was entered into by the town with the county, we were able to work with them to remove the debris from our roads and lake, saving us valuable time and money. At this time, we have set aside $100,000 to pay our share of the costs not paid by FEMA or the State.

Although there is a slower economic growth pattern in the state and national economy, the Town continues to see an upturn in the economic growth, with new houses, boat houses, and piers being built, and an increase in sales of existing real estate.

The Town will continue to focus on efforts to maintain the cleanliness and ecosystem of the lake, and the safety of the community. Funds are available for these and other improvement projects. The Town has no outstanding debt, and has no plans to incur any debt.

— Gail Bailey, Mayor
During the January Council meeting, the Annual Police Report was provided to the Mayor and Council by Scott Kon, Chief of Police. We felt it was also appropriate to provide some information to the community describing the work being performed by your Police Department over the last year. Sometimes we get asked; “Why do we have a Police Department? What do they do other than just ride around?” We felt it beneficial to share some statistics as they are one way to show some of the things the Police Department has accomplished over the last year.

In 2014, a total of 2,126 hours were worked, including the exhaustive man hours spent during the tornado incident and subsequent drowning/search incident resulting from the tornado outbreak.

This year the breakdown for hours worked is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Traffic and Non-Traffic Citations</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Custodial Arrests</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2,126 total hours worked in 2014: (includes tornado and drowning)

- 150 hours of administrative work
- 100 hours of arrest paperwork
- 150 hours of court time
- 60 hours of training
- 460 hours total other time
- 1,666 total patrol hours (estimated)

The Police Department on average maintained at least one contact per hour. A contact could be a traffic stop, a conversation in the park, or meeting a community member just to have cup of coffee. The Highland Lake Police Department strives to serve your community and keep our town the best place to live in Blount County.

This community is blessed to have a dedicated police department that is willing to go that “extra mile” for us under any circumstance. Special thanks to Chief Kon, and Officers Joe Franklin, Jerry Hughes, and Wes Buchanan for your dedicated service.
Reminders about Lake Watercraft

If you’re in the market for a new or used boat, please keep in mind the following boat regulations for Highland Lake:

- Boat length can be up to 21 ft. for fishing, ski boats, and personal watercraft.
- Pontoons can be up to 28 ft.
- Engine size shall not exceed the recommended horsepower as provided by the manufacturer and as is indicated on the United States Coast Guard Capacity Plate.
- The moratorium for bladder/wake boats is still in effect.
- Airboats are not allowed.

Lake Fees Due in May

Lake usage fees for 2015-2016 are due during the month of May. The fee is $100 plus $25 per motorized watercraft (property owners can have up to four motorized watercraft). Funds from the lake usage fees help to maintain and manage the lake, dam, park, and recreational areas.

Please remember:

- Watercraft must be registered in the name of the property owner.
- The Town must have current copies of your Alabama Boat Registration certificates to issue Highland Lake decals.
- State decals are purchased at the Blount County Courthouse.

During the month of May, the office will also be open every Saturday from 8:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. (noon).

Efforts Underway for Road Repair

Last April’s tornado caused major damage to our roadways and town. We worked all summer to clean the roadways and the lake, and to remove the debris. Most of the removal was finished by late summer. The roads were widened and scraped, new culverts were installed, and many other necessary structural improvements were made late into the fall.

This spring at Highland Lake, you can expect to see the roads finished as the temperatures rise. Commissioner Calvert has advised that, as soon as we can get some nights of 50-60 degrees, his crew will be able to pave the roads that were damaged. The town has also set aside a matching grant of $15,000 to repair some of the areas that were not storm-related, but are in great need of repair.

The repairs on the roadways damaged by the storm will be covered, in part, by FEMA. This will allow our roads to be in the best condition they have been in for quite some time. Because of this, we need to make sure we get it right the first time, as we only have one shot at this.

I understand that some of the roads are rough at this time, and the county did come back and try to scrape some of the ruts last week. Some of the work that was done last fall has also had to be redone because of heavy rains. However, spring is coming, the temperatures will be rising, and we will be able to get these roads paved – please just hang in there a little longer!

- Gail Bailey, Mayor

The purple martins and the townspeople appreciate the efforts of those volunteers who took care of the annual task of cleaning the homes of these beneficial birds. Dr. George Fant donated several purple martin houses some years ago and helped to maintain them.

