

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Legal Organ of Union County

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STAR students, teachers named

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
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The STAR students and teachers have been announced for Union County and Woody Gap schools.

Alice Francis is the STAR Student for Union County, and her STAR Teacher is Amy Payne.

At The Woody Gap School, the STAR Student is Logan Wood, and his STAR Teacher is Althea Cantrell.

The four will be honored by the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce at its Annual Meeting & STAR Presentation sponsored by Budget Blinds.

The event will be held on Tuesday, Feb. 18 at 11:45 a.m. at the Union County Community Center.

Chambers President Cindy Williams says seating is limited and tickets are selling fast.

"Attendees can look forward to our annual Chamber programs and statistics update which will highlight the top accomplishments



Alice Francis
of 2013 as well as exciting announcements for 2014," Williams said. "Each attendee will be first to receive a complimentary copy of our brand new 2014 Community Magazine and Business Directory which features a variety of stories and resources for residents, newcomers, and visitors.



Amy Payne
"Lunch will be provided by The View Grill," she said. Tickets are \$20 for members and \$30 for non-members. Registration is required by Friday, Feb. 14, by calling (706) 745-5789. To obtain the STAR See STAR, 2A

Mayor receives Certificate of Excellence

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
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Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley received the Certificate of Excellence from the Georgia Municipal Training Institute at the Georgia Municipal Association's Annual Mayors Day Conference in Atlanta on Monday.

To receive a Certificate of Excellence, a city official must complete a minimum of 120 units of credit, including nine courses from the required list, and the Robert E. Knox Jr. Municipal Leadership Institute.

The training program consists of a series of more than 40 courses.

The Georgia Municipal Training Institute, a cooperative effort of the Georgia Municipal Association and the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government, provides a nationally recognized series of training opportunities for elected city officials.

"This is an outstanding



Mayor Jim Conley

achievement," said GMA Executive Director Lamar Norton. "We commend Mayor Conley for this accomplishment and for the dedication he's shown in using this valuable resource to become a more effective city official."

Mayor Conley is the president of the Georgia Municipal Association's Second District.

The Municipal Association is based in Atlanta. It is a voluntary, non-profit organization that provides legislative advocacy, research, training, employee benefit and technical consulting services to its

500 member cities.

Mayor Conley and the City Council during his tenure as mayor, have completed an unprecedented package of projects related to water and sewer.

Since 2008, more than \$9 million in upgrades have been completed using low interest loans, grant dollars and less than \$750,000 in city funds.

The city's sewer capacity has been increased from 400,000 gallons of treatment capacity per day to 1 million gallons of sewer capacity per day.

Also, the city has used Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax shared with the county, to complete a total renovation project at City Hall.

Also, the city has just completed the grading and paving of the land to be used for the construction of a new North Terminal at the Blairsville Municipal Airport, thus, further enhancing the city's economic development attraction.

Hartman exits DDA; Harper comes home

By Charles Duncan
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Blairsville Downtown Development Authority Director Janet Hartman is leaving after seven years to spend more time with her family.

Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley said Hartman leaves behind some large shoes to fill.

"We're going to miss Janet Hartman," Mayor Conley said. "She has been an incredible asset to the city of Blairsville and she will be missed."

Hartman said she leaves the job with mixed emotions.

"Obviously, I'm going to miss this job," Hartman said. "But, I need to spend more time with my family. I'll be living in Atlanta part-time, my husband works in Atlanta, and we'll be able to spend a little more time together.

We'll also keep our residence in Blairsville. We want to stay connected to the community, it's such a great place."

Hartman said she loves the Blairsville experience.

"I love what I have done



New DDA Director Darren Harper with the departing DDA Director Janet Hartman. Photo/Charles Duncan

here, the community has been great to work with," she said. "I've been doing the development authority for seven years and it's really been a great ride.

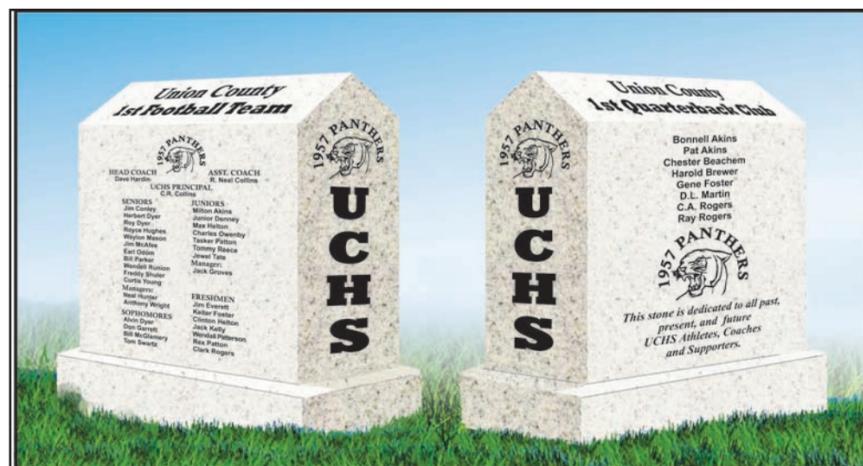
"We've had some great projects, we've seen some

change, hopefully we'll continue to see development and growth," Hartman said.

"We're hoping for good things that will help the city and community overall.

See DDA, 2A

Class of '57 monument unveiled



By Charles Duncan
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The rendering of the monument for the 1957 Union County Panthers' football team, the school's principal in

County High School history, has been unveiled.

The monument, which will be erected outside Mike Colwell Memorial Stadium, will include the names of all players, managers and coaches, the school's principal in

1957, and the first Union County Quarterback Club members.

