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

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

Legal Organ of Union County

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# **BOE won't bond ESPLOST proceeds**

### **By Charles Duncan** North Georgia News editor@nganews.com

No one really knew what to expect when the Union County School Board met with taxpayers last week at the Union County Middle School Gymnasium.

The forum, designed for the school board to answer questions about the upcoming March 19th vote for an education sales tax extension, brought out details that the school board has no intentions of bonding the proposed sales tax extension if approved by

The school system will have almost \$4 million left over to carry into the sales tax extension, Board Chairman Gary Davenport told the crowd.

The excess ESPLOST dollars are a result of the board's decision not to build a new football stadium and a multi-use auditorium originally

**By Charles Duncan** 

North Georgia News

editor@nganews.com

mately \$246,598 in Sparsity Grant funding for Woody Gap

School is part of recommend-

ed budget cuts recommended

by Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal.

Approxi-

Suches

the

in our budget.'

Local residents weren't hampered by chilly temperatures on Thursday as they turned out to learn more about ESPLOST. **Photo/Charles Duncan** 

listed in the 2008 ESPLOST. The football stadium was

projected to cost \$4 million and the multi-purpose auditorium was slated to cost \$7 million, Davenport said.

We weren't confident that we'd have enough money to finish those projects, so we

didn't start them," Davenport told the crowd. "It turned out to be a good decision on our part. If you start a SPLOST project, you must complete it. We would have had to borrow funds to do that.

"Going into this pro-posed ESPLOST extension, we

have money to work with early on, so we don't need to bond projects," he said. "We have a bonding option listed on the ESPLOST, but, that's just in case we need to do so.

The school system will have paid almost \$2 million in interest from bonding the 2008 ESPLOST projects. Interest rates have dwindled since, and right now, the board would pay less than 1 percent of \$13.5 million to bond the proposed projects.

All five board members, including Davenport, agreed that no bonding was necessary. "No bond," said Board

member John Strickland. The board has only one

bond payment remaining from the existing ESPLOST, a \$1.5 million payment in August, and then, the school system is debt free, Davenport said.

amount from an extended ES-

# 'Quilts of Valor'

Union County Sole

sponsored by the Mountain Regional Library System and the Blairsville Veterans' Clinic honored veterans from throughout the region.

me to be here today amidst all sider anyone who has served, or serves today, a war hero. "I really want to thank

all of those folks here today from the VA Clinic," he said.

## By Libby Shook North Georgia News **Staff Writer**

Commissioner Lamar Paris was the guest speaker at a special meeting held at the Union County Public Library on Wednesday, Feb. 27th.

The event, jointly

"It's really an honor for of these war heroes," Com-missioner Paris said. "I con-

"I'm for using the entire "We're thankful that the clinic

## See ESPLOST, Page 3A

Lamar Paris

is here in Union County and for the staff that does such a wonderful job. They keep our veterans from having to travel long distances for needed ser-vices."

See Quilts, Page 8A

## Senate aids Woody Gap School grant **Paris proposes Farmers Market expansion**

## **By Charles Duncan** North Georgia News editor@nganews.com

Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris told the county's agricultural community last week that more parking and additions at the Union County Farmers Market are in the works.

He urged the crowd to keep their fingers crossed.

Commissioner Paris, speaking to a packed house Feb. 25th at the Union County Community Center, said the future is bright for the county's ever-popular Farmers Market.

"I would like to thank all the vendors for their dedication to the Farmers Market,' Paris said. "Without them and their great products, the interest we have in our market would not be there.

"They are the backbone of the market," he said. "We

be to provide additional parking, Commissioner Paris said. If that pans out, it pro-

and Towns County Schools. The grant funding is in jeopardy because the state is looking to cut 3 percent from the annual \$2 million plus Sparsity Grant program.

Woody Gap School, located on the mountainous Georgia 60, qualifies for \$246,598 in Sparsity Grant funding because of its travel time to bus students to Union County Schools.

