

Tax Bills...from Page 1A

ments, or to see if your mortgage company has paid your property tax," Commissioner Knight said. "The website charges a 2.2 percent fee for a credit or debit transaction and only charges 50 cents to pay with an electronic check.

"This has already proved to be a convenient way for the customer and us

to do business," he said. "It also provides information for anyone wanting to check taxes against a property.

Commissioner Knight said the process to get the tax bills ready takes a lot of work from the Tax Assessor's office to keep track of property values, exemptions, and total amount to be taxed for each individual tax bill.

"They have done a great job getting us the required information early this year," Commissioner Knight said. "This information is also required for the Board of Education and the County Commissioner to set the millage rate to meet their budgets for maintenance and operations for the schools and the county government."

Commissioner Knight said because the combined millage rate is a little lower this year – 17.725 mills –

most taxpayers will see a slight decrease in their tax bill this year.

"Our job here in the Tax Commissioner's office is to bill, collect and distribute the money to the BOE, the County, and the state," Commissioner Knight said. "We do not set property values or the millage rate."

Property tax collection rate for last year, 2014, is at 96 percent collected, and for 2013 and back tax years the collection rate is above 98.5 percent collected, Commissioner Knight said.

"We did have a tax lien sale on June 2nd which is the hard part of collecting property taxes," he said. "Nobody wants to have their property sold for back taxes, and that is why we are willing to set up a payment agreement before we take action on a delinquent tax bill.

"Avoiding paying your property taxes and not making arrangements to pay your bill is not a solution," Commissioner Knight said. "While we may not like paying property taxes, it is only fair to the folks that have paid their property tax bill for everyone to pay their taxes."

Commissioner Knight said he would also like to thank the tax office staff for their hard work and efforts to deliver superior customer service to the Union County taxpayers.

"We are here to address any questions or concerns you may have about your property taxes or vehicle registration," he said. "I would also like to thank the citizens of Union County for allowing me to serve as their tax commissioner. My door is always open and I am here to serve the taxpayer."

Historic furniture returns home

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Inside the museum, also known as the Mock House for its longtime resident Grapelle Mock, a special dedication took place in the historic site's dining room.

Harry and Susan Roose Nolan donated Judge Thomas Candler's antique dining room set to be displayed inside the museum.

The early 1900s furniture was presented in terrific condition, with no alterations, featuring six chairs with original upholstery, a dining table with a roll-up center leaf, a large sideboard buffet, a highboy meant to hold alcoholic beverages and a type of dressing table called a lowboy.

In terms of history, the dining room suite comes to the Mock House with great significance – not only does the furniture fit within the time period during which the house was built, in 1906, the donation marks a homecoming for the furniture that has spent the last 25 years in

Atlanta.

Judge Candler, born in Blairsville in 1890, was appointed to the honorable position of Georgia Supreme Court Justice in 1945, a position he held for more than 20 years.

The donated dining room suite started its life in Union County in the Candler family home, the brick house located directly across the street from the old Union County Courthouse, just one block from the museum where the furniture resides today.

When Judge Candler moved from his Downtown Blairsville home, Union County residents Bonnell and Roma Akins bought the set from him and incorporated it into their home.

There the set remained for many years, lovingly used by the Akins household, until one day Bonnell and Roma decided to redecorate.

The Akins and Roose families had been friends for many years, and Susan Roose, who at that time some 25 years ago had not yet married her husband Har-

ry, jumped at the opportunity to purchase the suite from the Akins family for her home in Atlanta.

Both of Roose Nolan's parents are buried in the Choestoe Baptist Church Cemetery, and after Susan met and married Harry in Atlanta, he soon fell in love with the Union County area and its people.

"When we got ready to do some changes in the house in Atlanta, Harry and I had been talking about it for years, and we said, I wonder if maybe Union County would like to have the furniture," said Roose Nolan.

And the answer was a grateful, resounding yes to bringing the furniture back home to Blairsville.

Present for the historic donation were Harry and Susan Roose Nolan, as well as members of the Akins family: Bonnell and Roma's son Larry Akins, their great-grandson and Larry's grandson Isaac Hyde, as well as Larry's cousin and Union County Historical Society President Bud Akins and his wife Mary Carol.

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terrorist attack on July 16, 2015, at military recruiting centers in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Wells became connected with the 9/11 Ride to Remember through her neighbor, Jason Weeks, who is a member of the Wingmen Motorcycle Club Cherokee County Chapter.

Through the Wingmen, Wells has participated in bike rides to raise money for the Skip Wells Scholarship Fund, which she began as a way to honor her son.

Lance Cpl. Wells graduated from Sprayberry High School in Marietta, where he was a member of the school's ROTC program and band. Skip Wells Scholarships will go to students in those programs, as well as students in any club or organization within Sprayberry.

"Everything that I do, whether it be ride a bike or, next weekend I'm in Chattanooga for a bass tournament with Marines & Mickey, so everything that I do, I do for him," said Wells of her son. "Everything is for Skip. Everything is to keep his legacy and his memory alive. Whatever it takes for me to do that, that's what I'll do."

Sunday's ride offered bikers, many of whom were U.S. veterans and public safety personnel, the opportunity to commemorate fallen heroes – from members of the Armed Forces to firefighters, police officers and other first responders who lost their lives in the attacks of 9/11.

Friends Jeremy Jones and Scott Pulliam made the ride with Kris Smith and her 11-year-old son Nickolas, all from Danielsville, and they agreed that the scenic ride gave them plenty of time to reflect.

Smith, who has a daughter serving in the U.S. Army, called the ride humbling, and Nickolas, who wasn't yet born when the 9/11 attacks happened, looked back on that fateful day and said that thinking about the tragedy made him sad, but that the patriotic support was uplifting.

"That day changed the lives of the whole country," added Jones, who served six years in the Army. "Not only the people that lost their lives that day, but due to that day, all the men and women – 6,700 have lost their lives in Afghanistan and Iraq since that day, and that's why we do this, to honor them. We lost so much because of that, and we're still fighting it, whether people with PTSD or with loved ones and family members. It's always going to be like this, every year."

After reaching their destination at the Copperhead



Lodge, bikers and those along for the ride were treated to live music and barbeque lunches prepared by the Athens Hog Chapter, and Cycle World of Athens paid for the food with

their many partner sponsors.

"The food is free, the ride is free and the fun is free, but freedom ain't free – don't forget," said Cycle World Sales Manager Barry Brugh.