The 1957 Football team members are on the fund-raising trail to raise money for the lasting tribute to the Class of

See Panthers, 2A

Brown sentenced to 25 years, do 10

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
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A 57-year-old Blairsville man has been sentenced to 25 years, serve 10 for the conviction of kidnapping his estranged wife and other charges from June 21, 2012.

Senior Judge Frank Mills, of Cherokee County, sentenced Brown Jan. 21 in Union County Superior Court.

Brown, a Union County native and longtime businessman, was convicted Dec. 13 of kidnapping, aggravated assault in violation of Georgia's Family Violence Act, two counts possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony, possession of an illegal weapon, and terroristic threats.

Another charge, false imprisonment, was merged with Count 1, kidnapping, Union County Superior Court records show.

In addition to the lengthy sentence, Brown was fined \$12,550, including court costs, and banished from the Etowah Judicial Circuit.

That banishment includes a line running 10 miles outside the far side of the City Limits of Chattanooga, Tenn., to Knoxville, Tenn., to Asheville, NC, to Greenville, SC, to Atlanta and back to Chattanooga for the length of Brown's probation period, Union County Superior Court



Ronnie Dale Brown
records show.

Brown did receive credit for time served while awaiting trial.

Brown, represented by Richard Ryzek and Andrew Dowdy, and his estranged wife Debra Brown, were going through a divorce at the time the incident occurred in June 2012.

Ronnie Brown's attorney Ryzek has filed a motion for a new trial. Brown also has filed a motion to remain in the Union County Jail while his appeals are being heard.

The case began to unfold on June 21, 2012, Ronnie Brown showed up at his wife's place of work at Union General Hospital, and at gunpoint, forced her to leave that location in his vehicle. The

incident occurred around 4:30 p.m. on June 21, Union County sheriff's authorities have said.

Debra Brown was then taken to a location near Wolf Creek where she was held against her will, Union County arrest warrants and sheriff's reports showed.

Authorities said Debra Brown talked her way through the incident, convinced her husband that the two would get back together, and convinced Ronnie Brown to take her back to her car. When they arrived back at Debra Brown's car, both got into Debra Brown's vehicle. The couple then traveled to Debra Brown's parents house; Ronnie Brown brought the gun, later determined to be a sawed off shotgun, along for the ride, sheriff's authorities said.

Authorities say Debra Brown went into the home, told her folks to call 911 and went out the back door. The 911 call came from 169 C.H. Colwell Drive, the home of Debra Brown's parents, Union sheriff's authorities said.

Then Union County sheriff's Deputy Travis Gibson soon arrived and began questioning Ronnie Brown as he stood outside.

"Deputy Gibson asked him if he had a gun," then Investigator Lamar Dyer said.

"He said he had no gun,

See Brown, 2A

Pride comes to the Music Hall April 12

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
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Charley Pride is coming to Anderson Music Hall in Hiwassee on April 12.

Pride's music career has spanned almost 50 years, and turned out hits that include *All I Have To Offer You (Is Me)*, *The Snakes Crawl at Night*, *Before I Met You*, *All His Children*, which was nominated for an Academy Award, *Just Between You and Me*, and *I'm Just Me*.

He has recorded 36 No. 1 hits on the Billboard Charts; he ranks No. 18 in the 40 Greatest Men in Country Music. Pride also is a two-time Country Music Vocalist of the Year, and Entertainer of the Year.

Pride was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2000.

Pride was born on a cotton farm in Sledge, Miss., in March 1938. His father was a sharecropper on the farm at



Charley Pride

the time.

When he was 14 years old, Pride bought a guitar from Sears & Roebuck. He learned how to play by listening to Country Music on the radio.

Two years later, he turned his attention to baseball. He joined the Negro American League, playing with the Memphis Red Sox.

After playing ball for

two years, Pride joined the U.S. Army, where he served for two years.

Upon his discharge, he intended to return to baseball, but injuries to his throwing arm derailed that effort.

Discouraged that he would never make it to the Major Leagues, Pride began working construction in Helena, Montana, while he still played in the minors.

Eventually, he earned a tryout for the California Angels in 1961, but they turned him down; the following year, the New York Mets rejected him as well.

Following his rejection in baseball, Pride turned his attention to music.

Pride was discovered in 1965 by legendary Country Music guitarist Chet Atkins and soon afterward, was signed to a recording contract with RCA.

His chart-topping *Kiss*

See Pride, 2A

Cold weather to continue this week

By Charles Duncan
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The cold will continue this week.

Another Arctic blast is headed our way as extremely cold air is expected to come in fast and furious causing temperatures to drop rapidly, according to the National Weather Service.

Precipitation is most

likely to accompany the storm system, which is projected to include snow and sleet, Tuesday into Wednesday.

The weather service predicts the heaviest snow or sleet is expected to fall between 10 p.m. Tuesday and 5 a.m. Wednesday. The region should experience wind gusts between 5 and 10 mph, with some gusts as strong as 20 mph, according to the weather service.

The weather system is expected to bring with it strong, gusty winds and wind chills of zero to 10-above throughout the North Georgia region beginning Tuesday morning, according to the weather service.

Chance of precipitation is 80 percent Tuesday into Wednesday. The frigid temperatures are becoming a pattern for much of Northeast Georgia.

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Weather
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Fri: Clouds Hi 50 Lo 31
Sat: Rain Hi 58 Lo 40

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Computer Workshop at Union County Senior Center on Tuesdays
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Suches Coat Swap & Giveaway
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Help! Your Library Needs YOU!
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BASKETBALL:
Tues. Jan 28 vs. Jefferson 6 PM
Fri. Jan 31 vs. Rabun 7 PM
Sat. Feb 1 vs. Murphy NC - SR NIGHT

WRESTLING:
Tues. Jan 28 @ White County 4 PM
Fri & Sat. Jan 31- Feb 1 Area Tournament @ GAC