

# North Georgia News

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## Relay For Life raises money for cancer research with annual Dessert Contest

**By Jarrett Whitener**  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Union County Relay For Life hosted its Third Annual Dessert Contest inside the Dessert Plant at the Union County Farmers Market on Saturday, June 22.

The contest acted as a fundraiser to raise money for the American Cancer Society to end the fight against the deadly disease.

All told, 14 desserts were laid out for Farmers Market attendees to try, after which they voted for their favorite by donating to its maker.

These desserts ranged from different types of pies such as Oreo Creme and Key

Lime, to pound cakes and other sweet treats, including ice cream.

"Most of the desserts here are from us and the volunteers, and some are just from people that want to help us out," said Mia Crowe, who heads up Relay For Life in Blairsville. "All the desserts are donated, so there is no cost to us, and people just get to taste all the different ones they want and vote for their favorite with money."

The dessert contest is important to the organization because of the money it helps raise, but also the attention the event brings to the organization and the people it introduces to the American Cancer Society.

"Dessert, of course, is fun for the Farmers Market, because it fits in and it's all homemade dessert, so everybody loves that," said Crowe. "We are reaching out to a different group of people than we normally would to make them aware of this."

"And we also have a booth to give out information and get more people involved and aware of what we do ... It's just a fun thing to do to get a lot of people involved in our cause, and people love trying these different desserts."

Overall, the event raised \$322 for the organization, with First Place going to Diane Shillcutt, who raised \$83.75

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Union County Relay For Life volunteers Linda Presser, Sue Upchurch, Mia Crowe and Diane Shillcutt at their 2019 Dessert Contest for the American Cancer Society. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

## Historical Society seeking volunteers, donations to aid building restorations

**By Mark Smith**  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Much of the discussion in the June meeting of the Union County Historical Society centered on restoration work needed at the Old Courthouse and Grapelle Butt-Mock House.

The Old Courthouse and Mock House both feature museums of Union County history.

"We've got several restoration projects that need doing," said Historical Society President Judy Carpenter. "I brought these up at the executive meeting, and they gave me the liberty of contacting some contractors and some people to try and get some of this done."

Carpenter said the mortar between the bricks on the south and west sides of the Old Courthouse has lost its integrity and water is seeping through, which is ruining the drywall inside the building and causing



Union County Historical Society President Judy Carpenter standing in front of a historic building in need of repairs behind the Mock House. Photo by Mark Smith

the interior paint to bubble and peel. That mortar needs to be replaced.

And one of the old barns behind the Mock House dated 1868 – just three years after the American Civil War – is becoming unsafe to enter because the bottom two logs that support the structure on the front and sides have rotted, causing the old barn to sag.

Fortunately, there's a source in this area for the kind of logs needed to repair the

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## BOE discusses security improvements; Supt. Hill offers 'Year in Review'

**By Mark Smith**  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Over the summer break, the five campuses of Union County Schools are getting several major security and technology upgrades to cameras, intercoms, phones and computer networking.

In the June 18 meeting of the Union County Board of Education, School Technology Director Bill Driskell reported that the new card access system on all campuses had been fully installed, and that testing was in its final stage with access cards being printed.

"Through the state security grant that we got, we spent about \$40,000 dollars to get additional cameras," said Driskell. "We've installed about 16 at the high school this week, and we'll be installing them a little bit everywhere. Everything that we installed came from that grant."



Union County Schools Superintendent John Hill

The intercom system is now linked to phones and the computer network such that administrators with security apps can remotely access the system. Driskell also noted that an administrator can deactivate anyone's card key instantly through an administrative phone app.

School Police Chief Chad Deyton reported that the Georgia Emergency Management Agency would be conducting training on campus and Meeks Park for bomb dogs and their handlers on June 25, and the schools will host a GEMA class on July 18, 2019.

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## Mitchell joins EMC Board for rate discussion; TVA may forgo rate hike

**By Shawn Jarrard**  
North Georgia News  
Editor@nganews.com

YOUNG HARRIS – The Blue Ridge Mountain Electric Membership Corporation Board of Directors welcomed consultant Jeremy Mitchell in the June 17 regular EMC Board meeting.

