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The Oconee Leader

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Issue 1

Volume 2

From the Oconee to the Apalachee

Thursday, January 4, 2007

50 cents

Local kids enjoy **Super** art camp

By **ROB PEECHER**
The Oconee Leader

North Oconee High School's Students League of Artists hosted a 4-day Winter Art Camp over the holidays, giving elementary school kids an opportunity to create projects they wouldn't ordinarily be able to do.

The NOHS art club was also raising money for a trip to New York at the end of the school year. Cathi Mutimer, the art teacher at North Oconee, said the

fees for the art camp will help raise money for the 6-day trip where students will get to attend museums and Broadway shows.

The 4-day art project involved the children creating superheroes and side-kicks using masks and felt puppets. The art camp was broken into two sessions each day, with kindergarten through

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photos by **ROB PEECHER/Oconee Leader**

Above: Nick Rupert works on a drawing of his superhero while Felicia Li works on her project. Left: Callie Rojas works on her project with NOHS Junior Jacqueline Loevenich.

Mayor: Watkinsville had historic 2006

By **INGUNN MERCER**
The Oconee Leader

"I can't imagine a year more important for our city than 2006," says Mayor Jim Luken. The city has had a very busy year with the Streetscape project, a new code ordinance and its Bicentennial celebration.

The Mayor is very happy with the economic growth in the city.

"Businesses are very important to small towns. If you lose the businesses it greatly effects who wants

to live here. Now we have 10 restaurants and coffee houses in town, and businesses stretch out north and south," he says.

He explains how the north end of Main Street is about to be re-vised.

"This part of town has been kind of the quiet end of town. But they have now started on a project to build 101 upscale apartments in the



area, and Branch Contractors just submitted a plan to re-build their offices which burnt down two and a half years ago. Floyd's Grill will open any day now, and Chicken Express has been doing really well in a location where

two businesses before them failed," he says.

On a drive around town, Mayor Luken points out buildings that will

be renovated and new business offices that have been built and are expected to fill up.

In downtown, Streetscape is nearly complete, and soon the bright and big pedestrian crossing signs will have been traded out for something more pleasing to the eye.

"There is more than one problem with these signs. They are 7 feet up, which is too high, and they have a silver base, whereas everything else

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Volunteers battle Christmas Day blaze

New recruits training begins this month

By **ROB PEECHER**
The Oconee Leader

As many as 40 volunteer firefighters turned out on Christmas Day to battle a blaze at 1160 Daniell's Bridge Road.

Oconee County Fire Chief Bruce Thaxton said no one was hurt during the fire. Firefighters got the call at 12:53 p.m. on December 25. The fire started in a bedroom.

"The owner advised he was smoking and the fire could have started due to an unattended cigarette," Thaxton said. "We had the fire knocked down in 15 minutes, but we spent two to three hours on the

scene putting out hot spots and pulling the ceiling and walls."

Thaxton said the damage was "pretty extensive."

"The insurance company will determine what to do at this point, but it gutted the bedroom and there was heat and smoke damage throughout the rest of the house."

Thaxton said he doesn't remember a Christmas Day fire in the past, but he said the number of volunteers who showed up to fight the fire was more than usual.

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PHILLIP FAULKNER/www.dawgprints.net

Oconee County's volunteer firefighters took about 15 minutes to knock down a house fire that started in a bedroom of this Daniell's Bridge Road home.