

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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June 25, 2014

Shotgun Team honored for Second Place State finish

By Charles Duncan
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On an evening when it seemed Mother Nature would surely blow something away, those attending the monthly Union County Commission Meeting felt that they had experienced something pretty incredible.

Mother Nature had nothing to do with it, but folks were in the presence of greatness.

That's because Blane Brown, Matt Percy, Austin Dyer, Hayden Smith, Brady Tanner, Buck Martin and Kolbe Nix now share a legacy.

Together, the Union County 4-H Shotgun team members captured the runner up, or Second Place trophy, in the 2014 Georgia 4-H State Shotgun Match.

The Panthers finished second to the Laniers in the Modified Trap Shoot held in May.



Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris with members of the Union County 4-H Shotgun Team.

Baker County finished third, Bulloch County finished fourth and Emanuel County finished fifth.

In the 17-year existence of the Union County 4-H Shotgun Team, no Union County shooting team has ever achieved such a lofty

finish than at the 2014 State Shotgun Meet, Coach Gene Margelli said.

The Shotgun Team appeared at Thursday's County Commission Meeting where Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris honored its members.

Paris proclaimed June 19th, 2014 as Union County 4-H S.A.F.E. Shotgun Team Day.

"I invite all of our citizens to join me in celebrating the success of the 4-H Shotgun Team," Paris said.

Steppe: 'Milestones tests will challenge students'

By Charles Duncan
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Union County Schools Superintendent Gary Steppe believes Georgia Milestones is a step in the right direction for school systems in the state of Georgia.

The new system for assessing the progress of Georgia students grades 3-12 takes students in a different direction from CRCT and EOCT testing, Steppe said.

Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests and End Of Course Testing became guessing games with the multiple-choice questions on each.

No longer will Georgia students be playing "Trivial Pursuit," Steppe said.

For example, Steppe believes students will go beyond just knowing that Christopher Columbus discovered America in 1492. He believes they will ask, "Why did Columbus discover America?"

"It's not a bad thing that



Gary Steppe

a test drives a curriculum as long as what we're teaching and how we're teaching it is good for kids," Steppe said. "If we can get them to think more critically because of the testing, it's a good thing."

The new tests also will measure student growth, Steppe said.

"Student growth will be compared differently than

See Milestones, 2A

More than 2,000 attend Saddle Club Rodeo

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Edge of your seat entertainment and family fun for all ages was the name of the game for two nights on Friday and Saturday as the Blairsville Pro Rodeo stole the show at the Union County Saddle Club Arena.

Bareback riding, barrel racing, bronc and bull riding, calf roping, steer wrestling, team roping, and wheel barrow racing provided plenty of entertainment for all ages.

However, the hometown favorites, the Sass 'n Saddles Precision Drill Team was perhaps the biggest crowd pleaser.

The eight girls that made up the team performed an opening routine and another, faster routine, right before the intermission.

"They aren't trick riders but they do precision drills. It's put to loud music and the people really like that," Saddle Club Vice President Art



Eight seconds seems like a long time when you're riding a 1,000-pound bull. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Miller said.

Gates opened at 6 p.m. and the action was underway at 8 p.m., and when the dust settled the estimated two-night attendance total of 2,000 spectators went home fulfilled thanks to the heart stopping action.

"We packed the place

on Saturday night," Miller said. "Everyone was orderly and had a good time. It's a family rodeo so there is no alcohol served and we rarely ever have any problems. It was all good and everyone just came out and enjoyed themselves for two-and-a-half hours."

Other fan favorites in-

cluded bull riding and the rodeo clowns.

"The clowns make the show," Miller said. "We had a very good clown and people really enjoyed it. And obviously the bull riding is going to be one of the highlights."

See Rodeo, 2A

Ralston names Allison to study committee for wrongfully accused

By Charles Duncan
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Georgia House Speaker David Ralston (R-Blue Ridge) has appointed House District 8 State Rep. Stephen Allison (R-Blairsville), to the House Study Committee on Compensating Wrongfully Convicted Persons.

