

Christmas...from Page 1A



Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus leading the 2017 Blairsville Christmas Parade, the first ever to take place at night. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

participated in the parade, including local civic organizations and owners of classic cars, and there were a great many festive floats all decked out in lights and other Christmas decorations.

The Union County Sheriff's Office led the parade with Santa and Mrs. Claus in tow, followed by the students of the Union County High School Marching Band, who supplied joyous Christmas music for everyone to hear.

Union General Hospital even put a live nativity in the parade, and the Woody Gap Band of Steel played popular Christmas tunes on their steel drums.

Much candy went out to an untold number of children that evening, and all told, the parade was an absolute

success, thanks in large part, too, to parade emcee Libby Stevens and the city and county first responders who blocked off the parade route to through traffic.

Enotah CASA Executive Director Linda D'Angelo and volunteers placed and lit a couple hundred luminaries around the square that evening, to remind folks present of the growing need for the care of Union County's foster children.

"Last year, we had 87 children from Union County in foster care that we served," said D'Angelo. "Today, there are 63 children in foster care right here in Union County that won't be at home for the holidays."

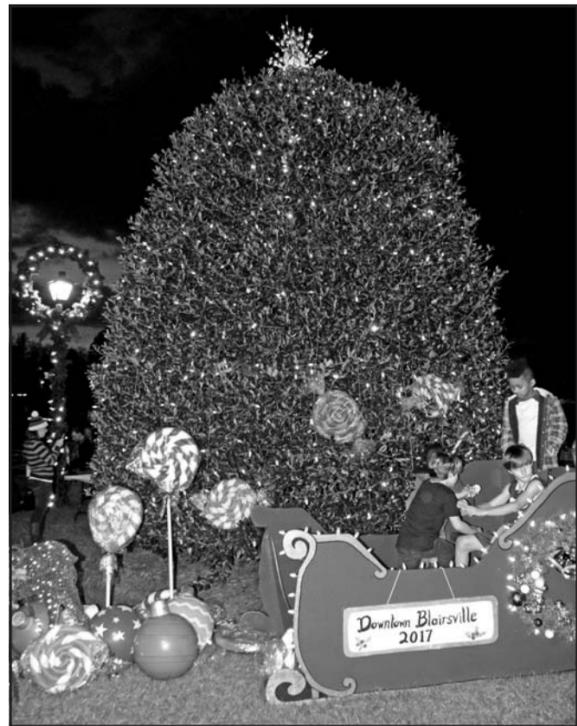
To find out how to get involved with helping local

foster children, either by volunteering or donating to the cause, visit EnotahCASA.org.

For their parts in making the Dec. 2 festivities possible, DDA Program Manager Darren Harper would like to thank:

The City of Blairsville Maintenance Department,

Nathan Meunier, Michael Pimentel, First Baptist Church Blairsville, Jennifer Queen, Judy Lanier, Lorri Burks, Renee Deibert, Danielle Vaughn, the Union County Historical Society, Joanne Sales, Libby Stevens, Enotah CASA and all other volunteers and parade participants.



Darren Harper of the Blairsville DDA and a few of his helpers decorated the Christmas tree at the Old Union County Courthouse. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

1941...from Page 1A

were killed; and another 1,282 were wounded.

On Dec. 8, 1941, U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt met with lawmakers in a joint session of Congress to tell them that a full declaration of war was necessary.

President Roosevelt described the Dec. 7 attack by the Empire of Japan as "a date which will live in infamy."

The U.S. entered World War II on two fronts, in Europe and in the Pacific, because of what happened 76 years ago.

We all know the end results.

Towns County resident and World War II Veteran Bud Johnson was aboard the USS Rhind, a destroyer, in the Atlantic Ocean when Pearl Harbor was attacked.

"I went in the Navy in April of 1939, when I was 17 years old, so I had two and a half years in the Navy," said Johnson. "I had spent all my time up until that time in the Atlantic fleet."

"I was serving on my second destroyer when we got the word that morning, with the time difference over here in the Atlantic, and we were aghast at what happened - we couldn't believe it."

