

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

www.nganews.com

Legal Organ of Union County

Your Hometown Newspaper Since 1909

August 22, 2012

City, County reach Local Option Sales Tax accord for next 10 years

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer



Commissioner Lamar Paris

Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris declared that the county and the city of Blairsville have reached an agreement on the distribution of Local Option Sales Tax revenues.

Paris confirmed that the county and city of Blairsville reached an agreement on distribution of LOST dollars.

Paris certified the agreement of the LOST Revenues with the city at Thursday night's Commission meeting.

The county will receive 80 percent of the LOST revenues and the city of Blairsville will receive 20 percent,

directly off your property tax. In other words, it's not additional revenue for the county, it just reduces property taxes," he said.

Paris said he had been in negotiations with Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley for several weeks and met last week with the Blairsville City Council in reaching the final accord.

"The county and city have divided LOST dollars at an 80/20 split for the last 20 years," Commissioner Paris said. "This could have been done based on population, and the city only has about 4 percent of that number.

"The county and city work well together and we were in agreement that the 80/20 should remain the same," Commissioner Paris



Mayor Jim Conley

"I'm proud to work with the city of Blairsville. There are a lot of counties and cities across the state that are at odds over this very issue.

"I'm proud we have such a good working relationship with the city of Blairsville," Commissioner Paris said.

Meanwhile, Commissioner Paris declared the week of Sept. 17 as Constitution Week in Union County and discussed other new business at last week's Commission Meeting.

Margaret Wischmeyer and Annette Hopgood were in attendance to represent The Old Unicoi Trail Chapter of Daughters of the American Revolution.

Meanwhile, the Blue Ridge Mountain Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution were represented by David Anderson and Sidney Dubose Turner.

Commissioner Paris read a proclamation requesting that the citizens of Union

County affirm the ideas that the framers of the Constitution had by diligently protecting the freedoms guaranteed to us through this guardian of our liberties.

"The week which commemorated America's most important document is one of our country's least known of official observances," Hopgood said. "It is an excellent time for adults and young people to learn more about their nation's constitution - the basis for our government."

Commissioner Paris' next order of business was to appoint Mitch Griggs to the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission Council.

"Mitch is our Economic

See Commission Page 6A

Iraq War Memorial will be a local reality

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

It began as an unknown quest; it concludes as one of the most significant accomplishments of a downtrodden economy in a tight-knit community.

The funds to erect a memorial to the fallen and wounded veterans of the Iraq War is complete, said Bob Spaulding, director of Veterans Affairs in Union County.

The committee that began raising funds in July to make a Iraq War Memorial a reality, says it needs no more donations, the task is complete.

"We've received enough money to do the pedestals for the Iraq War Memorial and the Afghanistan War Memorial," said Spaulding, who chaired the fund raising drive. "We hope to dedicate the Iraq War Memorial on Nov. 11, 2012."

Chuck Honaker, who co-chaired the fund raising drive, and retired Veterans Affairs Director for Union County Roy Hamby, said the funds were collected from

a cross section of residents, businesses, civic organizations, banks and churches.

Spaulding said the response to the Iraq War Memorial was like none he had ever seen before.

"I've never seen such a patriotic response," he said. "The predominant factor is the patriotism of the people who make up the Union County community.

"All the veterans, and this committee want to express our heartfelt thanks for all that the Union County community has done that will make this critical addition to the county's War Memorial possible," Spaulding said.

On Sunday, Brad Hutson of Woodmen of the World, donated what could be the final donation to the memorial fund.

"I'm a member of Lodge No. 1180," Hutson said. "We met and decided that it was the right thing to do, making a donation to this worthy cause. We didn't give it a second thought, we knew it was something that had to be done."

When the fund drive began, almost \$3,900 sepa-



Woodmen of the World's Brad Hutson, (R), delivers a donation to Chuck Honaker that could be the last donation to the Memorial Fund to add on to the Union County War Memorial. Photo/Todd Forrest

rated the Veterans Committee and a fitting memorial to those who served in the War on Terrorism.

Honaker, who helped start the fund raiser, has about 10 pieces of shrapnel still inside him as a red badge of courage from the prolonged battle in Iraq. His hearing was

irreparably damaged after an improvised explosive device detonated while he was a gunner on patrol in Baghdad.

It severely injured Honaker and killed his friend and Staff Sgt. Bobby C. Franklin, who worked here in Union

See Donations, Page 3A

Firefighters get certification

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

Twelve full-time Union County firefighters and one part-time firefighter have completed firefighter II training and certifications, Union County Fire Chief Charles Worden said last week.

After local firefighters took a 100-question written examination, evaluators from surrounding counties arrived in Union County and put the 13 firefighters through a series of hands-on evaluations to ensure that they could carry out specific tasks related to their jobs, Chief Worden said.

The examination and practical exercises covered higher levels of knowledge that included alarm and sprinkler systems, building construction, public safety education, understanding water supply systems, protecting fire scene evidence, and pre-fire planning, the chief said.