The committee, established by House Resolution 1332 also includes State Rep. Carolyn Hugley (D-Columbus), who will serve as Committee Chair, State Rep. Ben Harbin (R-Evans), State Rep. Rahn Mayo (D-Decatur), and State Rep. B.J. Pak (R-Lilburn).

The committee's task is to determine a uniform method for fairly and reasonably compensating wrongfully convicted persons.

The committee will recommend any actions or legislation that it deems necessary



State Rep. Stephen Allison or appropriate.

The committee will study procedures used in other jurisdictions in the United States in an effort to ensure that any person wrongfully convicted in Georgia is compensated fully and fairly.

The committee will publish a report of its findings and recommendations, which may include suggestions for proposed legislation.

The report will be made on or before Dec. 1.

Early Voting starts on Monday

By Charles Duncan
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Early voting for the July 22 Runoff Election begins Monday at the Union County Courthouse.

The election features one local race, Union County Board of Education District 5; one state race, State School Superintendent, both Democrat and Republican; and the GOP runoff for the U.S. Senate seat being vacated by the retirement of U.S. Sen. Saxby Chambliss.

The District 5 BOE race features Republicans Amber Deyton Pruitt and Patrick White.

BOE District 5 Incum-



Patrick White

bent Julie Barton is not seeking re-election after eight years in office.

There were no Democrats in the race so next month's runoff will determine the newest member of the



Amber Pruitt

Union County School Board. During the May 20 Republican Primary, Pruitt tallied 1,027 votes for 44.89 percent; White collected 897 votes for

See Early, 2A

Narcotics Division a very busy bunch

By Charles Duncan
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The Union County Narcotics Division has been very active over the past five weeks, Union County Sheriff Mack Mason said.

The drug unit has made several arrests and currently has issued warrants for Devon Lynn Davenport, and Shannon Lyle Prince on drug-related charges, Sheriff Mason said.

"Anyone with information about the whereabouts of either of these individuals, please contact the Sheriff's Office at (706) 439-6066," Sheriff Mason said.

On June 13, Charlotte A. Eller, 47, was arrested for distribution of methamphetamine and Clarence Eller, 54, was arrested for possession of methamphetamine, Sheriff



This blue Nissan 350Z was recently seized by the Narcotics Division during a drug bust in Union County.

Mason said.

On June 9, the Narcotics Division executed search and arrest warrants leading to the arrest of Levi Shook, 33, for distribution of methamphetamine, possession of a controlled substance, and possession of a firearm by a con-

victed felon. The firearm was seized, Sheriff Mason said.

On May 28, the Narcotics Division executed a search warrant, which resulted in the arrest of Terrell B. Brown, 55, for distribution of prescription

See Busts, 2A

City of Blairsville gets a clean audit

By Charles Duncan
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The city of Blairsville gets a clean score on its 2013 audit, the City Council learned at its June monthly meeting.

R. L. Jennings presented and discussed the FY 2013 Certified Audit with Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley and the Blairsville City Council.

Jennings told the Council that everything was in working order. He thanked those on the city office staff for their assistance during the audit.

In other business, the Mayor and Council approved a request by Bearding Bottling for an Alcohol License appli-



Mayor Pro Tem Buddy Moore listens as R.L. Jennings reads the recently completed Blairsville City Audit. Photo/Charles Duncan

Richard Ledean, architect and planning, presented a proposal to the Mayor and Council for services for the new Administration building.

See Council, 2A

Good Neighbors hand out scholarships

By Colleen Collins
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

The U.S. Postal Service would have been proud of the Good Neighbors Auto Club on Thursday.

They didn't battle any sleet or freezing rain, or even dark of night, but the braved high winds and a pretty fierce hail storm to complete their annual scholarship night.

The club awarded scholarships to six rising college freshmen that recently



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