

## Allison ...

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Ridge Mountain EMC has supported the Chamber for decades and has played an active role in providing support in numerous ways from teaching classes at the Leadership Union Program and providing assistance to the Youth Leadership Union Program to sponsorships, providing staff support and volunteers as well as providing leadership to the organization.

Blue Ridge Mountain EMC has been in existence and served the local community since 1938 with utility services and have since branched out to provide services in areas such as low-cost appliances, energy efficient programs and fiber-optic broadband to name a few.

“Concern for the community”, is one of the seven core cooperative principles which the employees of Blue Ridge Mountain EMC take to heart. EMC employees are actively engaged in the community whether it is volunteering to work at community events or volunteering on community Boards and Commissions. Some of these include the Blairsville Scottish Festival & Highland Games, Habitat for Humanity of Towns/Union Counties, Blairsville Kiwanis Club, Union County Rotary Club, Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce as board members, Community Council-Georgia Mountain Research and Education Center, the Blairsville-Union County Community Comprehensive

Plan and the Union County Development Authority to name a few.

Over the past several years, Blue Ridge Mountain EMC has also provided significant financial support to such local organizations as the Union County Public Schools, Allegheny Masonic Lodge, Blairsville Cruisers, Enotah District CASA, Glenda Gooch House, S.A.F.E., Special Olympics, TULIP, Tri-County Junior Golf Association, Union County Anti-Drug Coalition, Union County Historical Society, Union County Relay for Life, Union County Rotary Club, Byron Herbert Reece Society, Habitat for Humanity of Towns/Union Counties, Cooper’s Creek Sportsmen for Kids, FCA (North Georgia Chapter), The Humane Society’s Mountain Shelter, North Georgia Technical College, Blairsville Scottish Festival & Highland Games, Run Above the Clouds, Georgia Mountain Research & Education Center- Community Council, Union County Youth Leadership, and many others.

Blue Ridge Mountain EMC is also in the process of upgrading the existing substation in Union County to improve reliability and will add significant capacity to accommodate future growth of the electric load in the Blairsville area.

Thank you to all the employees of Blue Ridge Mountain EMC for your hard work and commitment to our community! Thank you for all that you have done for the Chamber! Congratulations on being awarded the Business of the Quarter!

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down from drug-free workplace policies that help ensure public health and safety. Common sense would also have parents and school personnel recognizing the harm to young people, but the constant talk that marijuana is harmless has many authority figures looking the other way when it comes to teen marijuana use.

We also hear that marijuana should be viewed the same way as alcohol, which is socially acceptable for adults, yet we would never consider it appropriate to use alcohol in a way that negatively impacts the workplace or allow kids to use alcohol.

According to The Economic Costs of Alcohol Abuse report, alcoholism costs U.S. employers 500 million lost work days per year (National Institute on Drug Abuse). The cost of alcohol abuse in the United States is at least \$185 billion annually. In other words, for every dollar we bring in, we spend ten. So, why are we holding this up as an example of a great revenue model?

It has been said that by regulating marijuana like alcohol, teen use will decrease. But since more than 70 percent of teens 18 years and under have experienced drinking alcohol, it does not seem likely that treating marijuana as alcohol will result in less use by teens. When adolescents use marijuana regularly, they can experience a lasting 6-8 point I.Q. reduction that, for most people, drops them significantly for potentially completing their education and gaining substantial future employment.

Treating marijuana the same as alcohol is impossible for several reasons. The potency and serving suggestions for marijuana cannot be standardized in the same way regulatory authorities have measured alcohol, due to lack of uniform measurement techniques. Additionally, there are no measurements for marijuana impairment that relate across the board to how we understand alcohol impairment. A simple

breath alcohol test allows us to know the immediate blood-alcohol ratio impacting the subject’s brain, where no such standard exists for marijuana.

As commercialized marijuana products continue to be refined and enhanced, allowing for levels of THC that are commonly 10-20 times more potent than in previous decades, some users report effects of acute impairment lasting for days after use. Therefore, an employer who takes the view that Friday night use of marijuana is none of his concern will begin to see ramifications when impairment on Monday morning does endanger workplace safety.

These are just a few of the reasons it remains imperative for employers to maintain thorough and consistent screening practices. As screening becomes more advanced through techniques such as oral swabbing, which allows for shorter detection time with THC, sending strong messages that impairment in the workplace will not be tolerated is both public safety and fiscally responsible.

While the marijuana industry does project billions of dollars streaming into the economy through tax revenues, polls and pundits alike fail to attempt to calculate cost load. Here are some important things we must consider:

A federal report on workplace drug testing by SAMHSA states that employees using marijuana cause 55 percent more accidents than those who do not, and positive drug tests showing THC in the employee’s system verifies 85 percent more on-the-job injuries by marijuana users. This same report lists increased absenteeism and loss of work productivity as additional costs to the U.S. employer. While the National Drug Intelligence Center reports that substance abuse costs this country upwards of \$193 billion each year, these costs are limited in scope and do not include the costs of associated destructive behaviors, such as child abuse or domestic violence.

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raise enough money to get the ramp extended up to the parking area and make this time a little easier on Libby and her family.

If you can help in any way with a donation, material, help building, or prayer, it will be greatly appreciated.