Johnson, now 95, was a petty officer third class aboard

the USS Rhind, and he was on watch when his ship was informed of the attack.

He and his shipmates were on their way back from a stint in Europe, and their ship was due for upkeep and overhaul.

If Johnson had his way, America would remember Pearl Harbor the way it remembers veterans on Veterans Day.

"Dec. 7, it's a forgotten day," Johnson said. "Not forgotten by veterans, but the folks who fought in World War II are getting fewer by the day."

"Pearl is the reason we entered World War II. It's the reason that a million young kids enlisted in the U.S. military."

"It was one of the greatest acts of terrorism this earth has ever known, and it was on our soil. Forget? Not me."

Johnson wasn't a Pearl survivor, but he was at Iwo Jima a few years later.

He wouldn't have been there if not for the Dec. 7, 1941, attack on Pearl.

"You have to trace every

battle fought by a U.S. military man in World War

II back to Pearl," he said. "President Roosevelt was right, it was a date that lived in infamy."

"It's time that each year we should honor the almost 4,000 that were killed or wounded on Dec. 7, 1941. It's no different than Sept. 11, 2001; it was just 60 years before the attacks in the Northeast."

Continued Johnson: "Same thing, both were acts of terrorism and both sent us to war. We remember the 9/11 victims, but we've almost totally forgotten the Pearl victims. That's a shame."

Johnson has compiled books on Pearl Harbor and Iwo Jima, and is working on his extensive autobiography. He has taken up a call to arms in serving veterans within the community, and that has become a large part of his purpose these days.

"As long as God gives me breath, I will honor these precious people out there who sacrificed for our freedom," said Johnson. "They paid the full price."

Water...from Page 1A

establishments" that they were subject to specific state guidelines.

"Boiled Water Advisories are issued when an event has occurred allowing the possibility for the water distribution system to become biologically contaminated," per Health Department information. "An advisory does not mean that the water is contaminated, but rather that it could be contaminated."

"Because the water quality is unknown, food service establishments should assume the water is unsafe to drink or use and take the appropriate precautions."

Without warning, food service establishments around town had to either shut down or drastically alter their operations to accommodate the strict water use guidelines during a BWA.

For about three days, several popular restaurants remained closed, including Chick-fil-A and Burger King, while other places had little time to react to the advisory.

Union General Hospital, area assisted living facilities, and Union County Schools had to purchase or otherwise acquire water and ice for consumption, as did restaurants that decided to stay open, and special sanitary precautions had to be followed for the washing of dishes and people's hands.

Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley said that the water snafu was a mistake made by the city and the Blairsville Water Treatment Plant, and that poor planning was the cause of the mistake.

"Everyone on our system, I apologize to them," said Mayor Conley. "I'm just so sorry that the people who have been closed had to close, and that their employees were out of work at this time of the year."

"That's what gets to me more than anything, to realize that businesses closed, and people were not able to earn their pay. And it being this time of year, right here just past Thanksgiving, going into Christmas."

"That's not easy, because



The notice posted at Burger King during the recent Boiled Water Advisory. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

most of the people who have jobs need to work and get their hours in every week. This has caused some people to lose time on their job."

The city lifted its Boiled Water Advisory on Thursday, Nov. 30, at about 10 a.m., after it received the all-clear from a required series of negative bacteriological water samples taken from inside the cleaned storage tanks.

Once the health department learned the advisory had been lifted, it notified all food service establishments that they could begin to resume normal operations once more.

The city decided in July to clean its tanks, after the

EPD conducted a survey that gave Blairsville City Hall two years to get it done, and it just so happened that the company contracted to do the cleaning was booked up until the week of Nov. 27.

Mayor Conley said that the next time the city has to issue an advisory for planned maintenance reasons, the city will give its roughly 3,000 water customers at least three weeks advance notice.

Already, the city has implemented a better notification system - it utilized the county's alert notification system to announce that the advisory had been lifted on Nov. 30.