

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Fourth of July festivities promise fun and fireworks

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

On July 4, 1776, the Founding Fathers of the United States of America put forth a document that forever changed the way mankind viewed freedom.

Thanks to those original patriots, and to the brave men and women who have kept America free from that day forward, Americans everywhere will be celebrating the nation's 241st birthday this coming Tuesday, July 4, 2017.

Union County residents and visitors from around the region will have plenty of patriotic outing options this year, starting with the Nottely Marina Annual Fourth of July Boat Parade on Saturday,

July 1. Lake-loving independence celebrants are encouraged to decorate their jet skis, pontoons, canoes, kayaks and any other kinds of boats for the parade. Past decorative themes have been patriotic and otherwise, ranging from Frozen to pirates to Ghostbusters.

Line-up time for the Nottely Marina Fourth of July Boat Parade is at 11 a.m. this Saturday, and trophies will go out at 12:30 p.m.

The event is free for spectators and those entering the parade. Nottely Marina is located three miles north of Blairsville up U.S. 129N, at 86 Doucette Circle.

Independence Day is on a Tuesday this year, and even though it's a weekday, there's still tons to be done to celebrate the holiday.

Vogel State Park kicks off its Fourth of July Celebration with an 8:30 a.m. flag raising ceremony, and will have various family activities and games throughout the day. Parking at Vogel is \$5.

As for fireworks, quite possibly the biggest annual show in the area will be the annual Independence Day Fireworks at Meeks Park.

The Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce, in conjunction with fireworks sponsor WoodmenLife, will be hosting its biggest ever show, with more bangs and a longer runtime than in previous years.

As usual, the chamber is holding a \$10 raffle to win \$1,000, the proceeds of which will go toward the cost of the

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Nottely Marina holds an Annual Fourth of July Boat Parade. 2016 parade participants pictured here. Photo/Lily Avery

Sheriff's Office nabs 37 in massive drug bust

By Charles Duncan
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The Union County Sheriff's Office has recorded the biggest methamphetamine bust in the history of the department.

The bust was generated through Operation Ghost, a nine-month narcotics investigation, and netted 37 arrests including the persons responsible for bringing the drug into the county, Union County Sheriff Mack Mason said.

At least eight people have been charged with RICO or Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, Union County Jail records show.



Christie Goode aka Christie Blair

"It was quite a lick," Sheriff Mason said. "And we hope we're sending the right message to drug dealers - stay out of Union County."

Operation Ghost got started on a tip from a



Matthew Ryan Vaughn

neighboring county sheriff's office. From day one, the investigation grew and grew, culminating in 37 arrests last Thursday, Sheriff Mason said.

"It was a total team effort," the sheriff said. "We had everyone in the

department working this one, from our office personnel to folks in the jail, patrol, CID, Warrants, Blairsville Police Department and State Probation Services."

"Based on the tip we received, we started gathering information and went with it from there," Union County Sheriff's Sgt. Tyler Miller said. "We worked controlled buys and built our case from top to bottom."

The sting operation netted two vehicle seizures, \$16,000 in cash, and more than 200 grams of methamphetamine valued at more than \$20,000 on the street, a substantial amount of marijuana, three firearms, and one stolen firearm, said

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Carry class back by popular demand

By Charles Duncan
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Interested in starting a gun club/shooting range in Union County?

On July 10, 2017, starting at 6 p.m., you will get your chance to organize the effort.

The Union County Sheriff's Office will sponsor a Firearms Conceal & Carry Class. The class is open to the public and free of charge. The actual class will start at 6 p.m. and last until 7:15 p.m. Following a brief intermission, the organizational meeting for the gun club/shooting range will begin at 7:30 p.m., Union

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Union County Sheriff Mack Mason

12U Girls Softball: 'We Are the Champions!'



Union County 12U Dizzy Dean Girls Softball State Champions

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

VALDOSTA - The Department's 12U All-Star

softball team needed just 12 state title in five years.

Following a district tournament that saw them run roughshod over their

opposition, the Lady Panthers at state, outscoring the competition 37-3 over three mercy-rule

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T. Graham Brown and Jimmy Fortune headline Fairgrounds on Saturday

By Charles Duncan
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To hear him tell it, T. Graham Brown isn't doing half bad for 62 years old.

"I'm having the time of my life," the Georgia native said last week in a telephone interview. "I'm having more fun now than I've ever had in my life."

He began his career in 1973, chasing big record labels and radio stations.

Now, an established

star for more than 35 years, the dark brown locks turned to silver, T. Graham doesn't have to bargain for elbow room.

He has recorded a total of 13 studio albums, and has charted more than 20 singles on the Billboard Hot Country songs chart. He also has been nominated for a Grammy for Best Grassroots Gospel.

T. Graham Brown and Jimmy Fortune are headed to Hiwassee's Anderson Music Hall on Saturday, July 1 at 7

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T. Graham Brown. Photo/Facebook



L-R: Tobie Chandler, Carrie Beary, Regina Allison, Chris Coleman and Sheila Freeman, all of the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce. Look for signs like this around town during Buy Local Week! Photo/Shawn Jarrard

'Buy Local Week' to celebrate community with discounts

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

What better way to support local businesses than to embrace the upcoming Buy Local Week?

Back by popular demand - and thanks to vendor feedback - the usual Buy Local Weekend has received an upgrade, becoming

Buy Local Week, and will run Saturday, July 1, through Saturday, July 8.

The event, put on by the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce, continues to grow each year, both in community turnout and the number of businesses participating with discounts in the form of coupons

usable during Buy Local Week.

"Buy Local Week is sponsored by Impact Design and Creations, so we appreciate them sponsoring this," said Chamber President Regina Allison. "We're distributing coupon sheets throughout the community, and they're also going to be on our website."

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Board of Education drug tests approved for middle school

By Lily Avery
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

The Union County Board of Education has unanimously voted to implement a new drug policy at Union County Middle School.

"The recommendation for that to be implemented originated out of the middle school governance team, which is a group of parents and



Board members Keith Potts and Patrick White. Photo/Lily Avery

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EARLY DEADLINE THIS WEEK

ALL ADS AND NEWS COPY MUST BE IN BY NOON ON THURSDAY, JUNE 29TH