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costs, it is still estimated that the elections this year will cost \$50,000 or more.

Q. Are there any expected increases in revenue to help offset these increased expenses?

A. Yes, thank goodness. Revenues from Building Permits have increased \$130,000 and Title Ad Valorem Taxes (your vehicle tax) have increased \$310,000. Real Estate Transfer Tax has increased \$35,000, Local Option Sales Tax has increased \$300,000, and Transportation Fares have increased \$10,000. The Insurance Premium Tax has in-

creased \$400,000. All of these increases help keep our property taxes (the millage rate) low as we use the revenue received in the tax rollback calculation to prevent a property tax increase.

Q. How long does it take county officials to prepare the budget?

A. Our Finance Director, County Manager, Elected Officials, Department Heads, and I are basically always working on the budget. We watch expenses and revenues throughout the year, but we started working on actually preparing the 2020 budget in July of 2019.

Cummings... continued from Page 4A

in front of his house. He was afraid a cut bank would pose a danger for him and his wife as they grew older. The man from the Alabama Highway Department agreed. However, when the road was built, a steep bank was created, which caused Lon to climb down and back up to retrieve his mail. The people constructing the road laughed when Lon asked them to level up the bank.

A few miles down the road lived his older brother Will Cummings. Within a few weeks after the incident with Lon, the Road Construction crew reached Will's house. Once again a man appeared at his door to ask about a road right of way. Will went through the same negotiations as his brother and was promised the same thing as Lon. Finally, the construction began at Will's place. When the dozer began cutting down the bank in front of his house he took matters into his own hands. He raised up his old rifle and began shooting at the dozer. The operator

ran for his life as the muffler of the dozer was shot away. The foreman of the crew tried to negotiate, but, Will refused to talk to him.

Finally, the Superintendent of Roads for the State of Alabama made the trip from Montgomery to Trapptown, Alabama. Before visiting Uncle Will, the fellow stopped at the store above Cummings Creek and asked, "What kind of man is Will Cummings?" The store owner replied, "He is honest. If he tells you he will do something then count it done." The Superintendent visited with Uncle Will, who demanded that the hill in front of his house not be cut because it would create a bank that would be hard for him to climb up and down as he aged. He further stated, "Any man that tries to cut down that hill will be shot." The road in front of Will Cummings' house was built over the hill in front of his house, and there is still not a road bank there even today. Uncle Will was a "real character."

Dyer... continued from Page 4A

donned their swift water gear and simulated water rescues in the Nottely river. Each rescue involved swimming in the rough and rapid current to a simulated victim and catching a rope to pull the victim in. These firefighters, made up of career and volunteers, are well trained and dedicated.

In March, firefighters were involved in training on Ladder 1. Firefighters and officers of several metro departments instructed a class on how to operate and maintain the ladder apparatus. Firefighters were also instructed in various ladder operations in order to use the apparatus and equipment to its potential. Ladder 1 has responded to several fires and was used on the dry cleaner fire.

Throughout the year, the training facility was utilized to complete basic, advanced, and live-fire training. The department conducted several live-fire training classes. These classes involved firefighters entering the burn building and attacking a fire in a controlled environment. It is an opportunity for firefighters to learn how smoke and fire react in a building. They also experience the heat and low visibility conditions associated with a fire.

The training facility was also used to conduct multi-

company training. The multi-company training involves all firefighters and all stations training together. This training allows firefighters to get to know each other and to learn how to work together as they do on an actual fire. Multi-company training in 2019 included subjects such as water supply, rescue, firefighter survival, and auto extrication.

This is just a basic review of the many hours of training conducted by the Union County Fire Department. Training hours help to reduce our ISO rating but more important, it keeps us trained and ready to respond to any emergency.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Williams... continued from Page 4A

have been grafted onto a rootstock. The grafted rootstock will provide more protection from root diseases and may also dwarf the tree, which cuts down on the difficulty of managing the tree.

If you have questions about pruning apple trees, contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Chamber... continued from Page A4

write about some of our wonderful local businesses and restaurants. Week after week, we were thrilled to provide ribbon cutting ceremonies for newly joined members who were able to connect with community members, receive recognition, and introduce themselves and their services.

At the beginning of last year, we made the decision to split the Chamber Awards Night and STAR Student Banquet, which resulted in two wonderful events where we were able to acknowledge and appreciate outstanding businesses and community members during the former and amazing traditional and non-traditional students during the latter. We will be holding the same format this coming year.

We were also recognized by the School Board for STAR Student recognition and made several strides towards improving entry into the local workforce by working with the College and Careers Academy as well as holding a special ribbon cutting ceremony for the Mountain Education Charter High School celebrating their new Patient Care Pathway Program which will provide various opportunities for local students.

Community members enjoyed two very successful fashion events in March and November which showcased a dozen of our hardworking merchants and encouraged local holiday shopping. Local businesses and entrepreneurs also showed up in full force for our annual Buy Local Extravaganza in October at North Georgia Technical College, which provided ample opportunities for networking and building customer relationships.

In April, we helped host a Fiber-Optic Dedication Ceremony at Mountain Crossings at Neels Gap to appreciate the new technology that will enable the county to adequately and safely gauge weather and road conditions on the mountain this winter and many winters to come.

Our 2019 Fourth of July Fireworks went off without a hitch, and this year, we were very pleased to have been able to reserve and make available a special space for residents of the nursing home to come out and enjoy the beautiful fireworks.

