

# Market...from Page 1A

our local vendors – and they donate the tomatoes to us.

“Logan Turnpike Mill donates the bread to us, so really all we’re buying is the mayonnaise. We get volunteer help, and they come out and cut up the tomatoes, make sandwiches out of them and we’ll pile them up on some of our dish pans in the canning plant, and we’ll serve them to our customers. Anybody that wants one is welcome to go over there and pick one up.”

In an effort to emphasize the crops of local farmers, several vendors decided to donate their tomatoes to Customer Appreciation Day this year: Jay Tipton, Kathryn Litton, Michael Perricone with Rock Hill Farms, Dick Mills with 7M Farms, and Dean Smith.

Perricone, who manages

Rock Hill Farms with owner Truman Barrett of Towns County, brought several varieties of tomatoes to the market, selling out of more than one kind.

“We have 15,000 plants in the ground,” said Perricone. “We’re over behind Brother’s Restaurant in Towns County. We’re growing a few different varieties this year – we’re growing some heirlooms as well. We’re growing Cherokee Purples, Georgia Stripes, Romas and the Mountain Fresh.”

Kathryn Litton of Litton Landscaping, who has been in the business for 54 years, on top of cultivating wildflowers for sale at the market, brought three kinds of tomatoes from her gardens: Super Sweet 100, good for salads, salsa tomatoes and Super Sauce toma-

atoes.

Last year, Litton was elected to the Union County Agricultural Hall of Fame, and she was on hand Saturday to sell tomatoes and offer buying advice for her customers.

“If you have all real red tomatoes, they’ll all get ripe at one time,” said Litton. “But if you have some that are not super red yet, then you don’t refrigerate the tomatoes. You lay them on the counter, and they’ll ripen over a few days period, so that when people buy tomatoes, then they can have them for several days and they’ll still be good.”

Mary Dixon, who has had a home in Blairsville for the past 20 years but lives in South Central Florida, visits the Farmers Market every chance she gets.

“I love it,” said Dixon, who is also a fan of tomato sandwiches. “I think this is the jewel of the city, really. I like the Trash & Treasures, and I like the Farmers Market.”

For those who were in the market for something other than a tomato sandwich, the folks behind the “We Are Still Here Memorial” sold Indian tacos, complete with frybread made by Blairsville’s own Kathie Garrett of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.

Amazing Grace Catering & Events supplied fixings for the tacos, including ground beef, pinto beans, salsa, lettuce, black olives and sour cream.

All proceeds went toward commemorating the visit of four Native American Tribes returning to Union County.

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brings the chiefs to town between March and mid-May 2016, and all four nations have maintained their commitments to the We Are Still Here Initiative.

“That was probably the best thing that ever happened to us, the fact that they said that they would like to move it to 2016 so that they can get the word out more because of the fact – you’ve got an elec-

tion, you’ve got their inauguration,” said Brown. “Quite possibly, you’ve got to speed up a new chief on what’s going on. So, this gives us an opportunity to work with a whole new delegation.”

One of the main goals of the memorial is “to bring the attention of the nation upon our community as we host four heads of sovereign nations while commemorating their peoples as the original inhabitants of Union County and North Georgia,” according to organization literature. “The focal point of the project is a bronze statue currently being designed by nationally renowned Pawnee/Cherokee artist, Daniel Horsechief of Sallisaw, Oklahoma.”

Pushing the entire event to 2016 allows the initiative to continue its fundraising efforts, which have included selling authentic Indian frybread and tacos at the Union County Farmers Market, and on Friday, July 31, the raffling of a limited, signed giclee print of a Native American Paint Horse entitled *Dream Horse*, by Blairsville artist Carol Moore Demme, who donated the piece.

The group began selling tickets for the print two months ago, raising nearly \$700 in the effort. The raffle drawing took place at the Friday Night Concert Series at the Historic Union County Courthouse.

A woman from Marietta

won *Dream Horse*, and when reached by cellphone after the drawing, was ecstatic upon hearing the news.

Demme is opening an art gallery in Victoria’s Plaza, near the Blairsville Cinema, called Art n’ Antiques Etcetera.

The gallery will showcase Demme’s art, paintings, pet portraits, signature lawn jockeys, other fine arts and crafts, as well as some antiques, handmade items and collectibles.

She plans to feature regional artists at her gallery in the future, and hopes to open shop by Sept. 1, promising “unique finds, redesigns and one-of-a-kinds.”

# Millage...from Page 1A

county’s Tax Digest continues to dip for the second straight year. The digest climbed almost \$200,000 in 2013 to \$1.215 billion. It fell by more than \$4 million in 2014. It fell another \$479,000 in 2015.

Union County government will generate \$7.128 million from property taxes in 2015. That’s down \$5,243 from 2014’s tax levy.

“The amount of taxes that will decrease is not a whole lot,” Paris said. “I think it’s more about the principle of rolling back the total taxable amount. It’s about making a statement that we’re not

going up on the millage rate.

“We need to do everything we can to inch it back as much as we can,” he said.

The school system will generate \$14.115 million from property taxes in 2015. That’s down \$14,611 from 2014. The school board has not raised the millage rate since 2011.

Commissioner Paris also reports that the county received an excellent audit report.

“We are pleased to report that our county had an exceptional audit this year, which will be presented to the public at the September

county meeting,” Paris said. “We have all worked very hard since last year to keep our expenses under control because you can also tell from the 5-year history that the county property values have continued to decrease and the growth in new property sales and new home sales is still lagging behind.

“We hope going forward that we will see positive turn around in both of these so that our revenue will increase to help make up for the increased cost of living if the economy continues to improve,” Paris said.

# Job Fair...from Page 1A

“The JDA team, which includes Erik Brinke representing Towns County, and Stephanie Searcy representing Fannin County, reached out to Renee Diebert with North Georgia Technical College in Blairsville, who arranged to allow the career fair at their campus,” Griggs said. “Renee and her staff have also been extremely helpful to us in offering the event.”

For a complete list of participating employers, job seekers may log on to [www.dol.state.ga.us/Access/Service/ListCurrentJobFairs](http://www.dol.state.ga.us/Access/Service/ListCurrentJobFairs) and click on the “North GA Regional Career Expo” event title. Job seekers are encouraged to bring their resume, dress appropriately and be prepared to interface directly with prospective employers.

The Development Authority’s goal is to help its existing businesses and the County’s residents.

“We hope that this event will provide the opportunity and environment for our local businesses and job seekers to meet with each other and hopefully lead to both increased employment and

more productive companies,” Griggs said. “We sincerely appreciate the hard work of our partners including the Department of Labor, North Georgia Technical College, Blue Ridge Mountain EMC, the Development Authority

of Fannin County, the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce and the *North Georgia News*, and most of all our area businesses without whose help and participation this event would not have been possible.”

# Cruiz-In...

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ers were set up to sell T-shirts and other merchandise. And there was also a swap meet where car owners could trade parts.

Parrish, who also promotes car shows in Panama City, Fla., and Fort Worth, Texas, likes to make his shows unique. Since participants in car shows often have jobs, families, and other responsibilities, they can only go to a limited amount of shows in a year.

“The more things you can do and give them, and if you have a neat place to go, then they’re going to take your show, and that’s what it is,” said Parrish. “They come here and like it, the same with the beach.”

So from Thursday to Saturday, the Cruiz-In consisted of parties at the Ridges Resort and at the Lake Chatuge Lodge, live music, “cruises” around the region, and a parade. On the last day, a small, non-competitive contest was held for the best moonshine car. Small prizes were awarded for the top 25, with special consideration given to the top “Fantastic Five.”