

# Opinions

## Everybody has one...

### Highway Accidents

Motor vehicle accidents happen every day. They range from minor "fender-benders" to major accidents involving multiple vehicles and injuries. Public safety response to these accidents may include law enforcement, emergency medical service, fire department, Georgia State Patrol, and wrecker services. These motor vehicle accidents can be tragic for the persons involved but they can also be a danger to public safety personnel who are working on the scene. Union County EMA would like to provide some tips for drivers who encounter an accident on the road.

When you encounter an accident, the first thing is to slow down. Accidents can be visually graphic due to the damage. There may be severely damaged vehicles, debris on the road, and possibly patients in the road. Whether people admit it or not, everyone wants to see the accident but as a driver, you must slow down and pay attention to the road.

If there are no emergency vehicles on scene, find a safe place to pull over and assess the accident. Be cautious of other drivers and traffic. Only assess the accident if it is safe to do so. Accidents on small roads with little traffic may be safer than accidents on major four-lane highways. Call 911 and report the accident. The 911 dispatcher will want to know vital information such as location; if the road is blocked; how many vehicles; number of injured; and if there is any fire involved. This determines the response from public safety.

If there are emergency vehicles on scene, slow down and be aware of what is happening. The multiple emergency vehicles and their flashing lights may be distracting and disorienting. Driving slow and paying attention to the road is essential. Law enforcement may be directing traffic around the accident and drivers must pay attention to directions. Drive slow and watch the officer for instructions. Officers may stop traffic for a few moments to allow other vehicles through or in order for public safety to perform a vital function.

Vehicles and public safety personnel may be working at the scene in close proximity to your driving lane. They may have on turnout gear or reflective vests. Be aware of these personnel in the area and know that they may inadvertently be close to your mov-

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**Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief**

David Dyer



### Work as Worship

It would be an "oops" moment to climb the ladder of success only to learn your ladder was on the wrong building! If you haven't discovered the right reason to work, you may find yourself making money in a meaningless career or a barely tolerable job.

If you study the ancient Hebrew word "avodah," you'll find it translated as worship, service, craftsmanship, and work. The Creator God inspires his creation to work and worship, responses that overlap in the Hebrew Scriptures. The New Testament adds, "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).

Since you spend the majority of your waking hours at work, shouldn't those prepared-beforehand works include your workplace? That doesn't mean you do awkward things at work. It starts with simply looking for God there. Author Gregory F.A. Pearce says, "Most of us spend so much time working, it would be a shame if we couldn't find God there... There is a creative energy in work that is somehow tied to God's creative energy. If we can understand that connection, perhaps we can use it to transform the workplace into something remarkable."

I heard Casey Cook, CEO of Cloud Control Media explain that it's a mistake to think you must invent ways to integrate faith into work. Faith enters the workplace when the believer walks in. If your identity is in Christ, you don't check that at the workplace door. When Jesus said "let your light shine," surely he knew that would transform your workplace. It will affect the way you treat people, conduct yourself, and complete your work. "Do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men... It is the Lord Christ whom you serve" (Col. 3:23-24).

You serve Him in your workplace because He is there. Remember when He surprised his fishermen friends at work? He cooked breakfast for them on the beach. He shouted out for them to cast the net on the other side, and it worked. Stumbled, one of them said, "It's the Lord!" It's no surprise he was involved in their work because as Abraham Kuyper said, "There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which

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**All Things New**

Wayne Fowler



### Commissioner's Questions

**Q. When will electronic recycling be here again?**

A. It will be April 7th from 10 a.m. till 12 noon at the parking lot of North Georgia Technical College located at 121 Meeks Avenue, Blairsville, GA. (Across the highway from Meeks Park).

**Q. Will they only be recycling electronics?**

A. No, they will also be recycling old papers or documents you may have that need to be discarded. The items go through a grinder right on site to protect any of your personal information or that of any of your vendors for a business. It is a great way to get rid of old records. We use this service for our old courthouse records. If needed, Document Destruction Service will provide a certificate of destruction for your records.

**Q. Will there be a cost for recycling older TVs?**

A. There is a charge for televisions, which is \$20 and \$10 for CTR computer monitors. Large projection and old wooden cabinet TVs will have to go to the main transfer station. I know this seems high, but this is what it cost the contractor due to the high amounts of mercury in these units that must go through special processing. There are over 36 other types of electronic equipment that can be recycled for free, including laptops, servers, desktop telephones and cell phones, hard drives, UPS batteries, gaming controllers, printers, copiers, scanners and much more.

