

# North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Legal Organ of Union County

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## Potential conflict of interest between Taylor, EMC uncovered

By Charles Duncan  
North Georgia News  
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The North Georgia News and Towns County Herald have uncovered a potential conflict of interest regarding Taylor and Taylor Construction and the development of the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC headquarters.

In a letter obtained by the newspapers dated Sept. 15, 2010, Taylor and Taylor Construction, owned by then EMC President of the cooperative's Board of Directors, Terry Taylor, was named a contractor on the new EMC headquarters project by Atlanta-based Evergreen Construction.

Taylor and Taylor was named a member of the local contractor list according to a letter from William McCorkie and carbon copied to Robin Millard and EMC General Manager Matthew Akins to Mylan Anderson of Millard Inc., a Roswell-based archi-

tectural firm.

The letter indicates that Taylor and Taylor were among a list of local contractors being used on the headquarters' construction project.

"Taylor and Taylor Construction - this is a local supplier of stone and sand who we understand is also furnishing material to the Phase I project," according to McCorkie's letter.

Taylor and Taylor Construction never paid for some of the newspapers on the project, the newspapers have learned.

According to Towns County Probate Court, Chester White Quarry has been awarded a \$9,728 judgment against Taylor and Taylor Construction for materials purchased for the EMC headquarters project.

The newspapers have learned that Taylor and Taylor purchased stone from Chester White Construction for use on the EMC project. Chester White Construction never re-



Terry Taylor

ceived money for the sale of materials to Taylor and Taylor Construction.

According to the default judgment, Chester White Construction will receive no pre-judgment interest, no attorney fees. However, Chester White Construction will receive future interest on the original principal as provided by law.

Taylor and Taylor also wanted to pay accrued court costs of \$103.50.

The case went to default because of the failure of Taylor and Taylor Construction to file an answer to the suit, or exercise other defensive pleadings, Towns County Probate Court records show.

Taylor and Taylor Construction until recently, had not paid their electric bill since March 22, 2012.

Documents obtained by the newspapers show EMC paid Taylor \$16,869.16 from March 2012 to May 2014.

Those documents also show that in that same time frame, Taylor and Taylor Construction was paid \$869.47.

Taylor, the former president of Blue Ridge Mountain EMC Board of Directors owes more than just his unpaid utility bill, documents obtained by the North Georgia News and Towns County Herald show.

The North Georgia News and Towns County Her-

ald reported on April 30 that Terry Taylor in arrears on his stone crusher company's utility bill in the amount of \$48,643.53.

Taylor was offered and accepted a consent agreement with the EMC Board of Directors to pay a minimum of \$1,000 each month, in addition to current electric charges. That bill is down to \$45,643.53. Prior to Taylor's most recent payments, the last payment he made to BRMEMC was March 22, 2012.

In the court-ordered consent agreement between Taylor and Taylor and Blue Ridge Mountain EMC, the EMC sought and received a judgment of \$47,643.53 with post judgment interest, Towns County Superior Court records show.

EMC also was awarded the cost of the action, with Taylor and Taylor agreeing to foot the costs, Towns County Superior Court records show.

A copy of Taylor and

Taylor Construction's bill for June 10, 2014 obtained by the newspapers shows that the company owed the EMC \$107,998.43.

The newspapers have yet to determine what happened to the remaining \$62,354 from the June bill.

The BRMEMC Board hired attorney Steve Minor of Tisinger Vance, PC to determine how the Taylor debt happened in the first place. That investigation, which will cost the membership up to \$30,000, is concluded and expected to be made public in the weeks ahead.

It's unclear how long Taylor's bill has been overdue, overlooked and gone unpaid. That information should come from Minor's report on the history of the debt.

The utility company has more than 43,000 customers with more than 49,000 electric meters serving a five-county area that includes Union,

See EMC, 2A

## Notla Water Authority unveils new laboratory

By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Notla Water Authority is pleased to announce the opening of its Microbiological Laboratory located adjacent to the Notla Water Treatment Plant on State Hwy 325.

The Notla Water Microbiological Lab received its official State certification from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Environmental Protection Division on Aug. 1st.

The lab underwent a rigorous 27-page audit covering all aspects of federal drinking water laboratory standards, including those referencing the actual facilities, security, personnel training, equipment, quality assurance, and process control.

