

# North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Wednesday, July 28, 2021

## TSPLOST will appear on November ballot, Paris says

By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
editor@nganews.com

By April 1, 2022, Union Countians could be paying an 8% sales tax. If, that is, the Transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax referendum receives majority support in an upcoming Special Called Election.

Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris officially signaled his intent to put the TSPLOST to a vote in a July 20 called meeting, in which he accepted an intergovernmental agreement between the county and City of Blairsville to distribute proceeds from the tax.

Blairsville City Council members approved the agreement in their July 6 regular city meeting, effectively passing

the baton to Paris to carry out next steps, which he did last week.

"We are putting a TSPLOST on the ballot for Nov. 2, 2021," Paris said July 20, "for voters to decide on this opportunity to collect one new penny sales tax on each dollar spent in Union County to fund transportation projects in the county and the City of Blairsville."

Added Paris, "We're not just doing this for the heck of it. Our purpose for doing it is, No. 1, to make sure we have some of the best roads and bridges and continue to have the best roads and bridges.

"But then, No. 2, is also to be able to find a way to reduce our property taxes, because currently, property taxes fund

roads and bridges for the most part."

The current Road Department general fund budget is \$1,370,087, including salaries and benefits. This is supplemented by the Road Department SPLOST budget of \$1 million that covers vehicles, equipment, asphalt, gravel, emulsion, surface treatment, striping, signage and more.

There's also the Road Department's maintenance and shop budget of \$205,943, which Paris hopes to combine with the total Road Department general fund budget to create about \$1.5 million in property tax savings due to the passing of TSPLOST.

"We will be able to reduce the property tax requirements of the county by having TSPLOST,"

Paris said. "And by having TSPLOST, you allow everybody to participate in paying for those roads and bridges, not just the property owners."

"And since we're at a time where people are concerned about property taxes because of the revaluations, we're doing everything possible to make sure we can keep those property taxes as low as possible, and lower than what the general public is, I think, currently concerned about."

Following a successful referendum, the city will receive 8.5% of proceeds from the estimated \$35 million to be collected in the five years between April 1, 2022, and March 31, 2027, with the county to receive the other

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Lamar Paris  
Sole Commissioner

## Moonshine Cruiz-In coming to Blairsville this weekend

By Mark Smith  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

The 13th Annual Georgia Mountain Moonshine Cruiz-In is coming to Meeks Park this year, where the classic cars, vendors and spectators can really spread out.

Running July 29, 30 and 31, this year's Cruiz-In promises to be "Bigger & Better" than ever, with a larger venue, more vendors and additional off-site activities.

Per www.gammoonshinecruizin.com, "Enjoy three fun-filled days of good ole mountain hillbilly fun. Fantastic

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Rakes Parrish, pictured here in 2016, is the organizer behind the Georgia Mountain Moonshine Cruiz-In.

Photo by Lowell Nicholson

## 2021 Home & Garden Show a huge win for homeowners

By Allison Youngblood  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

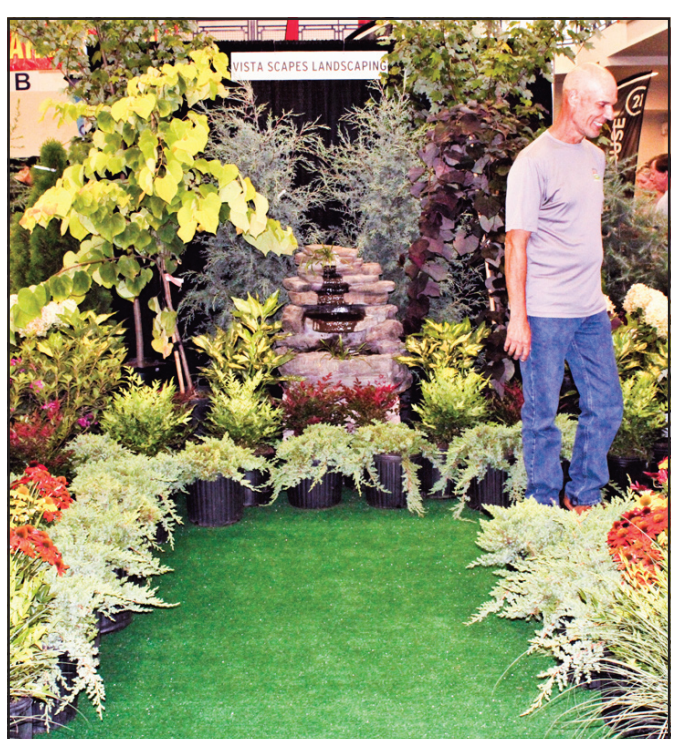
YOUNG HARRIS – The Seventh Annual Northeast Georgia and Western North Carolina Home & Garden Show returned to the area this past Saturday and Sunday, July 24-25.

