

# North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

www.nganews.com

Legal Organ of Union County

Your Hometown Newspaper Since 1909

February 8, 2017

## Horinek claims 2017 STAR Student honors at UCHS

By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Even though Maddie Horinek was touting satisfaction with her SAT score, it came as a pleasant surprise when she learned she'd been named 2017 STAR Student at Union County High School.

To be nominated as a STAR Student, a high school senior is required to have the highest score for any single sitting of the SAT through November of their senior year, and be in the Top 10 percent or Top 10 students of their class based on grade-point average.

Once nominated, students then select a STAR Teacher representative of their academic success – a teacher who has particularly inspired them toward higher achievements in their high school careers.

Horinek's favorite subjects

are math and science, thanks in large part to her natural problem solving abilities and the teachers who have fostered her abilities in those areas.

Enter Horinek Donahue, who taught Horinek in Honors Chemistry, Honors Physics I and AP Physics C: Mechanics.

"I knew right away that I wanted to nominate Mr. Donahue," said Horinek. "The first class I took with him was chemistry, and that's kind of where I started getting interested in science. The class was stressful, but I really enjoyed it."

"I think that's why I want to major in chemistry, potentially, because I really enjoyed the class and I feel like I learned a lot from him."

For his part, Donahue considers Horinek to be one of the brightest and kindest students he's had the privilege of teaching



UCHS STAR Teacher Mark Donahue with STAR Student Madison "Maddie" Horinek

over the years.

A Union County grad himself, Donahue has been teaching at UCHS for 25 years, and what he has enjoyed most about Horinek as a student is her knack for applied knowledge.

"That's what sets her apart from so many other students," said Donahue. "She's not about getting a grade – she's about learning content, and is excited about applying that in all parts of her life."

"I've been fortunate enough to have Maddie in three different classes, and I've watched her grow in that respect, which is just a thing of beauty. That's what we do this job for, that's what it's about."

Added Donahue: "I've taught a lot of students over a lot of years, and I've by far encountered in my history of teaching. If you ask any other faculty member

here, they would say the exact same thing."

Horinek golfs year-round, playing on the high school varsity team and in tournaments during the summer. She works at H&R Block as a receptionist, volunteers when she can, is co-president of Beta Club, and is involved in Key Club and Spanish Club.

She is in the running to be valedictorian of her senior class, and is currently evaluating her options to follow a med school path once she graduates high school in May.

"I'd like to thank my parents, my grandparents and my sister," said Horinek when considering other major influences in her life. "My sister (Ally) is only a year younger than me, and we both play golf, we're both good in school. So, we're very competitive, and I think that pushes me to always try my best."

## Break in Notla Water main results in 'Boil Water Advisory'

By Lily Avery  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

The Notla Water Authority issued a Boil Water Advisory to all Notla customers on Wednesday, Feb. 1, after a main break in the system earlier that same morning.

At 4 a.m. that Wednesday, there was a break in a 12-inch main line located behind The Sanctuary at Lake Nottely community on Murphy Highway. The break happened away from residences.

Because the break occurred so early in the morning, water consumption and use was low, so it took water workers longer to find the exact location of the break. Nevertheless, Notla Water Authority pinpointed the source of the leak and began immediate repairs within two hours of the break.

The authority determined that the break was caused by a couple of compounding factors, such as the age of the pipe in conjunction with alternating cold and warm weather patterns in recent months.

The break occurred in a main water line, necessitating the issuance of the state-mandated Boil Water Advisory, or BWA, for all Notla Water customers, even

See Water Main, Page 2A



The 12-inch water main break occurred behind The Sanctuary at Lake Nottely on Murphy Highway

## Nelms talks planning, TVA rate hikes, towns halls and more

By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Blue Ridge Mountain EMC General Manager Jeremy Nelms and EMC Board President Mickey Cummings stopped by the North Georgia News offices last Friday with a few updates on the EMC in 2017.

For starters, Nelms touched briefly on his transition into the EMC, which he has helmed since July of 2016.

"Right now, I'm slowly but surely getting my arms around the organization, all the ins and outs," said Nelms. "It's been a little bit of a learning curve, because the way an EMC works here in North Georgia is a little different than the way an EMC works in a metropolitan area of North Florida."

A few of the differences Nelms noted between working in the North Georgia Mountains and his former EMC in Florida, frequently windy climate, and occasional bouts of snow.

