

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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March 23, 2016

Blairsville honors its own with Bob Head Street

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

One of Blairsville's most treasured residents spoke at the dedication of his downtown Blairsville namesake, just before Bob Head Street opened to traffic for the first time on Friday, March 18.

Bob Head Street is the new on/off ramp connecting Georgia 515 to Pat Haralson Memorial Drive.

Completion of the project, which took about six months due to heavy rain and repeated inclement weather events, grants motorists quick access to downtown parking, and eventually, to new vendors as they expand the downtown area using the land surrounding Bob Head Street.

The morning ceremony took place at the base of the new street, where it flattens out facing 515. More than 70 people attended the dedication to witness the historic occasion and celebrate with Head and his family.

"I would like to say that this is the greatest honor a hometown fellow could ever receive from the City of Blairsville, Blairsville City

Council, and Mayor Jim Conley," said Head. "I am thankful to the mayor for the great job he does for the City of Blairsville, and the great support he receives from the city council, and the fine employees that make the city run every day.

"I do not know of any town that has a more dedicated mayor and employees that make the city function smoothly each day. I give a debt of thanks for the fine city employees and city managers for all their support."

Everyone knows that one of Head's best friends is another of Blairsville's native sons, W. C. Nelson Jr., and Head reiterated just what he thought of his friend that day.

"I also owe a debt of gratitude and thanks to my close friend, W. C. Nelson, for the nomination for this fine honor," said Head. "He is the greatest friend a person could have, and I thank him for his nomination.

"I again want to thank you (all) for being here today. I will continue to support the city staff and compliment them for the fine job they do each day. Thank you for being here to support your town and its fine employees and the great leadership.

"And one final message



L-R: W. C. Nelson Jr., Patricia Nelson, LuAnn Head, Josh Faris, Robert L. Head Jr., Carol Head, Matthew Faris, Mayor Jim Conley, Martha Cone, Tony Dyer and Betty Easter just before the ribbon is cut to mark the opening of Bob Head Street on Friday, March 18

to W. C. is that I plan to shoot you before today."

The joke hit its mark, drawing laughter from those gathered, including from Nelson, who said afterward that he'd

have his gun "all greased up and ready to go" when the time came.

Getting down to brass tacks, Nelson said that Head

has been a reliable friend over the many years that they have known one another.

"Everything with Bob is heartfelt," said Nelson. "He's

sincere - he doesn't say a lot of things, but when he does you better listen, because he's

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Easter always comes early to Meeks Park

By Shawn Jarrard
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More than a hundred children between the ages of 1 and 12 hoovered up 4,000 pastel Easter eggs at the Union County Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, March 19.

The hunt is a tradition in the county that dates back more than a decade, and it's a tradition the county is eager to carry on into the future, according to Larry "Duff" Conley, director of the Union County Recreation Department.

"I just appreciate the people coming out and being supportive," said Conley. "This is our way of giving back to the community."

Recreation department employees Kelley Lockaby and Beau Ballard assisted Conley in laying the candy- and toy-filled plastic eggs at the baseball fields in Meeks Park, near where the Vietnam Moving



Two youngsters enjoy their spoils of the hunt at the Union County Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, March 19

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Pastors team up for Ten Commandments



L-R: Jay Sills of New Life Family Church, Commissioner Lamar Paris, Joel Peney of Fellowship of the Hills Church, Dr. Fred Lodge of First Baptist Church of Blairsville and the Rev. George Cline of Antioch Baptist Church met with friends for the unveiling of the new "Foundations of American Law and Government" display at the Union County Courthouse

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

The display of the Ten Commandments are in the Union County Courthouse, right alongside eight other documents deemed to be of historical significance, all of which were unveiled in a small gathering of local church pastors and parishioners on Friday, March 18, at the courthouse.

Taken together, the nine documents act as a single

wall display known as "The Foundations of American Law and Government Display."

The display finds its roots in a bill signed into law back in 2006 by then Georgia Gov. Sonny Perdue that allowed local governments to post the display. The law was later amended by Gov. Nathan Deal in 2012 to expand the number of eligible places for the display to any public building in the state.

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Gowder, Heaton court documents unsealed

By Charles Duncan
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Sealed court documents related to the arrests of former Union General Hospital CEO Mike Gowder, Dr. James L. Heaton, and Dr. David Gowder are now unsealed.

Those documents, including affidavits for search warrants and an affidavit seeking to seize the contents of Dr. Heaton's bank accounts and safety deposit boxes, give details that led to the drug arrests of five members of

the Gowder family, and Dr. Heaton.

Investigators found documents and records of payments from Union General Hospital to Dr. Heaton, checks that totaled at least \$210,000, according to the affidavits. Those documents are evidence of criminal violations of Georgia's Controlled Substance Act, according to investigators.

Investigators have Dr. Heaton on video and audio, and Mike Gowder on audio, both telling investigators that

they had learned their lessons and that investigators would never hear from them again.

The affidavits show the alleged criminal violations to include: unlawful distribution of controlled substances, conspiracy to unlawfully prescribe, fill, distribute, dispense controlled substances, or cause the dispensing of controlled substances.

Furthermore, those alleged criminal violations include acquiring or obtaining possession of a controlled substance by misrepresentation,

fraud, forgery, deception, subterfuge, or theft, the affidavits show.

Finally, those alleged criminal violations include conspiracy to acquire or obtain possession of a controlled substance by misrepresentation, fraud, forgery, deception, subterfuge, or theft, the affidavits show.

Mike Gowder was arrested Feb. 4 in Union County with three counts of fraudulently obtaining

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Lions Club celebrates 50th anniversary

By Shawn Jarrard
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The Union County Lions Club turned 50 this month, and to commemorate the event, its members held a celebratory gathering at the Renovated Choestoe School House on Saturday, March 19.

Joining the Union County club for its 50th anniversary get-together were several neighboring clubs from District 18-I, including Towns County, Gainesville, Snellville, Jefferson, Winder Noon, Clayton, Lawrenceville, Dawsonville, Clarkesville and



Members of nearly a dozen Lions Clubs from around the district join the Union County Lions Club in celebrating 50 years of community service on Saturday, March 19, 2016

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SPORTS SOCCER
Thurs. Mar 24 vs. Rabun 5 & 7 PM
Fri. Mar 25 @ Towns Co 5 & 7 PM
BASEBALL
Tues. Mar 22 vs. Rabun Co. 5 PM
Fri. Mar 25 vs. Murphy, NC 4:30 PM