From 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday and 12-5 p.m. on Sunday, visitors browsed vendors specializing in home improvement and repair, essential services, and decoration for homes and gardens.

Dozens of booths lined the roughly 15,000 square feet of space inside the Towns County Recreation and Conference Center at Foster Park, with each booth filled with advanced services and unique wares.

Expo Management Inc. President Bill Anderson estimated that about 4,000 people made their way through

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VistaScapes Landscaping Co-Owner Donald Caraway set up an elaborate display for the Home & Garden Show last weekend, showing off what his company can do for homeowners.

Photo by Allison Youngblood

## Pennsylvania man succumbs to injuries after July 15 collision

By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
editor@nganews.com

A Pennsylvania man has died from injuries he sustained in a July 15 motor vehicle accident on Georgia 515 and Murphy Highway.

The accident occurred around 3 p.m. that Thursday when a Toyota Tundra that had been traveling east on 515 failed to yield and turned left in front of a westbound Harley-Davidson Trike, causing a collision in the intersection, according to the Georgia State Patrol.

Operating the Trike was Vernon L. Miller, 73, of Wellsboro, Pennsylvania, accompanied by his wife as a

passenger. The husband and wife were on a vacation trip with two other cycle couples when the crash occurred.

Miller's brother Meredith contacted the newspaper following publication of last week's article to clarify that, even though Miller was technically resuscitated at the scene by local first responders, Gainesville doctors determined he had effectively died in the crash due to massive head trauma.

On Saturday, July 17, Miller was taken off life support and died at Northeast Georgia Medical Center, where he had been life-flighted two days earlier.

His wife also sustained injuries and was transported

to Union General Hospital for treatment. Although she is facing several months of healing, she is expected to recover, Meredith said.

The 83-year-old driver of the Tundra was not injured in the accident, and it was not known at press time if the Georgia State Patrol would be bringing charges in the crash.

Noted in the obituary published by family in his hometown of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, was the fact that Miller was wearing his helmet when the accident occurred.

"Vern was married for 53 years to Mabel (Auker) Miller and was a truck driver for most of his life," according to his obituary. "He was an avid hunter

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## School District prepares for return to standard instruction

By Mark Smith  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Officials with the Union County School District are looking forward to the 2021-22 school year returning to normal, as discussed in the Tuesday, July 20, Board of Education meeting.

"It's an extremely exciting time to be able to say,

'Look, we've been through this thing for 18 months, we've got a handle on things, and we're going back to a standard school year,'" Superintendent John Hill said.

"We're not going to mandate masks; that's a parent's choice," Hill continued. "Of course, we support whatever the parents want to do. But we need our kids here in school, we need our kids in the classroom,

and we need to be here five days a week.

"Our kids will be eating in the cafeterias. We'll be able to resume field trips and athletic events with not-so-strict mitigation requirements. We need to have our kids here. Our kids are missing out on socialization, they're missing out on a lot of experiences.

"(Elementary School

See Back to School, Page 8A



Together, Jerry Bavero, C.T. Hussion, Carol Knight, Pat Donaldson and Shane Womack make up the principalships for Union County Schools.

Photo by Mark Smith

## EMC meetings open to members; fiber optic availability to expand

By Mark Smith  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

YOUNG HARRIS – The Blue Ridge Mountain EMC Board of Directors voted in June to open its regular meetings back up to member attendance following COVID-19, with the first open meeting in more than a year taking place on Thursday, July 15.

No one from among the general membership attended the meeting.

Heading up meetings is new General Manager Allan Glidewell, who assumed office in March after former general manager Jeremy Nelms stepped down last September to take the CEO job at Flint Energies serving the Warner Robins

area.