Mitchell is a former employee of the Tennessee Valley Authority – the federal agency that sells power to the EMC – and he runs a private management consulting company that counts BRMEMC and 77 other local power companies as clients.

In his presentation, Mitchell made the case for board members to start thinking about adjusting the EMC's power rates, though he took care to stress that immediate



Jeremy Nelms

action was not necessary.

The EMC is necessary, said Mitchell, just not at a rate that will protect the nonprofit co-op against inflation, i.e. the rising cost of goods and services over time.

And even though the co-op as a whole is experiencing a growth trend, the EMC is facing yearly declines in individual power sales, as energy efficient technologies continue to make up an ever-increasing share of the marketplace.

As a result, several years from now, inflation will begin to overtake the rate of growth the EMC has been enjoying.

Compounding inflationary concerns is the fact that much of the EMC's fixed costs are built into the variable energy portion of member bills, so declining sales will mean declining fixed-cost recovery, which will make it even harder for the co-op to pay its bills without taking on more debt down the road.

Eventually, action will

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## S.A.F.E. honors volunteers with Sock Hop-themed appreciation dinner



S.A.F.E. volunteers dancing to the rockin' tunes of Elvis Presley in their June 21 appreciation dinner at G&G Bakery and Cafe. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

**By Jarrett Whitener**  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Support in Abusive Family Emergencies, Inc. of Towns and Union counties hosted its annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner on Friday, June 21, at G&G Bakery and Cafe.

"Once a year we do something to honor our volunteers," said S.A.F.E. Volunteer Coordinator Vicki Franklin. "We try every year to do some sort of theme to change it up a bit."

The theme of the dinner this year was a '50s-style Sock Hop, which brought out volunteers who dressed for the era as they prepared for an evening of milkshakes, burgers and dancing.

Members of the Blairsville Cruisers drove some

of their classic cars to park in front of the building to further highlight the '50s feel of the evening.

Of course, the scene would not have been complete without music from that time period, which was provided by local indie impersonator extraordinaire Roy Perren, who performed spot-on renditions of "Hound Dog," "Love Me Tender" and many more by the King of Rock.

"These volunteers do a lot, and without them, we couldn't function. They are the backbone of S.A.F.E.," Franklin said.

Volunteers give of their time and are dedicated to helping the organization assist others to escape abusive situations.

"To volunteer time is a sacrifice," said S.A.F.E.

Executive Director Molly Cousins. "These particular volunteers all have a big heart, and some of them have a history, and they feel like they have a history and connect to what S.A.F.E. does."

"So, volunteering their time isn't just for S.A.F.E., it's a tribute for women who are victims of abuse."

Some of the volunteers for the organization have been around for years helping S.A.F.E. grow and develop into what it is today.

"I've been a volunteer going on 18 years for 40 hours a week," said Treva Farris. "I wanted to get involved with S.A.F.E. because I have been blessed, and I want to give back. It makes me feel good to give back to others."

"I was abused by my first

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## Commissioner Paris amends FY2018 county budget by \$2.2 million

**By Mark Smith**  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris announced in his June 20 regular meeting that he needed to amend the Fiscal Year 2018 county budget by about \$2.2 million.

In explaining some of the main increases, Paris said that several budget categories had unexpectedly gone up in 2018, including the category of Risk Management.

Risk Management includes expenses such as employee health insurance, workers' compensation insurance, and property and liability insurance.

A large part of the \$2.2

million net increase consisted of health insurance costs that went up \$569,000 due to employee medical claims and those of their families.

Other unforeseen budgetary expenses included \$563,000 for the Union County Sheriff's Office – primarily to keep deputy pay competitive with surrounding counties – and increased jail operations costs of about \$143,000.

The Union County Fire Department and Emergency Management Agency was also up \$172,950 over budget, due in part to the purchase of a ladder truck and construction of the new firefighter training facility located behind Fire Department headquarters.

In other county news,



Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris

Paris adopted a resolution to transfer surplus property located at 5048 Highway 515 to the Union County Development

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