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approved, though Chief Dyer does suggest that residents have their chimneys cleaned and inspected if they have not done so already. With the severe drought, any small stray ember could cause a chimney fire or carry and cause a devastating wildfire.

"We're going to need to have a significant amount of rain for it to wet the ground enough to make it safe to burn again," said Chief Dyer. "I don't know exactly what the deficit is right now; it depends on where you're looking at. In October, we had no recorded rainfall here.

"We were in the extreme drought last week, but as of this week, most of Union County except for the north side is in the highest level drought that we can have. It's extremely dry.

"Any fire that we have can really burn. A little bit of wind could come through, and one ember in these conditions could cause a fire to get started."

Because of the extreme drought, potential fires will be more difficult to manage, contain and extinguish,

consuming time and manpower for local officials.

"The biggest problem that we're having is, when we have a fire, we can't just spray some water, rake a few leaves and move on," said Chief Dyer. "This is something that we're going to have to stay to make sure that every bit of it is put out, we're going to have to put a lot of water on it."

Continued Chief Dyer: "The problem is, you get one of those, it's a lot of manpower and hours. But if you get five of those, that's even more manpower and hours, and you're running yourself to death. We're really worried about resources. There's only so much you can do."

To help with area wildfires, the U.S. Forest Service has deployed a helicopter team, stationed in the Blairsville Airport. This crew can rapidly transport personnel to a fire and assist in dousing or controlling the flames more efficiently, especially in a remote area.

As of right now, there has only been one wildfire in Union County, on Chimneytop Mountain near Brasstown Bald

on the Arkaquah Trail.

While this wildfire has been contained, the surrounding areas are currently experiencing extreme wildfires.

White County reported a wildfire on Sunday, Nov. 6, off of Richard Russell Scenic Highway.

Clay County, North Carolina, is battling two wildfires, one in Hayesville and another in Franklin.

Neighboring Fannin County, however, is getting the brunt of the blow with a wildfire in the Cohutta Wilderness Area of the Chattahoochee National Forest, on Rough Ridge. The fire began on Oct. 16 and has since burned through thousands of acres. Due to the location of the fire, officials are allowing it to continue to burn but monitoring the perimeter closely.

Those who are camping and hiking along the Appalachian Trail and various campgrounds throughout the community need to be mindful of the Burn Ban as well.

The county has shared information on the Burn Ban with the Georgia Appalachian Trail Association, the Benton Mackaye Trail Association and the Walasi-yi Mountain Crossing to prevent uninformed

hikers who may come through the area.

On Friday, Nov. 4, the A.T. Conservancy also issued an emergency trail closure in the Nantahala National Forest in North Carolina, due to the dry conditions and high fire danger.

The trail will be closed from Winding Stair Gap (mile 109.8) to Rock Gap (mile 106.1), as well as from Nantahala River (mile 137.1) to Burningtown Gap (mile 124.4).

All campfires or open flames of any kind are strictly prohibited anywhere along the A.T. in Georgia, North Carolina and Tennessee until further notice.

According to Chief Dyer, should someone see an open flame in violation of the current Burn Ban or a wildfire of any size, please call 911 or the Union County Fire Department.

"Please don't burn," said Chief Dyer. "If people see smoke or someone burning then we need to be notified. We'll be glad to answer any questions anyone has. We're just trying to keep people from losing their lives or property over this."

Coosa...from Page 1A



Armed Forces.

Coosa United Methodist Church has been celebrating Veterans Day with an annual appreciation brunch since 2010, and this year commemorated the occasion on Sunday, Nov. 6.

The brunch is meant to thank veterans, certainly, but is also meant to honor those service men and women who are no longer with us, as well as the brave individuals who currently serve in the military.

Donald and Nadine Michaels, with the invaluable help of Phyllis Bowman, were the driving forces behind the establishment of an appreciation brunch at Coosa Methodist, when they decided in 2010 to

look into giving back to those who had given so much for their country.

In 2014, Don received a Quilt of Valor in recognition of past service in the U.S. Army, and the quilt was presented by Coosa's own Jim and Linda Gorman of "The Misty Mountain Quilts of Valor."

Don isn't the only veteran of the family, however. The Michaels' son, Gregory, also served in the U.S. Army.

Sadly and before their times, Don and Greg both succumbed to cancer within the last year and were buried on the same day in February.

Stepping up to help the Michaels organize the Veterans Appreciation Brunch during Don's illness last year were U.S. Army (Ret.) Lt. Col Butch and Becky Quick, and a myriad of individuals helped to organize the event this year as well.

Part of what makes the Coosa event so special is the involvement of the veterans who attend the church.

Each year, veterans of Coosa Methodist contribute to a display area filled with personal effects from years spent in the military, such as photos, medals, newspapers, uniforms and other memorabilia.

Paul Little, himself an Army veteran, brought in an 1862 musket that could have been used by a Confederate veteran during the War Between the States, as well as a Union saber.

Little is proud of his ancestry – he has both a great grandfather and an extended uncle who fought for the Confederacy – and he reminded folks with his contribution to the display that Confederate veterans are honored veterans, too.

As for more modern conflicts, 88-year-old John Gurley shared pictures and his personal history as a World War II-era veteran. Gurley was in the U.S. Navy, and witnessed firsthand the testing of atom bombs in the Bikini Atoll in 1946.

Coosa Methodist on Sunday had representation of veterans from World War II to Korea, as well as from Vietnam to Somalia and Bosnia, and the more than 70 in attendance enjoyed hot meals prepared especially for the occasion by the membership.

The annual Appreciation Brunch is a grand occasion – for the company and the history involved – and all veterans are welcome to attend each year.

"We're thankful for the ones that have gone before, the ones that are here today, and we're thankful for all the other veterans that are fighting to keep America free," said Nadine Michaels.

Nadine would like to thank the following individuals for their help organizing this year's appreciation brunch: Ed and Pat Cook, Pamela Bates, Earl Bishop, James and Linda Gorman, Marvin Grose, John Gurley, Bob Jones, Stanley and Sally Kneeshaw, Becky Curlee, Terry Entwistle, Anne Mincey,



The appreciation brunch is meant to show respect for all U.S. military, both current veterans and those who have passed on, as well as active duty service members.



Coosa Pastor Roy Watkins, himself a veteran, asked veterans in attendance for the Sunday, Nov. 6, service to rise and give their names.

Butch and Becky Quick, Ron Moss, George Upchurch, Paul and Marcia Little, Steve Lobman, Ed Raymond, Clay Carter, as well as those who helped from the early church

service.

Along with recognition for veterans, the Coosa United Methodist is constantly raising money for care packages to send to troops serving overseas.