

# Chamber ...continued from Page 1A



Chamber members used the town hall to give their input on upcoming chamber events. Photo/Lily Avery



The membership drank coffee provided by Dunkin' Donuts during the early morning meeting. Photo/Lily Avery



One of the big focuses during the meeting was the annual "Buy Local Extravaganza," which will take place later this year. Photo/Lily Avery

Buy Local Program, allowing the event to take place over the course of a week.

"If we wanted to, we could start on a Monday and go until that following Saturday," said Lawrence. "We could do the same thing in the summer as well, and have it twice a year."

"We could possibly move the event in the summer to earlier in July, because May is a tough month since we have the Business Extravaganza then. We expect to have at least 10 vendors for it this year."

The chamber will determine the weeks that the Buy Local Program will occur in the coming month.

In addition to the Buy Local Program, the chamber is

considering a scavenger hunt as well as geocaching throughout the summer months, when tourism is at its peak.

The chamber had attempted a scavenger hunt in the past, and though it was not successful, many felt that the experience gained could be a positive attribute for upcoming endeavors.

"Back in 2012, when we started the Buy Local Program, we had a scavenger hunt," said Lawrence. "Now, right up front, it was not very successful. It was the first time it was done, and nothing is really perfect the first time we do it, but we try."

"I still think there should be life in that. I think this could become a family event. People could have a map or a game to

the businesses to get people to come out.

"If we create this to be a community event, like the Holly Jolly and like we do the Fourth of July, we could do the same thing with this, too."

As for geocaching, the chamber has already begun scattering geocache locations throughout the community, hoping these efforts will gain momentum and become a publicly embraced activity.

Both the membership and the chamber are hopeful for what 2017 will have in store for the community, and are enthusiastic to hit the ground running, providing events and extravaganzas for the community to enjoy.

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obtaining protection orders," continued the commissioner. "Many stalkers use technology such as cellphones, GPS, cameras and spyware to monitor and track their victims."

Ultimately, the designation of January 2017 as National Stalking Awareness Month is meant to encourage a more open communal dialogue when it comes to a crime that is becoming ever more sophisticated and not less prevalent in its commission.

Also in the Jan. 19 meeting, Commissioner Paris appointed five people to the Union County Construction Board of Adjustment and Appeals: Pat Parker, Keith Stewart, John Chitwood, Dale Stanley and Patrick Malone.

The commissioner gave the first reading of the Revised Buildings and Building Regulations Ordinance in the meeting, and announced that the public hearing for the revisions will take place on the same day just prior to the February county meeting.

A second reading and adoption is to happen in the February meeting, keeping in mind that regular commission meetings occur the third Thursday of each month at 6 p.m.

Revisions to the ordinance include changing the board from requiring seven members and two alternates to requiring only five members, plus some simplified wording.

Several agenda items included county contracts benefiting the Union County Jail, the first one being between the county and the Correctional Resource Group to provide meals at the Union County Jail.

"The new prices will be good through Dec. 31, 2017," said Commissioner Paris, adding that he didn't have price totals on hand. "And the price per meal has only increased 1.4 percent this year, which is really good since there was no increase at all last year."

The commissioner approved a contract between the county and Combined Public Communications, which is a service provided at no cost to the county, as revenue is collected when inmates make phone calls.

Commissioner Paris also amended the health services agreement between the county and CorrectHealth Union LLC, to be effective from Jan. 1, 2017, to Dec. 31, 2017, stating that the contract price had increased from a monthly amount of \$11,706.24 to \$12,279.84.

CorrectHealth Union provides medical services at the jail.

"They make sure that we



Vogel State Park Manager Jack Becker attended the Jan. 19 commission meeting to introduce himself. Here he is speaking with Union County Development Authority Director Mitch Griggs and Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce President Regina Allison. Photo/Shawn Jarrard



Union County Commission Meetings are generally well-attended, and the first meeting of 2017 was no different. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

have a nurse on staff, they're responsible for giving out all the medicines to all the inmates, keeping up with the medicine," said Commissioner Paris.

The amendment reflects a 4.9 percent increase in the contract, which the commissioner said "is based on the consumer price index of medical supplies and equipment," meaning that the cost of medical equipment has seen a spike over the last few months.

Commissioner Paris also announced that the county plans to abandon the defunct Apple Valley Road in the next commission meeting following a hearing that immediately precedes the February regular meeting.

A bypass on this road, Madeline Way, has been in place for some time, and a new property owner has asked the county for the abandonment.

During his closing comments, Commissioner Paris thanked the Union County Road Department for its round-the-clock service in

keeping county roads as clear as possible during and after the Jan. 6 and Jan. 7 snowstorm.

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