These feathered friends feast on thousands of insects which help us to enjoy the outdoors more during the summer. We are thankful to these volunteers for preparing the birds’ lakeside lodging so that new avian families will be raised at Highland Lake!
**Lost in the Woods? Learn What to Do!**

No one plans on getting lost. They get lost because they are engrossed in other activities while their adventure carries them into unfamiliar territory. When this happens, it helps to know what to do.

Teaching both children and adults what to do when they find themselves in unfamiliar territory is what the LOST IN THE WOODS program does. It teaches children or adults how to take care of themselves if they become lost or separated while in a wilderness area. The LOST IN THE WOODS program is administered by the SARTEC organization and will be presented to the 3rd and 4th graders of Appalachian School, but the public is also welcome to attend.

During the workshop, presenters also spend time letting people get familiar with our search teams. The organization takes handlers and their K-9s (dogs) to scheduled functions in schools, churches, and service organizations. These functions are used to tell people how we search for and find people.

**About SARTEC**

SARTEC K-9 UNIT is an all-volunteer unit based in Madison County, Alabama. SARTEC stands for Search And Rescue TEChnicians. The non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization’s members are highly trained rescuers with canine partners who are trained to work with law enforcement and emergency services organizations in searching wilderness, urban area, water, and disaster areas for those who are missing. While based in Madison County, they respond to any location outside this area at the request of the local, state, or federal authority. SARTEC members volunteer for service. Volunteers help families by locating loved ones who are lost.

In case of an emergency where you are confronted with a situation involving a missing person, you should contact responsible authorities immediately. The sooner an emergency services agency can call SARTEC and get a search started, the better the chance of survival.

If you like the outdoors and are interested in volunteering, either as a K-9 handler or support personnel, please contact: Andrew Nicholas (256-679-2575) or Shata Pace (256-679-2839). For more info, visit www.sarteck-9.org.

**SARTEC is a Proud Member of AARS, the Alabama Association of Rescue Squads.**
Run (or Dash) for a Great Cause!

Blount County Sav-a-Life will host a 5K Run at Highland Lake on Saturday, April 18. Registration begins at 8:00 a.m. The 5K begins at 9:00 a.m. and the "Lollipop Dash" kicks off at 10:00 a.m.

This 5K offers beautiful lake views and a challenging run. Walkers are also welcome. This 5K starts at the bridge near the intersection of Lake Road/Lakeshore Drive. Participants race around the lake on Lakeshore Drive to the intersection of Kennedy Drive/Lakeshore Drive and back to the starting line.

Registration fee is $25 for adults; $20 for students and senior citizens (65+). Participation in the Lollipop Dash is $5 per child.

The Lollipop Dash is held near the starting line of the 5K, at the F.E. "Pat" Bellew Park walking trail. It is a concrete sidewalk and is 1/8 of a mile long. The Lollipop Race is for ages 3-10. Races are divided by age and start separately. (3 and 4 year olds, 5 and 6 year olds, 7 and 8 year olds, 9 and 10 year olds) All participants win a lollipop. First and second place prizes are given for each age group.

The event will serve as a fundraiser for the non-profit organization that provides free and confidential pregnancy tests and counseling services. Their free services include pregnancy option counseling, peer counseling, parenting classes, baby and maternity supplies, ultra-sounds, and abstinence programs. They are located in downtown Oneonta at 311 First Avenue East. Phone is 205-625-5416. For more information on this agency, visit www.bcsavalife.com.

Registration for this event begins soon! Check their website for more details and entry information!

Easter Egg Hunt

Sat., Apr. 4, 2 p.m.
Pat Bellew Park @ Highland Lake

Egg Hunt for Age Groups
1-3, 4-6, and 7+
Please Bring Basket or Bag for Eggs
Prizes!
Light Refreshments!
Family Fun!
**Town Council Meetings**
1st Monday of each month
7:00 p.m., The Anchor

**Committee Meetings**

**Buildings & Grounds Committee**
2nd Thursday of each month, 10:00 a.m.

**Lake Committee**
2nd Monday of each month, 7:00 p.m.

**Ordinance Committee**
4th Thursday of each month, 5:00 p.m.

**Events & Activities**

**Community Dominoes**
Every Tuesday, 1:00 p.m.

**Lady Lakers**
2nd Thursday of each month, 6:30 p.m.

**Community Easter Egg Hunt**
Saturday, April 4, 2:00 p.m.

**Blount County Sav-a-Life 5K Run**
Saturday, April 18

**Lost in the Woods**
Training by SARTEC for 3rd/4th Graders of Appalachian School - Public Welcome
Wednesday, April 15, 10:00 a.m.
The Anchor