The certifications help Union County firefighters to be prepared for a fire scene, extrications and other scenarios, Chief Worden said.



Chief Charles Worden

"It's a multi-faceted accomplishment," Chief Worden said. "It improves ISO ratings, it increases our chances for grant-funding. It's a big deal."

The certification process has been two years in the making, a year to complete Firefighter I training and exercises, and another year to complete Firefighter II, Chief Worden said.

"Due to a grant we had, we had to complete this process within two years," the chief said. "All of the paid staff is now Firefighter

See Firefighters, Page 2A

Olens serves up a side of issues to go with the eggs

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

The Annual Eggs & Issues Breakfast hosted by the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce featured a very special guest last week.

Georgia Attorney General Sam Olens was the keynote speaker for the annual event at the Union County Community Center.

The event was sponsored by Boaz Media and Network Solutions.

Olens, 55, who has been invited to address the Republican National Convention in Tampa, FL next week, spoke about many of the legal issues

facing Georgia and how he tackles each one as Attorney General.

Most notably health care reform and Interstate water rights.

Following the passage of The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act in 2010 (Obamacare), 20 states joined Florida in filing a federal lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the bill, with Georgia joining with the backing of Gov. Nathan Deal.

After his swearing-in in January, 2011, Olens amended Georgia's filing, adding the Georgia Office of the Attorney General to the lawsuit.

"Given the far-reaching impact of the federal health-care law on every Georgia citizen as well as the critical



Georgia Attorney General Sam Olens said the battle of healthcare issues and tri-state water wars are still ongoing. Photo/Todd Forrest

constitutional implications of its requirements, it is important that Georgia's interests are protected at all stages of the litigation," Olens said.

Another issue of interest, which state owns the

See Eggs, Page 2A

Seniors get a gift from Wal-Mart

By Janice Boling
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Union County Senior Center has been awarded the Wal-Mart Foundation-Meals on Wheels Association of America, Small Program, Large Impact Grant.

The \$20,000 grant money was recently used to purchase a new 2012 Ford Escape for delivery of meals to senior citizens in Union County.

Union County Senior Center Director Kathy Hill explains how the Senior Center became eligible for the award.

"In March 2012, I participated in the March for Meals program by inviting the Mayor of Blairsville, Mr. Jim Conley, to deliver meals," she said. "I also invited Commissioner Lamar Paris to deliver meals."

"After participating in this event, I was notified that



Kathy Hill and Tony Stewart

this made us eligible to apply for the Wal-Mart Foundation Small Program, Large Impact Grant," she said.

"I applied for the grant and was so surprised when we received \$20,000 to purchase a new SUV type vehicle to deliver meals," she said.

Hill said the vehicle with greatly benefit Union County seniors.

See Seniors, Page 2A

Facebook leads to felony arrest

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

What do you do when a crime seems almost unsolvable?

The Union County Sheriff's Office is utilizing one of the most popular social network tools in the country.

Facebook has led authorities to an alleged thief, or actually, it's the other way around.

A young lady and her daughter were shopping at Wal-mart when the lady laid down her high-tech cell phone.

Union County sheriff's investigators say an unidentified male calmly walked



Eddie Huskins

by the lady and her daughter without even looking at them. However, detectives say he walked right on by and swiped her \$600-plus Droid Razr while it lay on the store shelf.

After talking with Wal-

mart's loss prevention specialist Jeff Griffin, the woman looked at a video of the unidentified male swiping her Razr, Union County sheriff's reports show.

Investigator C.J. Worden said he also looked at the video and was able to see the suspect take the phone from a clothing rack where it had been placed by its owner, sheriff's reports show.

"He took the phone with him into the rest room," Worden said. "He left the bathroom and then left the building."

"I placed a still shot of him on Facebook with hopes

See Facebook, Page 2A

Roundup time on Old Highway 76

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

Union County Animal Control Officer Paul Petty has seen it all.

He's chased horses, cows, pigs, goats and even emus.

Thursday's call to Old Highway 76 near Notla

See Horses, Page 3A



Eleven horses found the grass greener on Old Hwy 76 last week. Photo/Todd Forrest

Vol. 103 No. 34
2 Sections, 26 Pages
Weather
Wed: Clouds Hi 81 Lo 58
Thur: Clouds Hi 81 Lo 58
Friday Storms Hi 84 Lo 60

Inside
Arrests 8A
Church 13A
Classified 3B
Opinion 4A
Legal 5B
Letters 4A
Obits 15A
Sports 10A

11th Annual Mountain Heritage Festival
Labor Day Weekend
September 1 & 2
10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Mountain Life Museum
See page 7A

Sorghum Festival Vendor Applications
See page 8A

4-H Back to School Carnival
Sat., Sept. 1
10am - 4pm
See page 8A

Football Season starts Thursday, August 23
Lady Panthers win opener
See page 10A