Libby is a pillar of the community. Before being faced with a battle against cancer, she worked diligently at her home church, Fairview Baptist. For almost 50 years, she rarely missed church – only in extreme cases would she miss church. She cleaned the church weekly, she helped with numerous weddings, and she worked so hard with Bible school, as that is where her heart led her. She also devoted time to the Fall Festival, the annual Christmas program, Easter, being a Sunday school teacher, and the list goes on.

If God lays it upon your heart to give, please do. Otherwise pray like you have never prayed before. Put Jesus’ name upon your lips and call out Libby’s name for God’s Will to be done in her life and in the heal-

ing of her body. Not only for Libby, but also for others who also have a similar need. And there are so many.

Her family has been touched by cancer so closely this year that sometimes it is hard to breath. Her oldest sister lost her husband (the Rev. Waymon Lovell) to lung cancer this year; her half sister has been battling breast cancer this year, and her half brother’s wife is seeing an oncologist for cancer.

This community knows prayer can touch each of them.

If each of us gives \$10, we can raise enough money to help Libby build her wheelchair ramp, and help her with some expenses of traveling back and forth to the doctors in Gainesville.

She has a gofundme page on Facebook, just search for Libby Burrell, her daughter Angie, or daughter Carrie Burrell Monkus. Or, if you want to bring a check by the newspaper, please do. Make the check out to Libby Burrell.

You’ll be proud that you helped a Christian in need.

## Paris... continued from Page 4A

enport Veterans Building and at the office of Avita Community Partners.

**Q. We saw that a new playground is being constructed in Suches. Who will be able to use it since it is behind the school?**

A. The county, through SPLOST funding, is completing a new playground adjacent to the tennis courts in Suches. While it is on school property and certainly will be available to the school children, when school is not in session, it will also be accessible to the public. We are excited to be able to work with the Union County School System to assist them as well as the Suches community. There will also be a small walking trail between the school and the facility.

**Q. When will the Suches playground be completed?**

A. The playground is already complete. We should have the walking trail ready by

## Cummings ...

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made his way to the quarterback.

A few plays later as the ball was snapped, the Hovater boy through a handful of mud into Uncle Bud’s eyes just as the center snapped the ball. Pretty soon my young uncle was covered with cuts and bruises as he made his way to the huddle.

Junior’s eyes met Uncle Bud. Junior asked Uncle Bud, “Can you get Hovater on the ground?” Bud said, “Yes. What have you got up your sleeve?” Junior replied, “You just get Hovater on the ground and don’t let him up.”

The next play Uncle Bud kept his head down until the ball was snapped at which he launched himself into the gut of Hovater knocking him to the ground and the air from his lungs. Uncle Bud lay on the Hovater boy and Junior kicked him in the mouth knocking out his teeth. This play changed the course of the game. The Hovater boy could not play anymore.

He was the heart and soul of this team and when he was removed from the game the boys from Phil Campbell launched a comeback. Hovater left in the 4th quarter and Phil Campbell was behind by 10 points. Phil Campbell scored a touchdown to pull within 3 points. The game still looked out of reach until the defensive end, Uncle Bud, intercepted a pass and ran the ball 83 yards for a touchdown.

I was told that he ran the last 15 yards with two wideouts and a tailback hanging on to his waist and shoulders.

Junior Cummings better known as “Big Mamma,” carried his younger cousin off the field on his shoulders in celebration. Just to let you know, Junior went on to become a preacher later in life.

## Fowler...

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er in unity (Psa. 133), sharing meals and possessions with one another (Acts 2), stimulating one another to love and good deeds, and encouraging one another (Heb. 10). This means hugs, laughing, crying, giving, and receiving. This means “facetime” not Facebook.

Social media may be harmful or helpful depending on how and why it is used, but it will never be a substitute for the fellowship of believers, “and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ” (1 Jn. 1:3). That is the church’s blessing, and we don’t need artificial intelligence to enjoy it.

## Mattee...

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try to damage the nest first so the chemical can penetrate and reach the caterpillars.

Union and Towns County Extension will be holding a Master Naturalist Class Wednesdays starting July 26th and ending September 20th at the Georgia Mountain Research and Education Center. This is an eight week course that meets once a week and covers wildlife management, tree and insect ID, invasive species, Georgia natural history, and many other topics. Registration fee is \$250 for the entire eight week course. Please register ASAP!

## Lightner...

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care, especially since the south suffers from poorer health than the rest of the country.

The cuts are being made to fund a tax cut for the very wealthy.

**Mary Lightner, Young Harris**

the end of this month.

**Q. We were at the Union County Community Center this week and saw that ACCG was utilizing the facility. What is the purpose of them being here in Union County?**

A. Association of County Commissioners (ACCG), whose board I serve on, provides educational classes to commissioners all over Georgia. The classes are all conducted by the University of Georgia’s Carl Vincent Institute and they do a phenomenal job. They have several centralized classes during the Georgia Legislative session in February and also at our annual conference in Savannah in May. Other parts of the year they hold classes all over the state of Georgia. We are honored that they chose to have their Leadership Class here in Union County this week. Commissioners from all over the state of Georgia are here attending and they are excited to be here. They cannot believe the great service they are receiving and the participants love the mountain views and the cooler temperatures. We appreciate their renting our facilities for this three-day class. We commissioners rely on this training to make sure we keep up to date on all aspects of government, so that we can better serve our constituents.