

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Give blood July 19 with Easter and the Red Cross

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Since 1989, Betty Easter has partnered with the American Red Cross to raise awareness of the cause and increase blood donation levels in Blairsville and Union County.

Easter has known many residents over the years who have given blood so often that their arms just won't give any more, and while that's not exactly what the Red Cross is asking, it is that particular spirit of giving life-saving donations that makes donating blood such a special practice.

"I've seen a lot of people (over the years) give blood, and they've done it because somebody's going to need it," said Easter, whom many may

know as a Blairsville City Councilwoman. "There ain't no substitute if you need blood - you've got to have blood. You can't turn the spigot on and get it. Somebody's got to give it."

The next Blairsville Community Blood Drive will be on Tuesday, July 19, at the Haralson Memorial Civic Center, from noon until 5 p.m., and Easter urges all residents to donate in order to, as the Red Cross puts it, give "the gift of life."

For many years, Bob and Sandi Bishop have been helping Easter run the front and back ends of the Blood Drive, meeting with people as they come in and registering them to give blood, as well as getting them comfortable in the concessions area following the

actual donation.

"We volunteer because that way the Red Cross doesn't have to do it," said Mr. Bishop. "We take that burden off of them - greeting the people and making sure that they're taken care of afterward. That way the people who are actually doing this good work don't have to do this. We make sure that the things get set up for them."

As for the donors themselves, they come from all over the region to give blood, and many have done so for years and years. There's even a sense that, for some donors, there's a vital need to give blood for others in vital need of it.

Diane Keske of Blairsville gave blood the last time the Red Cross came to town, and she exemplifies this

lifelong urge to help others through blood donation, as she donates "whenever I can, since 1957."

"That was the first time I got to donate," said Keske, originally from Minnesota, who attended the May 17 Blood Drive at the Blairsville Civic Center. "It's the best thing I can do for volunteering, so it's worth it to me."

On why she donates blood: "I can help other people. I can't do a lot other than this to help other people, but this is my favorite thing to do, it is. I look forward to it and I feel good afterward."

Francis J. Kennard, a recent move-in from Florida with his wife Margaret B., was able to donate platelets that Tuesday, May 17, and



Diane Keske giving blood the last time the American Red Cross came into town for the Blairsville Community Blood Drive on May 17. Keske has been giving blood every chance she gets since 1957

GEMA/HS mitigation grant nets county \$24,000

News Special

Union County is better prepared for disasters with the recent approval of their local hazard mitigation plan, which is a long-term strategy to reduce the community's vulnerability to natural disasters.

The Plan identifies hazards and potential hazards in Union County, and it creates a framework to help community officials make decisions that may ultimately protect lives and property.

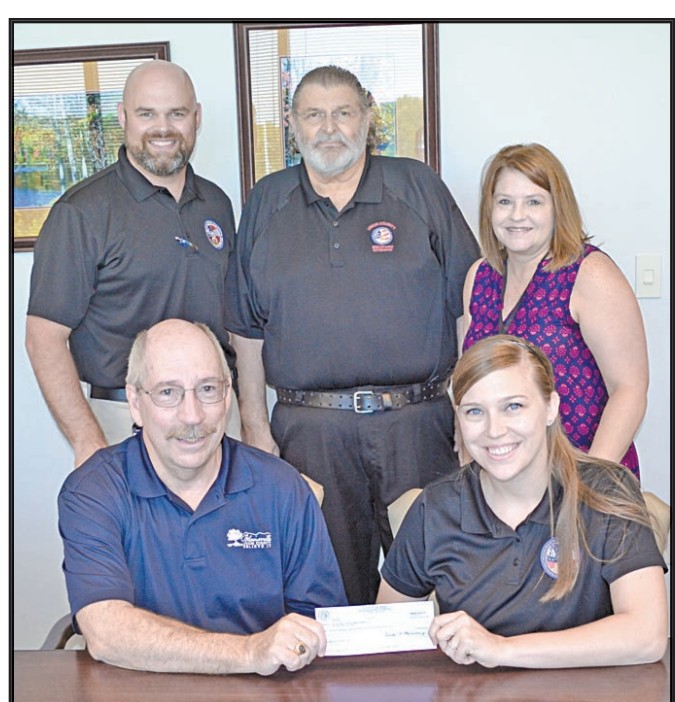
The plan also outlines a strategy for implementing mitigation projects in Union County.

