

# North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

www.nganews.com

Legal Organ of Union County

Your Hometown Newspaper Since 1909

Wednesday, July 17, 2019

## Malone on a mission to educate the public ahead of 2020 census

By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
editor@nganews.com

It's been 30 years since the United Nations declared the first World Population Day on July 11, 1989, way back when there were just over 5 billion people on the planet.

Fast forward to July 11, 2019, and the estimated global population has already grown to well over 7.5 billion people, marking an increase of more than a third of the world's population in three decades.

One motivation behind the celebration of international days like World Population Day is to encourage public discussion about issues concerning all of mankind, such as extreme poverty, widespread pollution

and geopolitical instability.

There are other reasons to care about population totals, of course – reasons that have the potential to affect every last man, woman and child right here in the United States.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, America is the third most populous country in the world, with a total estimated population of around 330 million people based on projections using the 2010 census.

And since the U.S. Constitution mandates "the actual enumeration" of people residing here every 10 years, the federal agency is gearing up to hold another census in 2020.

The census won't be

taken until next April, but locally, Patrick Malone, has begun in earnest getting ready for it.

Malone, a local business advisor, has been hired by the governments of Union and Towns counties and the cities therein to coordinate the efforts of a special outreach committee to promote census awareness.

This committee's aims will be to inform the public about the census and encourage people to fill it out, thereby allowing for a more complete and accurate population count in 2020.

The enterprise stems from a November 2017 executive order signed by then-Gov. Nathan Deal that paved the way for the creation of "Complete

Count Committees" in all 159 Georgia counties, and Malone is heading up the committee for Union and Towns counties.

He was hired in June, and now Malone is reaching out to well-known and respected members of these communities to fill the committee with volunteers who have "trusted voices."

"There are people in the community that other people listen to," Malone said. "So, we're going to those people and asking them to come on this committee to get educated about the census, so that they can then talk in their circles of influence about the census over the next months leading up to when people are going to start getting stuff from the Census

Bureau."

Deal created these committees because so much rides on capturing accurate census data, as the U.S. government uses population totals derived from the census to allocate billions in federal dollars across individual states, counties and cities nationwide.

Inaccurate census data can do real harm to communities missing out on these dollars, which go toward funding public health, family and children services, education, roads and transportation, neighborhood improvements and more.

And census figures also dictate the number of congressional seats apportioned to each state, as the 435 seats in



Patrick Malone  
the House of Representatives are split between the 50 states based on population.  
See Census, Page 2A

## Noah Rogers, 4, wins life-size Sheriff Woody in Shop With A Cop raffle



L-R: Raffle-winner Noah Rogers, Mitzi Rogers, Blairsville Assistant Police Chief Shawn Dyer, Sheriff Woody and Blairsville Cinema-owner Don Lingerfelt.  
Photo by Mark Smith

By Mark Smith  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Mitzi Rogers had no idea whether her entry into the raffle for a life-size Sheriff Woody figure at the Blairsville Cinema a couple of weeks ago would be a winner.

And to the delight of her 4-year-old son Noah, it was, and he arrived with his mother

at the theater on Saturday, July 13, to claim his prize.

The raffle was the brainchild of JoAnne Leone, said theater owner Don and Linda Lingerfelt.

Leone approached the Lingerfelts recently to propose that they purchase the Sheriff Woody figure from a friend, then raffle it off and donate the proceeds to the Blairsville Shop

With A Cop Program.

The raffle coincided with the theatrical release of "Toy Story 4," which really helped to increase the excitement for the raffle and the movie.

"We were actually watching 'Toy Story 4,' and they had the raffle on the wall, and I said, well, it was going to a good cause," said Mitzi.

See Rogers, Page 3A

## Community Council brings Experiment Station to the Farmers Market

By Jarrett Whitener  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

The Community Council of the Georgia Mountain Research & Education Center had a booth at the Union County Farmers Market on Saturday, July 13, to teach the community about the local environment and agriculture.

Featured activities included the making of leaf outlines and examination of animal tracks for kids, and there was plenty of information on hand for people of all ages.

"We wanted to come out today and spread awareness to the community about the center and what we offer," said Community Council Member Tobie Chandler.

One of the attractions at the center, aka Experiment Station, is the Georgia Mountain Ethnobotanic Gardens and Woodland Medicine Trail, which educates the public about native plants and their uses.