**Q. Are there any electronic items that cannot be accepted for recycling?**

A. Items such as appliances, gas powered tools, dehumidifiers, ceiling fans and much more that they cannot take at this event are free to take to the Transfer Station located past the hospital. Larger items such as furniture, mattresses and other large items are accepted at the Transfer Station for a reasonable charge.

**Q. Are there any other charges for electronic recycling?**

A. The only other cost is that they are requesting a donation of \$5.

**Q. Why are we being asked to donate \$5 to get rid of our electronics and documents?**

A. This is a service being provided by our partnership with our three county NGRMA (North Georgia Resource Manage-

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**Q & A from Union County Commissioner**

Lamar Paris



### Drug Free Mountain Life

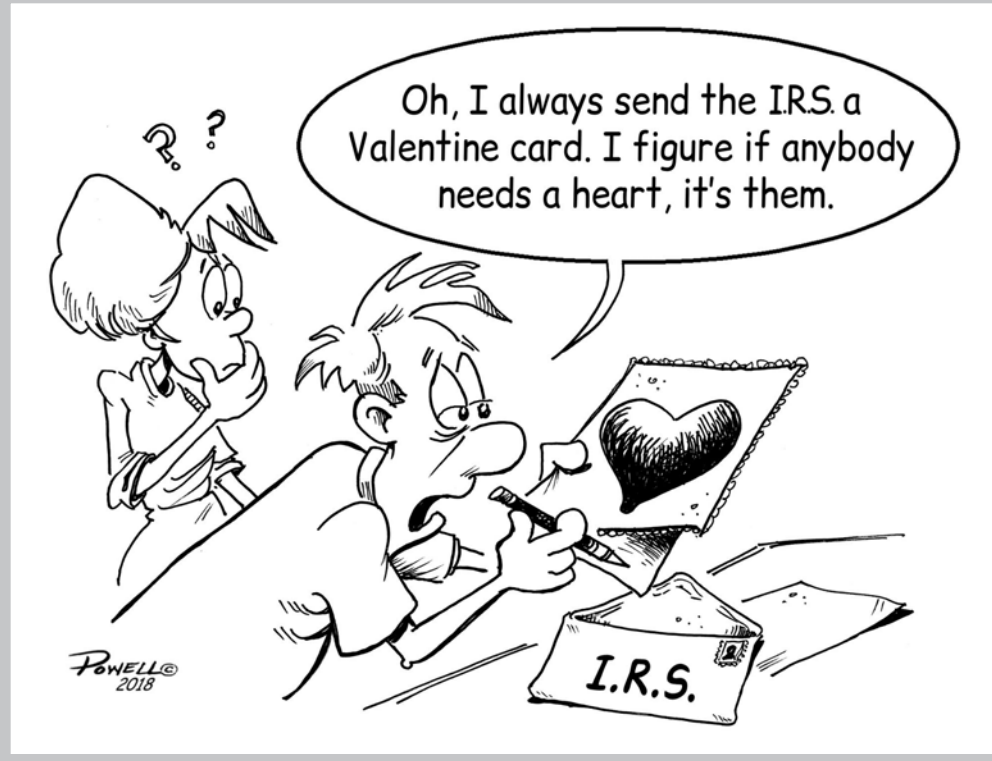
#### Teen Marijuana Use

About 45 percent of teens have used marijuana before they graduate from high school. The annual Monitoring the Future survey from the National Institute on Drug Abuse reports that among students from 8th, 10th, and 12th grades, marijuana use has remained stable over the past few years. For the three grades combined, about 24 percent of students reported past-year use in 2015. About 7 percent of 8th graders reported current (past-month) use. Among 10th graders, 15 percent reported current use, and current use for 12th graders was 21 percent.

**The DRUG FREE MOUNTAIN LIFE campaign supports an overall safe community by providing information, education and support services to children, families, and community toward prevention of illegal substance abuse.**

Researchers have found that the use of marijuana and other drugs usually peaks in the late teens and early twenties, then declines in later years. Therefore, marijuana use among young people remains a natural concern for parents and

See Drug Free, page 5A



### Letters to the Editor

#### First Love

Dear Editor,  
Do you still remember your first love? Your first kiss of a girl who made your heart dance with joy. The girl that you couldn't live without and the girl who kept you awake at night pondering the day you both walked down the aisle and became as one in marriage. We all have had first loves, whether it was a girl or maybe your first love was your first car. I remember mine. She was a 1952 Studebaker and I was smitten indeed. My dad co-signed for me and I made the payments of \$48 a month. Another first love we all might have experienced is being a first home buyer. I remember

See Combs, page 5A

#### Demon possessed!

Dear Editor,  
Just think about these times we are living in 2018. We are not safe! Only in Jesus! Not in our churches, the place of worship, the unthinkable has happened there. We know Satan has been there, also. He has taken the lives out of the place of worship, homes, families, schools, etc. The home of the free... and the brave!