Throughout the pandemic, Glidewell said the EMC has carried out its mission of upholding "the interest of our membership through innovative and sustainable energy and technology solutions."

"There were a lot of challenges that it presented," Glidewell said of the pandemic. "One of the big ones was how we accommodate people's service needs without requiring their attendance here at the office. So, we had to devise various means for that, and I think we were good at that. We segued into a new generation that prefers to do business remotely, so that stood us well from that standpoint."

"A curious thing with regard to the overall service of the electric load is, we're a primarily



Allan Glidewell  
EMC General Manager

residential community, and the load is primarily residential. COVID had the effect of having people come to second homes (here) outside of the large cities, and that increased the usage per existing home, and that was a

See EMC Meetings, Page 2A

## July Term 2021 Union County Grand Jury Indictments

The following individuals were indicted during the July Term 2021 of the Union County Grand Jury, which met earlier this month:

Wesley Trenton Pickens, possession of methamphetamine; possession of a Schedule I controlled substance; two counts driving under the influence (less safe) (drugs); possession of drug-related objects; possession of marijuana, less than an ounce.

Britton Andrew Barr, possession of methamphetamine; pedestrian under the influence.

ShaneRay Hux, possession of methamphetamine; theft by receiving stolen property; theft by bringing stolen property into

the state; dangerous drugs – dangerous drugs; possession of dangerous drugs; possession of marijuana, less than an ounce; possession of drug-related objects; drugs not in original container; driving without a license.

Ethan Allen Garrett, theft by receiving stolen property.

Zackary Sean Tamsiea, battery, Family Violence; cruelty to children in the third degree; terroristic threats; disorderly conduct.

Austin Davis Hooper, theft by taking.

Richard Weeks, burglary in the first degree.

Thomas Austin Arey, two

counts aggravated assault.

Lisa Ann Henry, theft by taking; computer trespass.

Charles Demiras Flowers, two counts cruelty to children in the first degree; cruelty to children in the second degree.

Teddie Frances Holbrooks Jr., unlawful handling of explosive devices.

Shawn Allen Rivera, cruelty to children in the first degree; battery, Family Violence.

Shaun Joseph Kanady, four counts child molestation; computer pornography; sexual exploitation of children.

Austin Davis Hooper,

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# EMC Meetings...from Page 1A

good thing.  
 “The second thing was, even people who lived here routinely were (indoors) more, and that increased the usage there as well. What this allowed (the EMC) to do, for the same amount of investment in terms of the plant build to serve (customers), is more utilization of it, and that means better efficiency. So, our members have benefitted from that in terms of the load.”  
 Glidewell is from West Tennessee, where he rose

through the ranks in an electric cooperative environment. He worked in that environment for over 23 years in operations and engineering before spending seven years with the Tennessee Valley Authority as an engineering consultant.  
 When the opportunity arose to return to the cooperative environment, Glidewell took it.  
 “It’s very much like coming home, not geographically, but culturally,” he said. “So, I’m really enjoying it. This is a large (adjustment), but I’m settling in. I’ve been well accepted and supported.”

“You couldn’t ask for anything better. The board is superb, the employees here are exceptional, and the membership is great. What we’ve got in front of us are opportunities. I’m looking forward to the next

step.”  
 One next step is the expansion of rural internet, which is always a hot topic, and Glidewell was happy to report renewed interest in “a complete and total buildout to all our members” of the EMC’s high speed fiber optic network.  
 “We have a program now called Neighborhood Network,” he said.  
 The program effectively enables members to have fiber optic cable extended into their area if they can get at least four neighboring homeowners to commit to adding broadband service at their location.  
 “It’s very positive for the cooperative in that, suddenly, neighbors are talking to neighbors about how to get service,” Glidewell said. “They begin to understand this idea of building a significant amount of fiber to one person is a different

animal than building to a block of people.”  
 For more information on this program, call 706-379-3121.  
 The EMC Board meets the second Tuesday of each month starting at 6 p.m. at the Young Harris headquarters. To attend, members must fill out the form titled “Member Notice of Intent to Attend a Board Meeting” at <https://www.brmmemc.com/my-cooperative/board-meetings/>.  
 This form may be filled out and submitted directly online, though members must complete the form at least 48 hours before the start of board meetings to attend. Members who wish to address the board during meetings will need to fill out a separate form called the “Member Petition to Present at Board Meeting,” due in the same time frame.