And for their weather during the snowy weather in January, Nelms offered nothing but praise for his staff and employees, men and women who work around the clock to keep the 50,000 plus metered accounts up and running in the EMC's five-



Blue Ridge Mountain EMC Board President Mickey Cummings with EMC General Manager Jeremy Nelms

county area.

"I was a little nervous, I was like a cocked gun, just waiting that whole Friday night, but woke up Saturday morning and didn't hardly have one outage," said Nelms of the Jan. 6 snowstorm. "To me, that's a testament to how our operations staff, our engineering staff, and just all of our support staff there at the EMC have built a system that can be resilient enough to handle 6 inches of snow laying

down on it.

"It was encouraging for me to see that we didn't have the world crashing down. They've been doing something right keeping those poles and wires up, and I'm glad to see it could ride through it. And not just the snow, but the wind up here."

Currently, Nelms is working with EMC employees and its board of directors to flesh out the future of the

See Nelms, Page 2A

## Woody Gap Homecoming, crowns Haley Grizzle

News Special  
North Georgia News

Woody Gap School senior Haley Grizzle was crowned as the 2017 Homecoming Queen during the school's annual Homecoming event on Saturday, Jan. 28.

Haley is the daughter of the late Shirley and Randy Grizzle. She was escorted by Kenneth Grizzle.

First Runner-Up honors went to senior Ivy LeCroy, the daughter of Jamie LeCroy, who was escorted by her grandfather Jimmy LeCroy.

Second Runner-Up Montana Barnes is a junior and the daughter of Michelle Barnes. Montana was escorted by fellow junior Austin Clark, the son of Melissa Pruitt and Bobby Clark.

Homecoming began with the Women's Alumni

See Homecoming, Page 3A



2017 Woody Gap Basketball Homecoming Court

## County, Blairsville work to update comprehensive plans

By Lily Avery  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Union County and the City of Blairsville are continuing to move forward in revising their respective comprehensive plans by hosting joint public hearings to gather community input, one of which was held on Thursday, Feb. 2, at the Union County Community Center.

The meeting on Thursday served to further discuss the details of the comprehensive plan, providing members of the community with an opportunity to express concerns regarding the goals for future betterment of the city and county.

Several community leaders were present at the meeting, such as Blairsville

See Plans, Page 3A

## Union County man dead in North Carolina crash

By Charles Duncan  
North Georgia News  
editor@nganews.com

Andrews, NC – An early morning crash on US 19/74 in Cherokee County, North Carolina, claimed the lives of two people, including a 31-year-old Blairsville man, according to the North Carolina State Patrol.

Mikael Raed-Suhayle Kaser, 31, of Ivy Log Road, Blairsville, died in the two-

See Crash, Page 6A



## GDOT to hold Feb. 21 meeting on Murphy Hwy. project

By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

The Georgia Department of Transportation has been notifying community leaders about an upcoming meeting to discuss the widening to

four lanes of a roughly 9-mile stretch of Murphy Highway.

Billed as a Public Information Open House, the meeting will take place on Tuesday, Feb. 21, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the Haralson Memorial Civic Center, and will feature information on the

proposed project.

GDOT officials will be present during the meeting to answer questions and take comments on the project, and they have encouraged residents to attend.

Currently, the project aims to widen Murphy Highway,

also known as SR 11/US 129, to four lanes. The widening will occur in the nearly 9-mile stretch of Murphy Highway between Blue Ridge Street North and Nottely Dam Road, with potential project costs

See GDOT, Page 3A

Vol. 108 No. 6  
4 Sections 28 Pages  
Weather  
Thurs: Cloudy Hi 42 Lo 23  
Fri: Sunny Hi 56 Lo 35  
Sat: Cloudy Hi 60 Lo 50

Arrests 6A  
Church 3C  
Classifieds 3D  
Opinion 4A  
Legals 5D  
Obits 4C  
Sports 4B

See page 1C

Join our Fight to end Cancer

See page 1C

Hope House's 6th Annual Super Chef SHOWDOWN

March 11th

See page 1C

Lions Club Annual Trash to Treasure Sale

February 25th

See page 6A

PANTHERS BASKETBALL

Region 7-AAA 1st Round

Tues. Feb 7 Girls vs. Dawson at GAC 4:30 PM

Wed. Feb. 8 Boys vs. Dawson @ East Hall 6 PM