History shows that the physical, financial and emotional losses caused by disasters can be reduced significantly through hazard mitigation planning. The planning process encourages communities to integrate mitigation with day-to-day decision making regarding land-use planning, floodplain

management, site design and other activities.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reviews and approves state, tribal and local hazard mitigation plans, which are required as a condition for states and communities to receive certain types of disaster assistance, including funding for mitigation projects. State mitigation plans must be approved every three years, and local and tribal mitigation plans must be approved at least once every five years.

Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris said "Thank you to all those who spent so much time helping prepare the plan and attending many meetings including, Charles Worden, past Fire Chief, David Dyer, current Chief, and the many community partners including the school, city and other utility companies, and paid staff and volunteer public safety



GEMA/HS C.J. Worden, 911/EMA Director Charles Worden, Union County Purchasing Director Pam Hawkins, Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris and Laura Radford, of GEMA/HS, meet in the commissioner's office for a presentation of a Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant totaling \$24,000

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EMC nominating committee selects seven candidates

By Charles Duncan
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There will be six names from which to choose this year during the annual Blue Ridge Mountain EMC elections of new board members.

Over the last two years, members have elected six new directors, and the directors have appointed one new director. This year, they will elect two new directors, and vote for the beginning of a new term for Board member Ray Cook, out of Brasstown, NC.

Cook was selected to

follow Kenneth Lance's term, following his resignation last year.

Cherokee County, NC would have chosen between Cook of Brasstown, NC, and Thomas Little, of Murphy, NC. However, Little declined his nomination.

Out of Clay County, NC, R. G. (Gary) Refitt, will

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City looking to update its website



Blairsville City Councilman Buddy Moore looks over some supporting documentation during the Tuesday, July 5, meeting of Mayor Jim Conley and city council.

By Lily Avery
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Summer is in full swing and so was the Blairsville City Council at the monthly meeting on Tuesday, July 5, as the city welcomed new faces and entertained many new ideas to better the city as a whole.

Downtown Development Authority Program Manager,

Darren Harper, presented two final bids to Mayor Jim Conley and the City Council regarding revamping the websites for both the city as well as the DDA.

"As part of the county's rebranding effort, the chamber and the county have all worked really hard to get all of the county assets in line," said Harper. "The city's website as

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Puppets and the library go hand in hand for kids

By Lily Avery
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Puppets have been the main attraction at all libraries in the Mountain Regional Library System this summer with the traveling troupe, Mountain Regional Puppet Company.

Many came out to see the ensemble perform its last show at Union County Public Library on Friday, July 8.

The Mountain Regional Puppet Company performed shows at Towns County Public Library, Mountain Regional Library System and Fannin County Public Library, for a total of five shows, prior to Friday's grand finale.



The cast of the recently formed Mountain Regional Puppet Company comes out from behind the curtain to meet the children after the Friday, July 8, puppet show, which featured several short stories and skits for Union County children at the library.

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Habitat for Humanity helps another Union County family

By Shawn Jarrard
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Surrounded by family, friends and volunteers from Habitat for Humanity Towns/Union counties, Michelle Seay moved into her new home before moving into her new home on Saturday, July 9.

The event served as both a dedication and a blessing of the recently completed home, which saw a December groundbreaking and a July finish date.

Mark Burgess, pastor of First United Methodist Church of Blairsville, led the blessing, which comes to all homes completed under the nondenominational Christian ministry that is Habitat for Humanity.

As for Seay, who put



The Seay Family, pictured left to right: Anna with Allyson, Katie, Michelle, Samantha and Adalynn. The Seays were excited to show off their new home to friends and volunteers during the Habitat for Humanity Towns/Union Counties dedication/blessing that took place on Saturday, July 9.

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Man wanted in connection with aggravated assault

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
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As of press time Monday, the Union County Sheriff's Office is looking for James Paul Weaver, 36, who is wanted in connection with two counts of family violence aggravated assault, according to UCSO Lt. Daren Osborn.

"Is to be considered armed and dangerous," read a UCSO flyer that had been made up for the search. "According to the victim, he was last seen



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Union County Historical Society PICNIC
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