**By Charles Duncan** 

North Georgia News

editor@nganews.com

The first official day

A couple of folks who

of Georgia's new title tax al-

most went smoothly in Union

County on Friday, Tax Com-

had purchased cars from pri-

vate individuals didn't quite

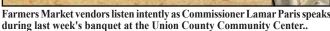
missioner Lee Knight said.



Lowell Nicholson

In the Non-Quality Basic Education Formula grants, the governor's budget recand Sparsity Grants by 3 percent.

tions Committee, which includes District 51 State Sen. Steve Gooch, kept the 1 perommends reducing funds for cent cut to Residential Treat-Residential Treatment Centers ment Center funding and cuts to Sparsity Grant funding. The cuts to Sparsity



want to continue to make the the Market experience will market better and are always looking for ways to improve the market and to adapt to improved marketing plans." A couple of ways to improve

See Farmers, Page 6A

**By Charles Duncan** North Georgia News editor@nganews.com





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Veterans honored with

In late February, the House of Representatives reduced these cuts to 1 percent.

The Senate Appropria-

Grant funding will be resolved See Woody Gap, Page 2A

Atlanta - Emma Garrison's dream season continued last week at the State Capitol. Garrison, a Union County High School freshman, and the Class AA individual state Cross Country champion, and Region 8-AA Cross Country champion, was honored and recognized for her athletic achievements by the Georgia House of Representatives with House Resolution 458.

Garrison was welcomed to the Georgia General Assembly in Atlanta by House District 8 State Rep. Stephen Allison and Senate District 51 State Sen. Steve Gooch, both represent Union County in their respective chambers.

"This week was a special one for me at the State Capitol as I got a chance to acknowledge a wonder-

State Capitol. ful student athlete for her achievements," State Rep. Al-

## Modern Vinyl to open for Three Dog Night

By Libby Shook North Georgia News Staff Writer

Hiawassee – Mark your calendar for Saturday, March 9th at 7 p.m.

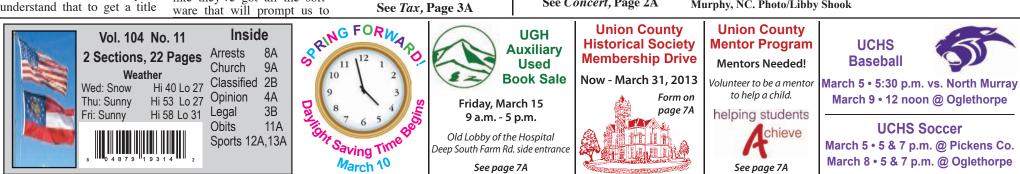
Three Dog Night comes to Anderson Music Hall in Hiawassee with a special local guest, Blairsville's own, Modern Vinyl.

The ever-popular Modern Vinyl will open for the legend known as Three Dog Night at The Hall

Modern Vinyl bass guitarist Todd Forrest, yes, that Todd Forrest, sports editor for the North Georgia News, said

See Concert, Page 2A

Blairsville's Modern Vinyl rocks during a weekend appearance in Murphy, NC. Photo/Libby Shook



1st was the first day of Georgia's Title Tax law. Photo/Charles Duncan for their recently purchased vehicles, that they were going to have to pay 6.5 percent of the car's value, or what's now commonly referred to as Georgia's Title Tax.

"Fortunately, Jennifer (Kerr) got them calmed down," Knight said. "Other than that, it's gone real good. Everything is working well, the state's computer system has worked real well. It looks like they've got all the software that will prompt us to

title ad valorem tax.' A gentleman from Florida who had just moved here paid half of his title tax on Fri-

stay on track and calculate the

day and will pay the rest over the next 12 months, Knight said.

"He wanted to do that because he said he was broke after moving up here from Florida," Knight said.

One problem that did

See Tax, Page 3A





here with State Rep. Stephen Allison, was honored last week at the resentatives in honor of her victory at the Class AA Cross Country Championships last November. See Garrison, Page 2A



