

## Worden...from Page 1A



Worden was diagnosed with bone cancer during the summer, but has continued to work as much as he can to direct operations at Union County Fire Department, Union County Emergency Management Agency, and Union County 911.

He has successfully completed a round of radiation treatments and is currently undergoing chemotherapy treatments that are almost halfway done.

"Charles Worden is such an amazing gentleman and we have been so fortunate to have him in charge of our Emergency Services in Union County for so long (E-911, Fire Department and Emergency Management)," said Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris. "The average citizen does not realize

what an asset it is in any type of emergency or natural disaster, to have a man who has dealt with every type of situation and intuitively knows what and how to react.

"I have been blessed as commissioner to have someone that I could always call on when needed and he was always there," Paris said. I am so proud that the Georgia Emergency Management Agency has chosen to present this award to Charles and he is so deserving. It also is true that he has always had a great staff and dedicated group of volunteers in support of him, but they also have had a wonderful leader and we appreciate him so much."

Worden said the award humbled him.

"Receiving this award was a surprise to me. I feel

honored to receive the award, it was a statewide award, and I am humbled," Worden said. "I didn't come here tonight anticipating this award. I have worked hard to do my job to meet the needs of the citizens of Union County. I have been fortunate to work for Union County Government, who has treated me like family.

"I call Union County home, it is my home, and like they say, home is where the heart is. My heart will always reside in Union County."

Worden was born and raised in Union County and his heart has always been here.

"Receiving this, I hope I can live up to the recognition of this award, and can continue to serve and protect Union County," he said.

## Coffee...from Page 1A

Currently operated as a garage by local mechanic David Tanner, the building will undergo a facelift beginning in January to become Cabin Coffee Co., Union County Executive Director for Economic Development Mitch Griggs said on Friday.

Tanner is in the midst of relocating to a new location on the Old Blue Ridge Highway, Griggs said.

Cabin Coffee intends to maintain the historical character of the building and will add an outside seating area, Griggs said. The business venture marks the first Cabin Coffee Co. franchise in Georgia, Griggs said.

Cabin Coffee will serve high-quality coffee and other beverages, along with breakfast and lunch products. Cabin Coffee will initially

employ eight to 10 people. Cabin Coffee will roast coffee beans on site. The menu will include specialty coffee and coffee blend products, other blended drinks, fresh baked goods, soups, sandwiches and other food items, Griggs said.

The Blairsville location marks the 11th franchise for Cabin Coffee Co. in the United States. The company also has locations in Colorado, Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, Griggs said.

Blairsville will be Cabin Coffee Co.'s first location in Georgia.

"We are excited about the opportunity to bring our restaurant to Union County and to participate in the revitalization of Downtown Blairsville," said local owners Wayne and Judy Jolley. "We

appreciate the effort and assistance we have received from the Union County Development Authority and the Downtown Development Authority and are impressed with the workforce, business-friendly environment and enthusiasm of the entire community."

"Wayne and Judy have been a pleasure to work with and we're especially pleased that they soon will open their new restaurant on the Downtown Courthouse Square.

The renovations they will make to an important corner building will greatly enhance the city's downtown revitalization efforts. This project and the newly renovated 5 & 10 building are creating excitement and providing new retail opportunities in the downtown, Griggs said.

## The Gap...from Page 1A



Union County Board of Education members got an up close look at the program, as students shared a PowerPoint presentation during the November monthly BOE meeting.

Cantrell queries students at the beginning of each semester about what they want to take a closer look.

Students chose a spotlight on teaching younger students how to play the dulcimer, teaching them the art of bee keeping, and the importance of protecting honeybees. They also learn the fine art of canning, building a homestead, and learning to live off the land.

"The program is usually a junior/senior thing," Cantrell said. "It offers a connection to the past, a connection to maybe their grandparents, it takes them back to their roots."

In 2015, the entire community will reflect on 75 years of the school system.

The school started with humble roots and has progressed to the 21st century, learning with modern technology and utilizing today's modern twists and turns.

Local Studies focuses on the history of the region and learning how the school system has evolved.

History tells us that in the late 1800s and early 1900s

the schools were in the local churches. In the 1930s the people of the Suches valley realized the need for one school. The development began with community involvement, donated land, \$5,000 of county funds and \$10,000 from a bond.

The school was built with local timber and quarried stone from nearby Woody Lake. In 1940 the school was dedicated and opened, but without a lunchroom, gym or playground equipment. The mothers of the community prepared meals and served them in the schools' cellar until the lunchroom was added in 1954. The school is strongly supported by the community. The gym, baseball field and tennis court were all funded by the community and built by volunteer labor. The community again pulled together and with various fund raising projects, provided the school and students with computers and printers.

In 1974 the Woody Gap School was designated as an isolated school by the Georgia General Assembly, due to its location of approximately 3,000 feet above sea level and being accessible only by way of hazardous curvy mountain roads.

The school provides classes from Pre-K through

12. In 1981 the school realized Standard School status and has been accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges since 1988.

To date, it remains the smallest public school in Georgia.

The annual Indian Summer Festival and Run Above the Clouds foot races continue to provide funding for the school system and scholarships for its students.

Cantrell, a Suches native and graduate of Woody Gap School, gets personal satisfaction from teaching the Local Studies classes.

"These kids need to know how to be good stewards of their community," Cantrell said. "Local Studies teaches lessons in life, and it's good for these students to understand their roots."

In other words, you have to understand where you've been to know where you're going in life.

"We've shared ideas with other small schools across the nation," Cantrell said. "We've been to the Small Town, Big Dreams Conference. Local Studies continues to evolve."

And you can rest assured, as 2015 rolls in, the Local Studies class will make sure everyone knows about the roots of Woody Gap School.