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vides the opportunity for the Market to expand and grow, he said.

In a downtrodden economy, the Market has become one of the most popular destinations in the county.

Open on Saturdays and Tuesdays, the Market experienced large crowds and offered financial opportunities for local farmers and bargain shopping for its patrons.

"We are looking to possibly purchase some adjacent property and if it works out so we can have additional parking, we will be able to add on to the market possibly next year," Paris said. "We are all excited for what this new season will bring and we want to invite the public to please keep up your support because it is vital for the future of the Market."

Commissioner Paris also extended special thanks to Market Manager Mickey Cummings and the employees and volunteers at the Market, including the Master Gardeners, and Pastor Darrell Gollnitz with the Mountain of Life Presbyterian Church for his assistance and lead in keeping the community garden going in 2012.

The event was a family reunion of sorts for Market vendors and their families as they gathered at the Community Center to share a meal, and catch up on each other's lives since the Market closed for the season, four months ago.

Cummings organized the event to express appreciation to the vendors, letting them know just how much they are appreciated for their efforts throughout the Market season, as well as to share with them the plans for the upcoming season.

Cummings told the crowd that the Market will open the second Saturday in June. Vendors nodded their heads at the news and started counting the days until the

2013 Market Season arrives.

"This is like my family," Eleanor Smith said of the event.

Having just gotten out of the hospital, Smith was not going to let her health interfere with this get together.

"I can't wait until we can get back over there and get the season started," Smith said.

New members to the Farmers Market Advisory Board were voted on by the group, at large.

Joining current advisors Freddie Collins and Mike Clark are Jennifer Lavelle, Lee Knight and Cecile Holland.

Also serving on the Advisory committee as ex-officio members are Peggy Deyton, Larry Garrett, JoAnne Leone and Cummings.

Cummings also shared details about some of the upcoming events he and the committee have been working on. He also gave the crowd an update on the canning plant, "Rules of the Market," as well as a review of the State Agricultural Department regulations.

Commissioner Paris also spoke about how a portion of the dollars that would be raised by the proposed Educational Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax would be dedicated to expanding the agricultural educational opportunities in Union County public schools, eventually impacting everyone at the Farmers Market as the local agricultural community grows.

Leone, who works to promote the Market and share in the organization of the events, spoke about the commitment to reach a broader spectrum of potential patrons from across the region, as well as across the country.

Coming to the Market in 2013 prior to the season opener: a Ramp Festival and a Native Plant Sale.

## County Mounties volunteer for Mardi Gras duty in Mobile, AL

Six County Mounties traveled, at their own expense, to Mobile, AL to participate in pre-Mardi Gras training and street work February 6-10, 2013. CMs Michele Aultman, Opelika, AL; Kathleen Corcoran, Mineral Bluff, GA; Anglie LeFrance, Phenix City, AL; Teresa Linkous, Harmony, PA; Heather Richbourg, Hayesville, NC; and Nanci Tarrant, Blue Ridge, GA spent eight to ten hours in the saddle training on various obstacles to de-sensitize their horses. "At Mardi Gras, riders have to be ready for anything that comes their way at these raucous events," says Director Lawrence Beal. "We send our CMs to participate in extra training to keep them safe and experience resources we do not have here like helicopters, street cleaning machines, many large, marching bands, fire trucks and motorcycles."

There were 45 mounted riders not only from five southern states to help out on the streets and attend the training. John Dalziel, the Florida instructor, said, "We want to make sure that everything is safe; not just for the horses and the rider but our main concern is the safety of the public."

First time Mardi Gras rider Nanci Tarrant said, "I rode the whole week with my eyes bulging out and my mouth wide open in amazement. Director Beal did a great job training my horse and me prior to this event so we were able to handle the new obstacles with ease. This was definitely the highpoint of all my County Mountie volunteer activities to date."

County Mounties train, serve and ride out of the Hayesville, NC training arena. Participation is voluntary and open to all riders willing to put in the time to train and be available for volunteer security, search and rescue and crowd control work. A mandatory 60 hours of training is required of the horse and rider for Level One Certification. A fundamentals test is also mandatory before participating in any CM event. Modest fees are collected on an annual basis to cover the horse and rider's training hours, insurance, training materials and membership. For more information, contact Director Lawrence Beal at 828-361-4669. Also see [www.countymounties.org](http://www.countymounties.org) and follow CM on FaceBook. NT(Mar6,Z6)CA

## Ismerio performs at Folk School

Michael Ismerio will perform a free concert in the Community Room of the John C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, NC on Friday, March 8 at 7 p.m. Donations are welcome.

Michael Ismerio has dedicated his life to learning and performing traditional Appalachian music. After growing up in California, he moved to Portland, OR, home to a vibrant old time music and dance community. Becoming ever more immersed in Appalachian music, he finally made the move

to Asheville, NC where he performs, calls dances and teaches fiddle.

U p - c o m i n g Folk School concerts include The Bear Notes



Michael Ismerio (March 22) and Susan Conger (March 29). For further information call the Folk School at 828-837-2775 or 1-800-FOLK-SCH. NT(Mar6,Z8)CA

## Dockery...

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financial burden on the business owners (and residents) of Union County! Why would we want to stop collecting the extra penny from visitors and place this added burden back on ourselves? Don't we already pay enough?

Finally, keep in mind that this is not another tax increase mandated by our local government, but merely a continuation of a process that already exists not only in Union County, but in many other Georgia counties as well. The next time you travel to Canton or Exit 1 to shop, remember that you are paying for school improvements in those counties. Why wouldn't we want travelers who visit our area to do the same for us? Voting YES for continuation of the 1¢ SPLOST makes good business sense!

**Misti Dockery**  
Blairsville