# Indictments...from Page 1A

burglary in the first degree; aggravated battery; burglary in the second degree.  
 Tyler Jacob Holloway, two counts terroristic threats; aggravated battery; aggravated assault on a peace officer; three counts obstruction of an officer; escape; interference with government property; criminal trespass.  
 Jacob Lee Greer, false imprisonment; simple battery, Family Violence; disorderly conduct; hindering an emergency telephone call.  
 Jason Paul Eady, crossing the guard lines with drugs; possession of a Schedule II controlled substance; driving without a license; drugs not in original container.  
 Christy Spires McClure, criminal damage to property in the second degree.  
 Brandon Roger Ross, aka Brandon Roger Brandoross, possession of methamphetamine; possession of drug-related objects.  
 Sherry Faye Duke, possession of methamphetamine; possession of drug-related objects.  
 Stephanie Loraine Pace, possession of methamphetamine;

possession of a Schedule II controlled substance; possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony; possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.  
 Jamie Lynn King, possession of methamphetamine; possession of a Schedule I controlled substance; possession of marijuana, less than an ounce.  
 Steven Douglas Long, criminal attempt to commit a felony; criminal damage to property in the first degree; obstruction of an officer; possession of methamphetamine with intent to distribute; possession of a Schedule I controlled substance with intent to distribute; possession of a Schedule IV controlled substance with intent to distribute; possession of marijuana with intent to distribute; possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony; sale of marijuana.  
 Austin Taylor Campbell, cruelty to children in the first degree.  
 Darin Cain Young, aggravated assault, Family Violence; false imprisonment; battery, Family Violence.  
 Patrick Brian Hull,

three counts exploitation and intimidation of a disabled adult, elder person or resident; two counts criminal attempt to commit a misdemeanor.  
 Dexter Dean Hubbard, three counts possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute; tampering with evidence; obstruction of an officer.  
 Kimberly Tromblay Ivie, possession of a Schedule I controlled substance with intent to distribute; possession of methamphetamine with intent to distribute; possession of a Schedule IV controlled substance with intent to distribute.  
 Brian Lee Nothdurft, possession of methamphetamine with intent to distribute; violation of Georgia Controlled Substances Act.  
 Alicia Rita Welborn, possession of methamphetamine with intent to distribute; possession of a Schedule I controlled substance.  
 Ethan Allen Garrett, aggravated stalking.  
 The above individuals have been charged only and are presumed innocent until found guilty in a court of law.

# TSPLOST...from Page 1A

91.5% after the state claims a 1% administration fee.  
 Should it pass electoral muster, TSPLOST would be the third voter-approved 1-penny sales tax being collected in Union County, alongside the county’s SPLOST V and the School District’s Education SPLOST V.  
 TSPLOSTs and ESPLOSTs collect for just five years, though the regular SPLOST runs for six years. Back when the county put SPLOST V to a vote in the 2018 Midterm Elections, collection projections were only \$24 million over six years.  
 But sales tax collections and the local economy have experienced a boom during the pandemic, exceeding expectations to the point that the School District anticipates hitting its ESPLOST collections cap of \$21 million a full year early.  
 That’s why the School District is putting another ESPLOST referendum to a vote in the May 24, 2022, General Primary Election, to prevent an interruption in collections that will likely expire a year ahead of schedule, with plans for the next ESPLOST to build a new elementary school.  
 So, when coming up with TSPLOST projections, the county went with more optimistic

estimates based on pandemic-era sales tax figures to avoid the current dilemma facing the School District and other counties in the past.  
 “We have to project high for the TSPLOST collections, because if you project too low and you collect the total before the five years runs out, then it ends,” County Purchasing Agent Pam Hawkins said.  
 The current average of SPLOST collections is over \$500,000 per month, Hawkins said, adding that collections have been steadily increasing over the last six-plus years.  
 At least 30% of TSPLOST proceeds must be used on road improvement projects that are consistent with the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program by the Georgia Department of Transportation.  
 STIP projects include but are not limited to improvements to roadways, bridges and public transit, for bicyclists and pedestrians, and to increase safety.  
 “Our next step in this process is Lamar doing a resolution calling for a TSPLOST election,” Hawkins said. “We will have that ready in August. That goes to Libby Stevens and the Union County Board of Elections.”

