"Land of Lakes, Mountains, Scenic Beauty and Friendly People"

(75¢)

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

Legal Organ of Union County

**Your Hometown Newspaper Since 1909** 

www.nganews.com Wednesday, December 12, 2018

## Chamber, United Community Bank host Christmas events for the public

#### By Jarrett Whitener North Georgia News Staff Writer

Although the weekend was cold and rainy, the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce brightened the mood with its annual Holly Jolly Christmas event, which took place on Saturday, Dec. 8, at the Union County Community Center.

More than 100 attendees made their way through the events at the Community Center, some of whom waited outside for the doors to open so they could be among the first to enjoy the festivities.

"We had people lined up at the door at 8:30 this morning,' said Chamber President Steve Rowe. "The only thing we didn't get to do was the train, but we have the Chick-fil-A cow upstairs, and

Santa up there. "We are definitely happy with the outcome, considering the weather. It's been great. We have the Gingerbread Village and Tour of Trees alongside these other activities.'

In the lower floor of the Community Center, attendees could enjoy a few reindeer games and a cakewalk, which was provided by Dixie Confexions.

On the way up the stairs, there were two photo opportunities for attendees to take advantage of if they wanted a picture to capture the moment.

"What we did with the photo ops is, we have people here to take the picture using the guest's phone, then they can take their picture themselves to print it off and use for a Christmas card if they want,"

Upstairs, the Blairsville Post Office had an area set up for kids to come by and write their letters to send to Santa, and kids crowded around the area, awaiting the opportunity to personally write to Santa and tell him what they wanted for Christmas.

Children also had the opportunity to meet the big man in person, as they navigated the line for the chance to sit in his lap while all the parents took pictures

The line for Santa stretched out the doors, and many families mingled around the room as their kids waited their turn.

Breakfast with Santa was hosted by United Community Bank, which partnered with

See Christmas, Page 6A



Kids and adults alike had a blast at the 2018 Holly Jolly Christmas and Breakfast with Santa. sponsored by the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce in concert with United Community Bank. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

## **Vogel Tree Lighting continues** despite cold and rainy weather

#### By Jarrett Whitener North Georgia News Staff Writer

Despite the cold and rainy weather, Vogel State Park went through with its annual Christmas Program and Tree Lighting, ensuring the event did not get canceled for bad weather a second year in a rov

While the event could not be held in the normal field across from the big tree due to rain, organizers still made the event possible by moving it under the large pavilion sitting on the lake.

This relocation and weather did not stop guests from coming to celebrate the annual event, with some attendees making sure that they would get the chance to be part of the program.

As time passed, the small crowd grew to fill the entire pavilion, eventually leaving no more seats for people to take. For the first hour of Baptist Church, and other local



Santa Claus and Janet Hill at the 2018 Vogel State Park Tree Lighting, with Mike and Cheri Young. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

the event, attendees mingled churches that wanted to provide with each other in social hour beverages and snacks for the fashion while enjoying hot event. chocolate and cookies provided by House of Prayer, Pine Top

## Shop with a Cop takes 100 children shopping for Christmas

#### **By Jarrett Whitener** North Georgia News Staff Writer

With Christmastime and the season of giving well underway, many families struggle to provide some of the Christmas luxuries that bring magic to this time of the year.

equal opportunity to enjoy the season, the Blairsville Police Department, with help from other local first responders, held the annual Shop with a Cop Program on Saturday, Dec. 8, at the Walmart in Blairsville.

Most of the children in the program range from fifth grade to high school, and each child is given an allotted



Keith Lockwood and Ginger Carey of the Union County Schools Police Department during the 2018 Shop with a Cop on Photo by Jarrett Whitener Saturday, Dec. 8.

their time with the program. of Shop with a Cop," said When we first started, we took organizer Cindy Neely. "We See Shop with a Cop, Page 3A

have helped an average of 100 "This is our 18th year children for the last 10 years.

**Union County fifth-graders** 

# To help give children an

This program offers children in need the opportunity to personally pick their own gifts, allowing them to move freely around the store with adult chaperones as they look for Christmas presents for themselves and others.