God's word is true, when He said, Satan was loose in our world! Jesus asked "Satan" Where art thou? Satan answered, I am going "to and fro" - seeking whom I may devour. Satan is not only at gas stations, the homes, and the churches! He is in the "hearts" of the wicked sinful people! They know him! They are obedient to his will!

God has a place for him - where? In "eternal Hell" and all those evil ones that follow him there! As sure as the mud slides come, so will God! He doesn't need an army of men

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#### Tourism Dollars

Dear Editor,  
In Commissioner Paris' questions last week, he stated that tourism had contributed \$24.8 million in 2014, in direct travel spending. I have two questions: (1) What does this translate into as far as tax income for Union County residents? (2) What is the ratio as to the amount of sales tax income from residents, as opposed to tourist sales tax income?

I think this would be a more accurate comparison as the residents of Union County would be the ones with the heavier tax burden on an everyday basis. As far as the ESPOST is concerned, our school taxes are already more than our property taxes, so does that mean another ESPOST is coming down the road in the future? It looks like more taxes with fancy names. We

See Breece, page 5A

### Conservation & Development

Resource Conservation & Development Councils (RC&D) are 501(c)3 non-profit organizations that administer projects, programs, events, and workshops to help citizens improve their communities, conserve natural resources, and improve the standard of living. The USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) is a government agency within the US Department of Agriculture that helps farmers and landowners improve their farm and land operations with cost share programs and expert advice to conserve the natural resources and improve the water quality on the land.

**RC&D Executive Director**

Frank Riley



Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D (CCRCD) along with 374 other organizations across the country was once imbedded in the NRCS and had no worries because operating funds flowed down from the NRCS to the RC&Ds. RC&Ds acted as the community outreach for the NRCS. The RC&Ds facilitated projects, events, and programs with guidance and oversight from a NRCS Coordinator. The coordinator was an NRCS employee within each RC&D who was the link between the non-profit and the government. The grants, contacts, and funds were channeled down to the RC&D to do the work in the communities. Since RC&Ds are non-governmental they were not bound by the same strict rules and regulations that NRCS was, so programs were put into motion much faster than the government could with all the red tape required. This partnership began in 1961 and continued all the way until 2011 when NRCS pulled the plug on RC&Ds, took all their equipment and coordinator away, and left the RC&Ds standing alone as private non-profits to make it on their own.

Most of the RC&Ds were not prepared because they had never had to worry about funding and when the end came, they acted like baby birds, sitting there with their mouths open waiting for someone to bring a worm but there were no worms anymore. Most of the 375 RC&Ds across the country closed their doors instead of trying to find a way to survive. Our RC&D, Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D was one of these organizations that operated in the 13 counties of Northeast Georgia. When NRCS defunded the RC&D program in 2011, CCRCD like most of the other RC&Ds fell into a death spiral only surviving on the funds left in the bank with no income so the end was in sight. In 2012 I was hired as Executive Director of CCRCD because they needed someone who could think outside of the box and I like a challenge, so I jumped in to try to keep CCRCDs alive. Soon after I started, the long-

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### Lon Steele and Hoover Baggett

Daddy (Paul) and his brother (Bud) owned a pair of outstanding coon hounds during the 1950s. Daddy was about 14 years old when his dad traded for the pair of Black and Tan puppies. Papa and his sons trained the hounds on squirrels and raccoons. The family enjoyed squirrel dumplings while a boy could sell the hides from the coons for a little money. Old Sam and Lou hit their stride around 1956-57 when they treed more than 100 coons during the fall and winter. The pair of dogs became widely known and everyone wanted to hunt with that fine pair of coon hounds owned by the Cummings boys. Daddy was particular about who he would let go hunting with his dogs. So, he never let anyone borrow them. However, anyone could go hunting with him and his dogs. One day Daddy was stopped in town by Lon Steele who asked if he could borrow Daddy's dogs. Daddy explained that Lon could come and hunt with him and his dogs anytime. But, the dogs could not be borrowed by anybody. So, Lon told him that he and Hoover Baggett would meet him at the Mon Dye bottoms on Saturday evening.

