

## Judge...from Page 1A

judgeship occurred in January 2008, when Gov. Perdue appointed him to a newly created position on the court.

In 2012, Miller took the helm as chief judge of the Enotah Judicial Circuit, and he won re-election to the court in both 2012 and 2016.

Reflecting on his time as a superior court judge, Miller said that many of his most positive experiences have come while overseeing the Enotah Mental Health Court.

"We've been doing that about seven years now," said Miller. "That's been extremely rewarding, and we've really done well. It's a team approach to a pretty serious problem in criminal justice, and I think we've done people some good over the years."

Added Miller: "The accountability courts and all that criminal justice reform has been a good thing for our circuit and a good thing for the state."

As for next steps, Miller said he's not looking for anything else at the moment, and that he may do volunteer work or practice law in North Georgia after leaving the

court.

"I coach the (Union County) Mock Trial Team, and I'm going to continue to do that if they'll still have me," said Miller. "That's one of the best things I do, is working with those young folks."

Miller has four children, eight grandchildren and resides in Dahlonega. He is the son of the late Gov. Zell Miller and Shirley Carver Miller, and the older brother of Young Harris City Councilman Matthew Miller.

On May 1, he submitted his letter of resignation to Gov. Nathan Deal, which triggered a search process by the Georgia Judicial Nominating Commission.

Normally, superior court judges are elected, but since Miller is resigning with two and a half years left in his term, Gov. Deal will appoint a replacement to finish out the term.

The governor will make his decision based on recommendations from

the Judicial Nominating Commission, which took nominations through May 31.

Nominees received application packages with a June 14 completion deadline, and the commission will meet to interview applicants sometime after June 25.

Enotah Judicial Circuit District Attorney Jeff Langley received a nomination for the superior court vacancy, and he sent an open letter to Gov. Deal on June 13, respectfully declining consideration for the position.

"I was honored to learn I had been nominated by one or more members of our local legal community," said Langley in the letter. "However, after careful consideration and prayer, I have decided to decline the opportunity to be considered."

"I feel I need to honor the commitment I made to voters when I asked them to re-elect me as district attorney this year, and I am on the ballot without opposition in November."

Continued Langley: "In addition, I have recruited a great staff, some of which left other positions, sold their homes and moved to North Georgia under the assumption that I would be continuing to lead this office."

"As I look forward to my third term as DA, there are still goals to be accomplished, interesting fulfilling work to be done, and I genuinely enjoy this challenging calling. My prayers are with you as you seek to select a well-qualified judge with personal and professional integrity to serve in our community."

The Enotah Judicial Circuit serves the residents of Union, Towns, Lumpkin and White counties.

Judges Stanley Gunter and Raymond George also preside as superior court judges in the Enotah Judicial Circuit, and both men won re-election to their judgeships in the May 22 Nonpartisan General Election.

## Chamber...from Page 1A

"Payroll, 401(k), matching 401(k), all that stuff is now automated, so the only thing I was having to do was cut checks to vendors. We've kind of breathed a sigh of relief that we accomplished all of that. Now, it's just a function of getting out there and providing more quality service and services to our members."

When it comes to the chamber's continued success, Harper credits the staff with having put in the work, day after day, to make the chamber what it is today.

"I've got nothing but positive statements for the chamber and all the employees," said Harper. "I'm really, really proud of the work that they have been doing. It's not been me, it's been the workers. I give all the glory to them and the Lord."

Added Harper: "The chamber's in great shape all the way around, and as I said, has a great team."

Harper said he could be reached for questions at (972) 489-4393 or waharper1@gmail.com.

Beginning with the departure of former chamber president Cindy Williams in 2016, Harper's exit marks the third time in two and a half years that the chamber board has been on the lookout for someone to fill the top spot.

"The chamber board and staff would like to thank Al for his service and wish him well in his future endeavors," said Chamber Board Chair Chris Wadle. "We would like to commend the chamber staff and volunteers for their hard work and willingness to step up during this time of transition."

"The board's directors are currently exploring all options for finding our community's next chamber president/CEO. An interim president/CEO has not yet been determined."

Continued Wadle: "We have many great leaders on our board, so the board is actively working with the staff to ensure that their needs are being met and the chamber's affairs are still being successfully managed."

The chamber is staffed by Tobie Chandler as tourism director, Dawn

Saroney as member services director, Sheila Freeman as information specialist, Chris Coleman in marketing and communications, and Liz

Henley as event coordinator.

For more information on the chamber, check out VisitBlairsvilleGA.com.

## Jarrard...from Page 1A

bachelor's degrees from The University of Georgia, one in journalism and the other in English.

When approached with the opportunity to work for Kenneth West, Jarrard never hesitated. He and his wife relocated here in 2014, and Jarrard said that, to this day, moving to Blairsville is one of the best decisions he's ever made.

"I may not be from here, but these mountains are home," said Jarrard. "Blairsville is my mom's hometown, and now it's my kids' hometown."

"My daughter was born in Union General Hospital in 2016, and we're expecting a son in November. I've got so much invested up here – my whole life, really – and I look forward to continuing to serve these communities for years to come."

Jarrard said he is thankful

for all the people of Union and Towns counties who have made him feel right at home since he came aboard at the newspapers four years ago.

"This has been such an incredible journey so far," said Jarrard. "I'm extremely grateful to everyone for accepting me and my family."

"As editor, I pledge to uphold the values long maintained by Mr. West and his newspapers. Furthermore, I am extending an open invitation to anyone to come see me about anything. If I'm not in the office, please leave me a message and I'll get back to you."

Jarrard can be reached at editor@nganews.com or newsjarrard@gmail.com.

The phone number to the *North Georgia News* office is (706) 745-6343, and the number to the *Herald* is (706) 896-4454.

## Williams...from Page 1A

Williams is the new Agricultural and Natural

Resources Agent for the UGA Extension Offices in Union and Towns counties. He is taking the place of Melissa Mattee, who recently transferred to the Fulton County Extension Office.

"UGA Extension has a county delivery model where agents, who are public service faculty members, are the primary resource for local communities," according to Extension.UGA.edu. "Extension agents have the backing of a variety of specialists who train and support programs across the state."

"These UGA faculty experts are critical to disseminating research-based information to our agents across the state. In turn, agents keep specialists apprised of the latest information and needs of their clients."

In other words, ag agents work locally to assist farmers, agribusinesses, homeowners and communities in a variety of agriculture-related areas.

Can't identify a bug that's infested your home or garden? Take one to Williams. Don't know what exactly killed the tree in your front yard? Give Williams a call. Need to send off a soil sample before a big planting? That's right – Williams can help.

Williams, 26, is well-versed in all things soil and crop related, as he has both a bachelor's and a master's degree in agronomy from Auburn University.

Following graduation from his master's program, he accepted a job with Speedling Nursery in Blairsville. He worked there for about a year, until the extension job became available.

June 1 was his first day at his new position, and Williams is excited for the opportunity to help educate as many residents as possible.

"Right now, I'm trying to meet as many people as I can, just kind of network with everybody so that I can figure out what's going on and what I can do to help people the most," said Williams.

## Hope House

Hope House is a faith-based, non-profit benevolence center to help Union County residents and homeless in times of critical need. Hours of operation: Monday 9 a.m.-12 p.m. & Thursday 1 p.m.-4 p.m., located at 178 Brackett's Way, Blairsville, (706)781-3090. N(Jun20Z)CA

people," said Williams.

Stay tuned for a new weekly column by Williams, which will appear starting next week in the pages of this newspaper.