From there, the Board of Elections will issue a referendum notice of the called election and coordinate with the Secretary of State’s office to make ready official ballots for November. Then, following a four-week advertising period, it will be up to voters to decide the matter.  
 The commissioner said the county is working to form a special volunteer committee to bring in community stakeholders to help decide improvement projects should the tax pass.  
 Patrick Malone is in the early stages of organizing the committee. He has extensive experience in corporate leadership development as well as local affairs. Malone headed up the county’s recent census awareness campaign and formerly served as Chamber of Commerce interim president.  
 Once formed, the committee will feature residents from five geographic areas of the county who will provide community input about what work is needed and where in each area.  
 “If we’re going to ask the public to vote on TSPLOST to allow us to have this amount of money to maintain and keep our roads, we want them to feel totally comfortable that it’s not political,” Paris said. “It’s not anything except based on the biggest needs in the county.”

# Cruiz-In...from Page 1A

venue, swap meet, cruises, live music, real moonshine still in the works, mountain crafts, and plenty of hot classic cars, trucks, bikes, rat rods and more!”  
 General admission to the event is \$10 each day, with children 12 and under allowed in free.  
 For many years, the Cruiz-In was held at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds in Hiwassee. But the event has grown to the point where more room has become necessary, and Rakes Parrish, who runs the show, said competition with other events was a factor also.  
 “We like Meeks Park,” Parrish said. “We think that will work well for us since we’ll be the only event there.”  
 “We like the restaurants, being able to run to Walmart to grab what we need for the show, and then there’s so much more that’s offered to us, plus the help from the community seems to be great.”  
 Parrish said he has been particularly impressed with the assistance he has gotten from the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce, including President Steve Rowe and Director of Operations Crystal Wagner.  
 “I’m looking forward

to working with everybody in Blairsville, and I think the people will love that area and the restaurants and all that Blairsville has to offer,” Parrish said.  
 Touching on COVID-19 concerns, Parrish said his company, Flip Flop Promotions, has managed to hold other events safely during the pandemic, including last year’s Georgia Mountain Moonshine Cruiz-In.  
 “The age group of our participants are pretty much all vaccinated. They’re concerned just like you and me. We do all the precautions,” he said, adding that masks are by individual preference and people are encouraged to observe safe practices.  
 “We’ve been successful with three different shows (during the pandemic), and I don’t know of any kind of outbreak that’s occurred from our event.”  
 On Thursday, July 29, classic cars participating in that day’s cruise will be lining up at the Farmers Market at 1:30 p.m. to pull out at 2 p.m.  
 Local country music legend Tommy Townsend, who owns Granddaddy Mimm’s Distilling Co., will be hosting a “Sour Mash Welcome Bash” at his Wellborn Street business in

Downtown Blairsville Thursday evening to kick off the Moonshine Cruiz-In weekend.  
 Music starts at 7 p.m. featuring Townsend and beloved local musician Rick Davenport, and additional parking will be available throughout the downtown area.  
 The distillery will be hosting its renowned facility tours, and Two Country Hens will be on-site to provide hot dogs and barbecue to feed hungry guests.  
 Then on Friday, the Moonshine Cruiz-In will welcome spectators and participants between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. at Meeks Park, to feature live music throughout the day before wrapping up with a barbecue party at the Farmers Market at 6 p.m.  
 Festivities re-commence at 8 a.m. Saturday, with even more music that morning and afternoon leading up to the big awards ceremony at 4:30 p.m., to include cash and prize drawings.  
 There will even be a block party on the downtown Blairsville Square Saturday evening, with live music slated for around 7 p.m. People will want to park on side streets and not in the main part of downtown to make way for classic cars to park.

# Correction:

A news article in the July 21 edition of the newspaper misstated a figure presented in a recent meeting by District 8 State Rep. Stan

Gunter.  
 Instead of 90% of the FY22 State Budget being programmed for education and health and human services as reported, the article should

have read that Gunter said nearly 90% of “new revenue” for FY22 would be set aside for spending in education and health and human services agencies.



