

Firefighters...from Page 1A

51 State Sen. Steve Gooch, who at one point was a volunteer fireman in Lumpkin County, said that the bill was well-deserved by firefighting heroes all over the state.

"You've got these firefighters who are out in unknown conditions," said Sen. Gooch. "They're going into burning buildings and industrial fires and commercial fires, even residential fires today, and there's a lot of toxins in those buildings. You don't know what you're getting into."

"So, you walk in there to try to save property or even other humans, and you're breathing in those poisonous gases. And then, a year or two later, you end up with cancer



Gov. Deal poses for photos with those who made the legislation possible, inside Gilmer County Fire Station No. 1. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

that can be pinpointed back to that fire, I think we owe it to those people that put their lives on the line every day to take care of them when they're sick."

Union County Fire Chief David Dyer attended the bill signing, and commented afterward that the bill was a good thing not only for his firefighters in Union County, but for firefighters all over the state.

"Firefighting is a dangerous job," said Chief Dyer. "Firefighters are asked to risk their lives to help people who they don't even know. Now, there is evidence that the long-term effects of firefighting increase the risks of certain cancers. The fire service, as a profession,

is working diligently with other stakeholders to increase safety and provide protective measures to reduce the risk of cancer."

Continued Dyer: "HB 146 provides protection and peace of mind for firefighters in Georgia by providing funding upon initial diagnosis of cancers linked to firefighting. It also provides income protection for firefighters who are unable to provide for their families during treatment."

"Union County Fire Department has supported the Firefighter Cancer Legislation from the beginning. We are very proud and thankful to all those involved in making this bill possible."

Prayer...from Page 1A

Christians to worship in the United States of America and if you do cry, cry with the tears of those who trust and believe that there is a God.

"A God that hears and answers our prayers and will one day wipe away all tears. We pray that you feel the presence of our Lord Jesus as we worship him together."

Each year, a national theme is determined for participants to contemplate and reflect upon. This year's theme was "For Your Great Name's Sake! Hear Us... Forgive Us..."

Heal Us," inspired by Daniel 9:19 from the Bible. "O Lord, listen! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hear and act! For your sake, my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name."

Throughout the nearly two hours of prayer, area pastors led the congregation in prayer over individual sectors within the community and society, while those in attendance joined with heads bowed and voices raised.

Pastor John Davis of Blairsville Church of God

opened the ceremony with a prayer of thanks to God for all those in attendance and for the freedom to pray openly on a sacred day of prayer.

Pastor Tim Mason, leader of Shining Light Baptist Church, prayed for the nation while Pastor Marty Duncan from Fellowship of the Hills led a prayer for all of the state and local officials.

Associate Pastor Darryl Flake of House of Prayer led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance while also leading prayer for all armed forces, both past and present. To recognize each branch of the military, Flake had each branch's service song played and asked for veterans to please stand as their respective branch was recognized.

Dr. Fred Lodge, from First Baptist, prayed for local, state and national law enforcement, fire departments, EMTs and all those who work as first responders or in the medical field.

Bill Schakat, pastor of Redeemer Baptist Church, led a prayer for the youth of Union County and elsewhere, asking God to give guidance to today's youth, "in a dangerous world that does not acknowledge your word as truth."

Pastor Terry Stuart of Blairsville Church of Christ prayed for families, and Pastor



Blairsville residents joined millions nationwide in celebrating the May 4 National Day of Prayer. Photo/Lily Avery

Don Parmely of New Life Family Church said a prayer over businesses and business owners.

Pastor Roy Watkins of Coosa United Methodist Church prayed for missionaries and mission trips around the world as well as for the sacred land of Israel and its people.

Pastor Dave Wesche from All Saints Lutheran led a prayer for the church and its role in helping those who are in need.

In closing, Pastor Duncan invited those present to join with him in song as he

sang, "God Bless the USA." Everyone in the sanctuary rose to their feet, placed their hands over their hearts and sang

along as the National Day of Prayer in Union Community came to a close.

Hot Dog Lunch benefit



Heritage Propane is holding its yearly Hot Dog Lunch on Friday, May 12th, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., this includes hot dog, chips and a drink. They will also fill your propane gas tank for \$10 between the hours of 11-1 p.m. Bring the family and enjoy, all proceeds will be going to Relay For Life.