

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Legal Organ of Union County

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Early voting ends this week; Primary Election on July 31st

By Charles Duncan
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The July 31st Primary is upon us.

There's only one contested race on the Primary ballot involving local candidates.

First time local candidate Barry Weinstein faces Incumbent Probate Judge Dwain Brackett in a non-partisan race that is on all ballots.

Though he's running here for the first time, Weinstein, 63, ran twice for judgeships in his hometown of Miami, Fla. He lost both races.

Brackett, 51, is seeking his fifth term as Union County

Probate Judge.

Weinstein believes his experience as a lawyer is essential for being Union County Probate Judge. Georgia law does not require Probate Judges to hold law degrees.

"My legal education, legal training and legal experiences prepare me to take on the responsibilities of probate judge on Day One," Weinstein said. "I need no 'on the job training.' I am a seasoned attorney that has extensive trial experience. I have litigated both criminal and civil cases and I am quite comfortable in a courtroom. I have practiced in the areas that probate judges have primary jurisdiction."

Brackett, in his 16th year as Probate Judge, doesn't require "on the job training" either.



Judge Dwain Brackett

"I am now in my 28th year of government service to Georgia, with the last 16 years serving the citizens of my home county," Brackett said. "I have always said that I'm in the people business. Isn't that what government service through public office

is really about? We deal with many aspects of peoples lives in the probate court. Some are pleasant, some difficult, some trying and some even tragic. Whether it is the loss of a loved one, a guardianship, a marriage license, a teen driver's traffic offense, or any one of the many services expected of the probate court, it is always my pleasure and heartfelt responsibility to meet these issues with a personal touch and strong human interest."

Also on the ballot, local voters must decide if their 13-county Georgia Mountains Regional Commission district will approve a 1-cent sales tax to fund transportation projects over the next 10 years.



Barry Weinstein

Opposition is stiff and mounting against the referendum. At the recent Hall County Republicans meeting, participants voted 139-26 against the referendum in a straw poll vote, the North Georgia News has learned. The newspaper itself has come out against the

referendum because of its potential impact on the poor and the disproportionate balance of power held by voters in larger counties in the district.

The Primary also will determine the Republican nominee for the vacant 9th Congressional District seat.

Republicans Doug Collins, Roger Fitzpatrick and Martha Zoller seek that honor.

Jody Cooley, a Hall County Democrat and former Gainesville City School Board member is unopposed and already has his party's nomination.

Also on the Democrat and Republican ballots, straw poll questions that are non-

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Union County is now an E-911 county

By Charles Duncan
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Seconds save lives. That's why Union County government and 911 officials have spent thousands of hours of dedication with one goal in mind: Enhanced 911.

It's now a reality in Union County, said E-911's Amy Smith.

Union County recently received the news from Windstream that it had "hot tested" at 102 percent - the acceptable average is 95 percent.

Hot tests are a set number of calls to all the different prefixes such as 745, 439, and 835. There were 2,301 hot test calls made in the process for Union County to become Enhanced 911, Smith said.

"This is big and it's been a lot of work," said Union County Fire Chief and Emergency Management Agency Director Charles Worden.

"We've literally put thousands of hours into this project. It was worth every second," he said.

The difference between 911 and E-911 is



E-911 is expected to save lives through quicker response and preparation. Photo/Charles Duncan

life and death, Smith said. "The biggest benefit is accuracy," Smith said. "One thing I'd like to stress is if someone calls 911 and they can't talk, or don't want to talk, don't hang up. If you're calling from a cell phone, they can't hang up. Stay on the line, and we'll find out where you're at."

With 911, the dispatcher only sees an address associated with the telephone number that the call is made from.

With E-911, the dispatcher can see the caller's information, personal medical condition, if provided, and maps and directions, and it breaks

down how many times emergency personnel has been to the residence.

"E-911 keeps a call history," Chief Worden said. "It helps you see a pattern with the calls they make."

If the medical conditions of people that live at the address have been provided, medical personnel can be prepared for the emergency before they ever arrive at the scene, Smith said.

If the person at that address wants to give their medical information, it can literally shave seconds off the clock as medical personnel will know

exactly what the medical issues are of the people living at the address where the number was dialed, Smith said.

Cell phone calls are different. E-911 can't go by the address linked to the cell phone because the phones are mobile. Instead, they have to depend on the service provider to determine what tower the cell phone pinged from, Smith said.

