

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

www.nganews.com

Legal Organ of Union County

Your Hometown Newspaper Since 1909

January 21, 2015

Moving Wall coming to Union

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

A symbol of healing for Vietnam veterans is headed to Meeks Park in Union County, Oct. 8-12.

The Vietnam Moving Wall, a half-size replica of the Washington, DC Vietnam Veterans Memorial, will be on display for five days at Meeks Park during the first weekend of the annual Sorghum Festival.

The Wall is scheduled to arrive Oct. 7, and will be set up and ready for viewing by 3 p.m. Oct. 8, said Mirville Chapter 1101 of the Vietnam Veterans of America.

"As a Vietnam veteran, the Moving Wall represents all the turmoil that we went through," Priven said. "It's a moving tribute beyond belief. Any Vietnam veteran that witnesses this will be teary-eyed. It's the brothers that lost their lives."

"I think it's going to help the Sorghum Festival, and I think the Sorghum Festival is going to help us," Priven said. "The Wall is meant to be a Vietnam veterans of America, welcome home." Hopefully, it will provide closure for some guys."

The announcement came last week at the Union County Courthouse as members of the Blairsville Chapter 1101 of the Vietnam Veterans



of America, in collaboration with the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Disabled American Veterans, and the American Legion broke the news.

The Vietnam Moving Wall has been touring the country for more than 30 years; the first stop was in Ty-

ler, Texas in October 1984. It was designed to allow people that wouldn't have the chance to see the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC, the opportunity to experience the Wall.

The arrival of the Vietnam Moving Wall, Page 3A

Farmers Market expansion in the cards

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris has added another 7.1 acres that adjoins the Union County Farmers Market.

The property, off Old Smokey Road, was purchased from Jane Wimpey Rogers for \$12,635 per acre. The total cost of the property was \$89,712.

"This property and a future option contract was presented at the Nov. 20, 2014 county meeting, and this is just acceptance of the deed and settlement statement from the closing," Commissioner Paris said.

"This property is adjacent to the current Farmers Market property and borders the East side of Butternut Creek for 400 feet and is about 50 percent cleared and 50 percent wooded," Commissioner Paris said.

Commissioner Paris said the purchase made sense with the popularity of the Farmers Market and the need for future expansion.

"The way the Farmers Market is growing, we felt that having a chance to add to that experience, it was something that made sense," Commissioner Paris said. "It was a good price and it was a no-brainer to buy it because it allows us future expansion opportunities."

"We don't have a specific purpose in mind just yet,



but, in the short-term, we can expand the community garden. If we have to have expansion in the future, there is a barn and a storage building on that property. It gives us a lot of options going forward," Commissioner Paris said.

In other business, Commissioner Paris adopted a resolution to sell 3.32 acres of forfeited property obtained by the Union County Sheriff's Office as a drug seizure.

The property will be sold to the highest bidder at some point in the future, and utilize the funds to further enhance the Sheriff's Office operations.

Commissioner Paris accepted the renewal contract between Union County and the Correctional Resource Group to provide meals at the Union County Jail.

There will be an increase in the per meal price this year

based on the sliding scale according to the cost of living and food index increase. The new prices will be good through Dec. 31.

Commissioner Paris accepted a contract between Union County and Rushton & Company for the year ending Dec. 31, 2014. The amount of the contract is \$4,000 for the Financial Statement Audit and \$3,500 for the Single Audit if required.

"We have changed audit companies as we were previously utilizing Maulding and Jenkins for the past two years," Commissioner Paris said. "The price is the same."

Commissioner Paris approved the business license issued to Serenity Retreat, LLC, located at 15 Leidel Lane, Blairsville for the pur-

See County, Page 3A

Sheriff: Lock your car doors while at church

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

Union County Sheriff Mack Mason is asking churchgoers to lock their vehicles while they attend church services.

The Sheriff's Office has received reports of items stolen from vehicles during two church services. Cell phones, other valuables and cash have been taken, Sheriff Mason said.

"These items were taken from vehicles that were unlocked," Sheriff Mason said. "The last place a person would expect to have their vehicles illegally entered is at church. The best advice I can give is to lock your vehicle."

Union County Sheriff's



Sheriff Mack Mason
Detective SSgt. Darren Osborn said even a locked vehicle is subject to being broken into at church.

"If you leave something of value inside your vehicle in plain sight, chances are a thief will find something to break out a window to retrieve it," Sgt. Osborn said. "We live in a day and age when window of opportunity is still the biggest temptation to a thief."

Sgt. Osborn suggests leaving valuables at home in a place of safekeeping and not in one's personal vehicle in plain sight.

"Entering an auto is a felony," Sgt. Osborn said. "The best advice we can give is to not provide the temptation for someone to break into your vehicle. If a thief sees an iPad in your front passenger seat, they will find a way to retrieve it. If you leave that at home, you reduce the risk of someone il-

legally entering your auto."