Pool... continued from Page 4A

years ago list the groom's job? Or what about the names of the bridesmaids?

I realize that Facebook as a whole is not going anywhere, but what guarantee that your account and all your posts and photos are there to stay for the next 100 years? With hacked accounts and privacy issues are you sure the post about your child's birth will be permanently there? I guarantee you once we print a newspaper with a birth announcement or wedding photo, it's there to stay. There are archives of every newspaper at several locations including at our office, the library, state archives, online archives. And there are plenty of old copies folded up inside family Bibles or scrapbooks. Newspaper clippings someone from years ago waned saved fill many drawers in grandparents' houses.

I wonder if later generations will bemoan this time period as the black hole of public records when personal milestones were no longer saved. "We don't really know the grandparents of your grandmother because they didn't get tagged in the Facebook post."

The birth and wedding announcements on our People page are free. I encourage you to take advantage of them. One day someone may be grateful you kept a permanent record.

Dan Pool is the editor of The Pickens Progress and the current president of the Georgia Press Association.

Fowler... continued from Page 4A

Your life might be measured in years, but you live it one day at a time. This year, may each of your days be full of rest, purpose, and harvest. I cannot think of a better way for you to pass the time.

Dixon... continued from Page 4A

will have to truly listen to the needs of those around us who are different from us - be it a different political party, a different race, or a different country - and respond as Jesus has called us to do. This Christmas season, let us pray for a change of heart.

Vernon Dixon, MD

We were honored to have Union County Fire Chief R. David Dyer share his experiences on the 18th Anniversary of the September 11 terror attacks during September's morning Monthly Mingle.

Mitch Griggs from the Union County Development Authority shared his wealth of knowledge about economic development in Blairsville during our sold out Eggs & Issues Morning Mingle in August, and during our annual Power Lunch in October, the Georgia Chamber of Commerce President Chris Clark shared vital information about the New Georgia Economy and how it will affect North Georgia.

As we began to approach the end of the year, we were grateful and excited to be able to put on our first Annual "Shoot for the Stars" Golf Tournament (which will be held during the warmer month of May next year). The tournament benefitted local scholarships for UCHS students who will receive their checks during the upcoming STAR student Banquet.

Finally, 2019 came to a close with the festive Tour of Trees which consisted of 35+ beautifully decorated trees and wreaths which were on display through the month of December, and an extremely successful Holly Jolly Christmas/Breakfast with Santa which saw one of the biggest turnouts we've seen in a few years.

The last year has been a huge success for us and we can't wait to keep building on

that success as we make our way into a brand-new decade. Happy New Year, everyone!

UNION COUNTY COMMUNITY CALENDAR

	Every Monday:	
Children's Story Time	Union County Library	11 a.m.
Civil Air Patrol	Blairsville Airport	6:30 p.m.
Boy Scouts #101	United Methodist Ch	7 p.m.
	Every Tuesday:	
Tri State Bus. Women	Cabin Coffee	8 a.m.
Tuesday Strippers	Mtn. Presbyterian Ch	9:30-2:30 p.m.
Smoky Mtn. Melodies	United Methodist Ch	6:30 p.m.
Hi Country Harmonizers	Branan Lodge	6:30 p.m.
	Every Wednesday:	
Kiwanis Club	Skillet Cafe	Noon
BINGO	Civic Center	7 p.m.
	Every Thursday:	
Amateur Radio Club	Brkfst. at Blairsville Rest.	8 a.m.
Masonic Luncheon	Cook's Restaurant	11:30 a.m.
Rotary Club	NGTC	Noon
	Second Monday of each month:	
MMQG Sewcials	Mtn. Presbyterian Ch	10 a.m.-3 p.m.
Enotah Chapter #24	Masonic Lodge	7:30 p.m.
Disabled A.m. Veterans	Veterans Center	7 p.m. (Jan-Oct)
	Second Tuesday of each month:	
FPL Retirees	Hole in Wall Rest.	9 a.m.
Historical Society Bd.	Old Courthouse	10:30 a.m.
Mtn Laurel Arts/Crafts	Union County Library	10 a.m.
Active/Retired Fed Emp.	Grinds & Glazes	Noon
Mtn. Sounds Dulcimer	Sr. Citizens Center	1-3 p.m.
Mountain Coin Club	N. GA Tech	6 p.m.
Blairsville PTO	UC Primary School	6 p.m.
Eastern Star #304	Location not listed	7:30 p.m.
Band Boosters	UC Middle School	7:30 p.m.
	(Aug through May, except Dec)	
	Second Thursday of each month:	
Lions Club	Cook's Restaurant	6 p.m.
Appalachian Shrine Club	Shrine Building	6:30 p.m.
Democratic Party	Unity Church of B'ville	6:30 p.m.
Trout Unlimited	UC Community Cntr - A	6:30 p.m.
Sons Confederate Vet.	UCB Community Rm	7 p.m.
Knights of Columbus	Marian Hall	7:30 p.m.
	Second Friday of each month:	
Eastern Star #471	Location not listed	7:30 p.m.
Blue Ridge Mtn Jeepers	Blairsville Skillet Cafe	6:00 p.m.
	Second Saturday of each month:	
No activities listed		
	Second Sunday of each month:	
PFLAG	Call 706-389-5269 for Info	