## graduate from D.A.R.E. program



Union County fifth-graders graduated from the D.A.R.E. program on Friday, Dec. 7, at the Fine Arts Center. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

#### **By Jarrett Whitener** North Georgia News Staff Writer

Union County Schools celebrated fifth-graders who completed the D.A.R.E. program and gave each student a certificate during a graduation ceremony on Friday, Dec. 7, at the Fine Arts Center.

D.A.R.E. stands for Drug Abuse Resistance Education, and nearly 250 students took part in the ceremony.

Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris was the first speaker that day, and he talked with the children about the dedication of Union County educators and the Schools Police Department in teaching them about drug abuse.

"Just remember that the D.A.R.E. program is important,

Fri: Rain

Vol. 109 No. 50

4 Sections 28 Pages

Weather

Thurs: Cloudy Hi 48 Lo 42

Sat: Showers Hi 48 Lo 34

Hi 47 Lo 39

and that these guys know what's best for you," said Paris. "They're going to teach you need to take seriously. what's best for you.

"And thank you all for being good citizens of Union County and making this a better place to live, because of how responsible and how educated you guys are becoming, and you are our future in this county."

Following Commissioner Paris, Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley took the podium to say a few words to the D.A.R.E. graduates.

the police department here at the school and all the teachers and everyone, the Board of Education and all the board contest was Natalie Henderson, members, and everyone who had a part establishing this program here in Union County

Inside

**Classifieds 2D** 

4C

**4**A

4D

6C

2B

Arrests

Church

Opinion

Legals

Obits

Sports

Schools," said Mayor Conley. 'This is something you really

See Vogel, Page 6A

"It doesn't take very much for you to get influenced by your peers to do something you shouldn't be doing. I am proud of each and every one of you students that are graduating today.

Each student was individually called up during graduation to accept their hardearned diplomas for completing the program.

Students were required "I'm so appreciative of to write essays prior to the ceremony, and each essay was submitted in a contest.

The winner of the essay who read aloud her essay on the importance of the D.A.R.E. See D.A.R.E., Page 2A

SPORTS

BASKETBALL

Dec. 11 @ Towns Co. 6 PM

Dec. 14 @ Elbert Co. 7 PM

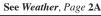
Dec. 15 vs. Monticello 2 PM

## winter weather with Ready.gov

By Shawn Jarrard North Georgia News editor@nganews.com

Residents of the North Georgia Mountains just experienced their first taste of winter weather for the season, getting plenty of rain over the weekend followed by a light mix of sleet and snow early Monday.

In an attempt to get ahead of the large storm front that began moving through the region on Friday, the National Weather Service issued a Winter Storm Warning and held a series of special weather briefings late last week.





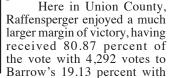
Heading into Saturday Georgia 180 got some snow near Brasstown Bald and Jacks evening, some weather models Gap at the Towns/Union line on Sunday, Dec. 9. See Weather Page 2A Photo by Lowell Nicholson

## Raffensperger, Eaton win locally and statewide in Dec. 4 runoff

#### **By Shawn Jarrard** North Georgia News editor@nganews.com

With results favoring the Republican Party in the Dec. 4 General Election Runoff, the 2018 midterm election season is finally over in Georgia.

Republican Brad Raffensperger defeated his Democratic challenger Josh Barrow in the runoff race for Secretary of State, taking 759,944 votes (51.97 percent) to Barrow's 702,251 votes (48.03 percent) statewide.



Right

The Price is Right

Coming to

GA Mtn Fairgrounds

See page 2C



**Brad Raffensperger** 

1,015 votes.

Both statewide and locally, Republican Incumbent



**Chuck Eaton** 

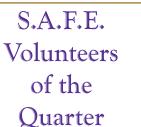
Chuck Eaton experienced similar margins as Raffensperger in his

See Election, Page 2A

#### **Pearl Harbor** Remembrance



See page 1C



See page 3A