"Cell phone calls to 911 are a bit more complicated," Smith said. "Wireless network operators must pro-

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Union Grand Jury indicts kidnapping suspect Brown

By Charles Duncan
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Ronnie Dale Brown heads a list of 35 true bills of indictment handed up by the Union County Grand Jury last week, Union County Superior Court records show.

Brown, 56, of Union County, was indicted on charges of kidnapping, aggravated assault in violation of Georgia's Family Violence Act, possession of a firearm during the commission of felony, possession of a sawed-off shotgun, false imprisonment, terroristic threats, and obstruction, Union County Superior Court records show.

Brown remains in custody following his arrest for allegedly kidnapping his estranged wife from Union General Hospital on June 21, Union County arrest warrants show.

Brown faces seven felony charges and one misdemeanor charge resulting from the June 21st incident involving his estranged wife, Debra



Ronnie Dale Brown

Brown. Sheriff's authorities say Ronnie Brown and his estranged wife are going through a divorce.

On June 21st, sheriff's reports show that Ronnie Brown showed up at his wife's place of work at Union General Hospital, and at gunpoint, forced her to leave that location in his vehicle. The incident occurred around 4:30 p.m. on June 21, Union County sheriff's authorities said.

Debra Brown was then taken to a location near Wolf Creek where she was held against her will, Union County arrest warrants and sheriff's reports show.

According to the eight-

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Welcome home Tommy

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Hiwassee - His family and friends were in the audience; his wife and daughter were selling the band's T-Shirts at the top of The Hall, behind 2,900 filled seats.

All that was left to do was for Tommy Townsend to pick and sing and let Waymore's Outlaws do the rest.

Blairsville's own Tommy Townsend kicked off the Georgia Mountain Fair with Waymore's Outlaws on Friday.

Townsend was surrounded backstage by friends and family who came out to support a local boy who's been touring, recording, and living in Nashville for the past 15 years.

Waymore's Outlaws consists of the former members of the late, Outlaw Music Icon Waylon Jennings.

The Country Music



Blairsville's Tommy Townsend made a triumphant return to the North Georgia Mountains on Friday. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

outlaw passed away in February 2002 but Townsend and Waymore's Outlaws, which consists of Townsend, Richie Albright on drums, Jerry Bridges on the bass guitar and Fred Newell on the steel guitar, continue to keep the spirit

Buddy Jennings, a sound engineer and, the son

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Rain, clouds no threat to Butternut

By Janice Boling
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

The 2012 Butternut Creek Festival was better than ever with visitors doing lots of shopping. Saturday's downpour didn't dampen anyone spirits; the two-day festival was fun for visitors, artists, craftsmen, and food vendors.

The setting for the festival couldn't have been more ideal - with the 70 invited exhibitor booths nestled under the majestic trees along the banks of the Butternut Creek as it meanders through Meeks Park and surrounded by the Georgia Appalachian Mountains.

The 70 artists and crafters who participated are the best in the Southeast -- each carefully juried to ensure the quality of their works and to achieve a balanced presentation of unique and original art and handcrafted works.



Event goers braved the rain to shop at the 14th Annual Butternut Creek Festival. It was another successful year. Photo/Janice Boling

There were lots of new artists this year, along with old time favorites.

Shoppers were spending money which made everyone happy. Popular items included birdhouses, garden decor, fine art paintings, fab-

ric crafts, silver spoon jewelry, homemade ice cream, kettle corn, and fresh lemonade.

Many unique items were available at the festival making it a feast for the senses.

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It's Green Bean Time in Union

By Charles Duncan
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This year, the 3rd Annual Green Bean Festival has been relocated from downtown Blairsville, out to the Farmers Market on Old Smokey Road.

"This year it will be bigger, and better than ever" promises Market Manager

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Farmers Market the place to be

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

If the Union County Farmers Market is in the business of entertaining, then business is booming.

As always, The Market was the place to be on Saturday morning in Blairsville for good family fun.

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Saturday, July 28 • 11 AM • Union County Farmer's Market

Third Annual Green Bean Festival Pageant

Saturday, July 28

at The Haralson Memorial Civic Center

Square Dance

Friday July 27 • 8 PM • On the Square

Dunking Booth

Saturday, July 28 • 11 AM • Union County Farmer's Market

Union County School System Information

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Georgia Mountain Fair

Continues through Sunday, July 29, 2012