Dad met them at the old bridge over Turkey Creek. As he was releasing his dogs he knew there would be trouble because Lon took a swig from a flask located in his pocket. The dogs struck a trail and treed a coon in 30 minutes. Hoover and Lon celebrated by passing around the bottle. By the time the men reached the dogs at the next tree Hoover Baggett and Lon Steele were in high spirits. This time the dogs had treed a big old boar coon. The coon must have weighed 25 pounds. The men celebrated once again with their flasks. It wasn't long until the dogs struck another track. Dad noticed Lon stumble a couple of times as he began walking toward the dogs.

The dogs trailed their quarry across the creek and treed next to a rock (the size of a house) next to a tall bluff. The area was rough and it took the two men a long time to walk the couple of miles up the creek bottom. Dad said he wasn't sure if Hoover and Lon were just out of shape or if the alcohol was affecting their ability to walk. But, the men had fell down a number of times before they got to the tree and big rock. This boulder was huge and about 50 feet high. Dad said the tree was a Hemlock and it was difficult to locate the coon. So, they all climbed up on the rock to try to see the raccoon. Finally, the three fellows found the coon and Lon decided to shoot it. He pulled out his pistol and shot a couple of times with no success. Lon was too inebriated to shoot out the critter. But, he claimed the raccoon was moving too much. The tree was

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**Around The Farm**

Mickey Cummings



### Southern Pine Beetles

The North Georgia Mountains are renowned for the beautiful fall color of their hardwoods, but pine trees and other evergreens are also an important part of the Appalachian ecosystem. Drought and storm damage have provided major stress to these trees over the past few years, and such stress leaves them susceptible to secondary troubles such as infections and pests. Some of these pests are collectively known as Pine Beetles, which are made up of Black Turpentine Beetles, Ips Beetles, and Southern Pine Beetles.

Black Turpentine Beetles are the largest species. They are a quarter of an inch long, their abdomen is rounded and they are a dark reddish brown. Usually, you will see turpentine beetle damage on the bottom eight feet of the tree. As they feed on the tissue, the tree will secrete large tubes of pitch. Black Turpentine Beetles feed under the bark of stressed or weakened trees. If a pine tree is not completely girdled, or surrounded, by turpentine beetles feeding on its phloem, it is likely that it will survive the infestation.

Ips Beetles are also small, pine-feeding insects, but their size is variable by species. Adults are a dark brown or black and can be the same size as the Black Turpentine Beetles or as small as one tenth of an inch. The end of their abdomens appear flattened or "scooped out," compared to other pine beetles. Like turpentine beetles, Ips Beetles feed just under the bark on the phloem of the tree, obstructing the flow of nutrients. Their feeding also causes the tree to secrete pitch tubes, but these tubes are very small (usually less than a half inch) and a creamy white color. If you peel the bark off a tree with an Ips Beetle infestation, you will see galleries, or trails, in the shape of a Y or H. The beetles make these as they try to find mates and food within the tree.

Finally, Southern Pine Beetles are the most damaging species. The adults are about an eighth of an inch long and have rounded abdomens like the turpentine beetles. They are difficult to assess because they attack trees from about halfway up to the lower crown. Southern Pine Beetles create S shaped galleries as they feed beneath the bark. These beetles often build up large populations and can kill thousands of trees in a given area. Usually, the attacks will move in one direction and you can see a pattern of dead or dying trees.

While South Georgia may be known for its large scale timber production, North Georgia can still be susceptible to pine beetle infestations. For this reason, it is important to be on the lookout for dying pine trees and destroy infested wood to prevent the spread of pests.

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**Blairsville - Union County Chamber Interim President**

Al Harper



### Evening with the STARS

The Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce is honored to promote education in our county by hosting the 4th Annual Evening with the STARS; Student Teacher Achievement Recognition. Since we love our students and teachers and are grateful for the incredible impact they have on our community, this event is one way we can show our appreciation.

Because of their great commitment to education, Woodmen-Life is sponsoring this year's event which will be held at the Union County Community Center on Thursday, February 22, 2018 at 6 p.m. The evening will be filled with fun, food, and music, and will give attendees an opportunity to recognize and honor the STAR student, Ms. McKenzie Hooper, and the STAR teacher, Ms. April Krieger.

For main entrée choices, The View Grill has assembled an amazing menu featuring Grilled Skirt Steak with Roasted Vegetables, Creamy

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**UGA Extension From the Ground Up**

Melissa Mattee



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