"We offer free garden tours on Monday mornings," Chandler said. "The Ethnobotanic Gardens are absolutely beautiful and blossoming right now, and we



Jared Ogden of the GMREC Community Council helping little Cecilia Shook with an activity at the Farmers Market on Saturday, July 13.  
Photo by Jarrett Whitener

want people to come out and experience it, because you may not know what kind of beautiful plants are growing in your backyard.

"People that don't want the garden tours are also welcome to do a self-guided tour through the garden throughout the week if they want. It's just a beautiful area that I recommend

people visit."  
The center held a native plant giveaway and offered general information about the area alongside displays at the Farmers Market on Saturday.

Glen Henderson of the Mountain Beekeepers' Association brought some  
See Farmers Market, Page 3A

## City claims two Haralson Property parcels in joint meeting with DDA

By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
editor@nganews.com

The city of Blairsville will soon be taking ownership of two parcels of land on the Haralson Property Development behind City Hall.

In a joint City Council and Downtown Development Authority meeting on Tuesday, July 9, the council voted unanimously to transfer land parcels D and E from the DDA to the city.

According to a parcel map prepared for the meeting, parcel



The city plans to develop the gravel parking lot behind City Hall to include paved parking and bathrooms. Photo by Mark Smith

## Reece re-indicted on charges alleging sexual relationships with students

By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
editor@nganews.com

A Union County Grand Jury issued two superseding indictments last week for Shawnetta Reece, who was arrested in 2017 after authorities accused her of having sex with two students while she was a teacher at Union County Schools, according to court documents.

Reece, 42, of Blairsville, was originally indicted in two separate cases in September 2018, one for child molestation and sexual assault of a student

in 2013, and another for two counts of sexual assault of a second student in 2015, according to court documents.

Handed up on July 10, 2019, the superseding indictments replace the 2018 originals, though the charges remain largely unchanged with the exception of an additional count of child molestation in the first case, according to court documents.

Enotah Judicial Circuit District Attorney Jeff Langley said last week that his office presented the cases for



Shawnetta Reece  
See Reece, Page 2A

## Clemmons lands Lake Trahlyta photo in Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson Airport

By Mark Smith  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Self-taught photo artist Jason Clemmons, known locally for his landscape photography, took a picture of Lake Trahlyta at Vogel State Park that was chosen to grace the walls of the Interfaith Chapel at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport.

Clemmons posts a lot of his images to social media, and the Lake Trahlyta photo caught the eye of the head pastor of the Atlanta Airport.

"They were in the process of redoing the chapels in the International and Domestic Concourses, so they were thinking about getting a picture," Clemmons said. "His wife was on Facebook and somehow came across my page

and they followed it.

"He saw some images that he liked, and he contacted me and asked if I'd be interested. And it just went from there."

Clemmons said he was really excited at first, but it took a while before it finally happened.

"When you deal with a place as big as the Atlanta Airport – the biggest airport in the world – there's a lot of layers there," Clemmons said. "So, it just seemed like it would go up the chain, then fall off."

"Then I didn't hear anything back. It was a little bit frustrating. I just didn't think it was going to happen."  
More than half a year later, however, Clemmons was contacted again to begin working with the printer. The resolution had to be excellent

because the picture was to be blown up to 24 feet by 8 feet.

"Then it went up, and it happened fast," he said.

The picture is actually several pictures "stitched together" to make a panorama, which now resides in the Interfaith Chapel of the International Concourse.

Clemmons also sold seven other pictures to the pastor that are now on display in the chapels of both the Domestic and International Concourses.

In their spare time, Clemmons and his wife Jessica are avid hikers, and the lower Appalachians of Georgia and North Carolina provide a great many opportunities to access some of the most beautiful locations in the Eastern United

See Clemmons, Page 8A



Jason Clemmons with his photograph of Lake Trahlyta, which now resides in Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport.  
Photo by Mark Smith

Vol. 110 No. 29

4 Sections 28 Pages

Weather

Thurs: T-Storm Hi 86 Lo 67

Fri: T-Storm Hi 88 Lo 68

Sat: T-Storm Hi 88 Lo 68

Arrests 7A

Churches 2B

Classifieds 3D

Opinion 4A

Legals 5D

Obits 4B

Sports 2C

Butternut Creek Festival

July 20-21

See page 5A

Club 66 Veterans

Fundraiser for MIAP

July 20th

See page 8A

July 19-27

See page 1C

New Student Registration

See page 6C