Sgt. Osborn also suggests that churches have someone serve as a lookout during church services to keep an eye on the parking lot.

"More and more churches are looking at security options," Sgt. Osborn said. "We live in a day and age of desperate people. That requires desperate measures."

The Sheriff's Office continues to seek leads into the recent string of vehicle break-ins at local churches. Anyone with details of these break-ins, contact the Sheriff's Office at (706) 439-6066 or the TIP Line at (706) 781-1973, Sgt. Osborn said.

All calls will be kept confidential, Sgt. Osborn said.

Gowder honored as one of 130 CEOs to know

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Dr. Michael Gowder, CEO of Union General Hospital Inc., was named one of 130 nonprofit hospital and health system CEOs to know in 2014 by Becker's Hospital Review.

"The leaders on this list lead some of the largest and most prominent hospitals and health systems in the nation," according to Becker's. "They were selected to this list based on their experience, professional achievement and involvement in their communities."

Dr. Gowder is one of three Georgia hospital CEOs named to the list, and holds the honor with Kevin Brown of Piedmont Healthcare and John Huppert of Grady Health System, both of Atlanta.

"Becker's Hospital Review features up-to-date busi-



Dr. Mike Gowder
ness and legal news and analysis relating to hospitals and health systems," according to the Becker's website. "Content is geared toward high-level hospital leaders (CEOs, CFOs, COOs, CMOs, etc.), and we work to provide valuable content, including hospital and health system news, best practices and legal

See Gowder, Page 2A

Foster Children of Towns and Union had another successful year

News Special
North Georgia News

Towns and Union Christmas Fund had another successful year for the Foster Children of Towns and Union Counties.

Every year for the past 14 years, volunteers, who were previous child advocates, have been supplying gifts for the foster children.

Here's how it works - the group advertises for sponsors and they receive an angel with the child's wish list. No names are used because of confidentiality. The sponsor shops for what the child would like for Christmas. They are asked to put the gifts in a large bag.

Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris allows the group to use a room at the old jail on Trackrock where they check everything to see if the child is getting what he or she wants and especially clothing and shoes.

The group also accepts monetary donations and they are so thankful because there are always a few children that come into the system right before Christmas.

Throughout the year if DFCS cannot supply a child



with a need they have, the group steps in to meet those needs, be it back to school supplies, camp, and other enrichment activities or unusual medical needs.

About 12 years ago the group's Board members decided they needed to incorporate and become a bona fide charity. The group is now

a 501 (c) (3) charity under the name "Towns and Union Foster Children's Enrichment Program."

An important factor is that no one on the Board gets any remuneration. This is all volunteer work. The group is thankful to its community, and all the individuals and businesses and churches and banks

who have donated gifts and money over the years.

Without them the group acknowledges that it could not provide the foster children with a nice Christmas.

The group has sponsors that go back many years in supporting the program, and for that the group is truly grateful.

Rep. Allison to chair House Special Rules Committee

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

Atlanta - The House Committee on Assignments have announced the committee appointments for the Georgia General Assembly 2015-2016 term.

House District 8 State Rep. Stephen Allison (R-Blairsville) was appointed to serve as Chairman of the House Special Rules Committee.

The Special Rules Committee is responsible for reviewing bills and legislation of a unique nature which do not fall under the purview of other standing committees and for working on special tasks and issues given to them by the Rules committee.

"I am honored and deeply appreciative to Speaker Ralston and the Committee on Assignments for allowing me to serve the citizens of District 8 and our state as the Chairman of this committee,"



State Rep. Stephen Allison
said Rep. Allison. "I look forward to working with the committee to improve the environment for all citizens and help businesses in Georgia to flourish."

During this term, he

See Allison, Page 2A

Vol. 106 No. 4
2 Sections, 20 Pages
Weather
Thurs: Clouds Hi 50 Lo 32
Fri: Rain Hi 47 Lo 31
Sat: Clouds Hi 48 Lo 29

Arrests 6A
Church 7A
Classifieds 2B
Opinion 4A
Legals 4B
Obits 9A
Sports 10A

Meeting
Thurs. Jan 22nd
Veterans Building
See page 6A

RELAY FOR LIFE
Jan. 22nd
Fellowship Hall
at Mtn. Presbyterian Church
See page 12A

Benefit for Tricia Spear
Director of the Towns/Union Humane Society Thrift Shop
Mon. Jan 26th
Spaghetti Dinner
Union Community Center

SPORTS
UCHS Basketball
Fri. Jan 23 @ Greene Co 5 PM
Sat. Jan 24 @ Hayesville 7 PM
WRESTLING
Fri. Jan 23 @ Oglethorpe County