Notla Water Authority General Manager Danny



The men and women who comprise the Notla Water Authority staff. Photo/Todd Forrest

Young explained the arduous task of acquiring certification and the many precondi-

tions involved. Although, one unwritten requirement is patience, and it's a must.

"It was a delay of all-  
See Notla, 2A

## DA reaffirms GBI, Attorney General involvement in BRMEMC inquiry

By Charles Duncan  
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A news story by the Clay County Progress in North Carolina has prompted the Enotah Judicial Circuit District Attorney Jeff Langley to reaffirm a Georgia Bureau of Investigation inquiry into the debt of former Blue Ridge Mountain EMC Board President Terry Taylor.

The Taylor was unable to confirm information already published by the North Georgia News and Towns County Herald. Seemingly, that story cast doubt on the news reports by the North Georgia News and Towns County Herald.

That doubt was lifted as Taylor doubted his statements to the North Georgia News and Towns County Herald.

"The newspaper (North Georgia News/Towns County Herald) contacted me and asked if it was true that the GBI and the Attorney General's Office were involved, because the paper had received information that they had become involved," Langley said. "I confirmed that the GBI had been contacted and that I had called the Attorney General's Office."



Jeff Langley

"I knew the GBI had conducted at least one interview," Langley said. "The GBI was requested to gather information about the situation. That's not an open criminal investigation."

"That prompted the GBI response that there was no criminal investigation on the matter," Langley said. "Technically, no there is no investigation, but they are examining the documents they

See Inquiry, 2A

## A creek or a wetland? DDA awaits final decision

By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

The Downtown Development Authority of Blairsville met last Tuesday to discuss several items of business, but the Haralson Property Development made top of the list.

In attendance were Program Manager Darren Harper and fellow board members Brenda Adams, Daniel Davensonport, W. C. Nelson, Paul Thompson, Ricky Abercrombie, and Rhonda Mahan. Chairman Paul Thompson called the meeting to order, and after a quick determination of quorum, the agenda was underway.

The Haralson project, which encompasses the land behind City Hall up to Georgia Highway 515, has been an ongoing project of the DDA since 2010.

The goal of the project is to increase business to the downtown area by creating a



It doesn't look like much, but this small body of water is holding up progress in Downtown Blairsville. A decision is expected soon to determine if this is a creek or wetlands. Photo/Matthew Jarrard

new exit ramp from 515 that will let out further up on Pat Haralson Drive, as well as introducing bathrooms, parking, and green space for patrons, and open up more space for businesses.

"We want to leverage the traffic that goes along 515, because if you're coming from out of town, and you're going up 515, you don't really see much off of that. And this is a good way of drawing some of

that traffic into this area, and then into downtown," said Harper.

One of the key components in getting the Haralson  
See DDA, 3A

## BOE holds the line on county property taxes

By Charles Duncan  
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The budget is going up, but property taxes are status quo as far as the Union County Board of Education is concerned.

The total school budget is set at \$25.885 million for Fiscal 2015. That's up from \$23.662 million in Fiscal Year 2014.

However, the millage rate is at 11.791 mills, essentially holding the millage rate line the same.

Union County Assistant Superintendent Dr. Jeremy Williams told Union County Board of Education members that the increase is due to the rising cost of instruction.

However, he also told the board that an anticipated increase in ad valorem tax collections and increased funding coming from the state



Dr. Jeremy Williams

would allow the budget to absorb the increase without raising taxes.

"From the state standpoint, we're earning more money from the state," Dr. Williams said. "We underestimated tax collections last year, and with the \$14 million anticipated for collection in the next fiscal year, there should be no tax increase."

See BOE, 3A

## Two charged in string of thefts, burglary

By Charles Duncan  
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Two local residents remain behind bars following their arrest on multiple theft charges.

Gina Burnette, 41, faces charges of second-degree burglary, two felony counts theft by receiving stolen property, and seven misdemeanor counts theft by receiving stolen property and felony criminal interference with government property, jail records show.

Rusty Lee Albietz, 40,



Rusty Lee Albietz



Gina Burnette

faces two counts first-degree felony burglary, one count second-degree felony burglary, one felony count theft by receiving stolen property, felony criminal interference of government property, seven counts misdemeanor theft by receiving stolen property, felony probation violation, and felony riot in a penal institution, jail records show.

Union County Sheriff's Office Staff Sgt. Darren Osborn said an investigation of a break-in led to video surveillance that led to two ar-

See Arrests, 3A

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