# Home Show...from Page 1A



Several thousand people attended the annual H&G Shows last weekend for home improvement ideas. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

the numerous displays over the two-day event, marking the successful completion of one of 19 H&G Shows each year from Knoxville, Tennessee, to Naples, Florida.

Anderson said that last year's circuit was cut down by nine shows throughout the Southeast region due to COVID-19, but that this year's return to Towns County had been busier than ever.

The goal of the expo is always to bring home improvement businesses with quality products to an area with interested customers, in the process attracting people to Towns County who do not want to travel to Atlanta or Knoxville for the products and services they need around the home.

"Your home is the greatest asset most people own. It's really important to them to make their house comfortable, pretty, and enjoyable," Anderson said.

noting that increased time at home during the pandemic had led people to put more effort into improvements.

Nancy Purser of "Nancy's Treasures" out of Andrews, North Carolina, is passionate about connecting customers with antiques and repurposed furniture. She feels the annual show is not only about selling décor but giving folks new ideas to implement around their houses.

And though 2021 was the first year in attendance for Karen Pattillo's "Family Affair," she said it was evident the Home & Garden Expo was bringing crowds of folks into the region to support the area by buying locally made goods from artisans and other vendors.

Emery and Norma Foote from Young Harris are building a home in Hayesville, North Carolina, and they stopped by to see what the community had to offer for their new build. They found the worm castings booth particularly interesting, as they plan to start a garden at their new home.

Chris Carlson from

"Mountain Time on Main Street" is one such vendor emphasizing the importance of investing in local talent, as the outdoor living store supports around 55 artisans and artists selling handmade furniture, wood carvings, paintings, jewelry, blown glass and more.

To Carlson, the best part of the event was bringing local businesses together with residents and guests of the area, all while getting to know customers and what they want inside their homes.

All told, the Home & Garden Show featured top to bottom improvement services, from roofing to house foundations, gutter guards to hot tubs, yard art to kitchen wares, antiques to jewelry, and information on internet providers, solar panel installation and professional cleaning services.

For more information, and to stay on top of news regarding next year's Home & Garden Shows in North Georgia and Western North Carolina, visit <https://expomanagementinc.com/>.

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## Paris... continued from Page 4A

**do I respond?**

A. You simply call or go by the Tax Assessors office and let them know why you think your values are too high. Believe it or not, some complain because they are too low. If there is a minor problem, they can correct it, but if larger problems exist you can appeal your property value.

**Q. What are our current property taxes?**

A. Currently, our county portion of property tax rate (mil rate) are ranked as the 12th

lowest in the State of Georgia out of 159 counties. We anticipate that after the revaluation is complete, we will drop from 12th lowest to somewhere in the bottom 6. However, when you put the school tax and the county tax together - which adds to the total of what you actually pay - Union County has the 3rd lowest tax rate in the state of Georgia. This is because our school system does an excellent job of utilizing their budget and keeping it low - despite many opinions.

## Williams... continued from Page 4A

the label and follow its instructions fully. The label is the law.

Another problem during extended wet periods of the growing season is root rot. This disease can affect most plants, but there are different groups of fungi that cause it depending on the plant. Common symptoms include an unhealthy-looking plant, combined with gummy, black roots, and a stem that is easily broken from the ground at the base. The reason the infection begins is usually due to excess moisture in the soil, or inadequate drainage of the soil. For the vegetable garden, the most effective way to control it is to prevent it. If you planted

something there last year that got it, plant that thing in a drier area of the garden next year. If you use mulch, while it has many benefits, it may be holding too much moisture in the soil. When you water plants, remember to water deeply and less frequently, and let the soil surface become dry for a day or two before watering again.

If you suspect any of these ailments to be troubling your garden, or have any other questions or concerns related to agriculture, landscape or natural resources, please feel free to contact your County Extension office or email Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

## Walters-Taylor... continued from Page 4A

at the turn of the century of the Buffalo Soldiers being early "park rangers," protecting some of the natural lands prior to the creation of the official National Park Service. Many were Medal of Honor winners, including Mark Matthews, who lived to an amazing 111 years old, dying in 2005. Imagine that, living in three centuries. He is buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

Celebrating National

Buffalo Soldiers Day first happened in 1992, with Gen. Colin Powell dedicating a monument at Fort Leavenworth in honor of these troops.

A Buffalo Soldier Museum also exists in Houston, Texas. Although the 28th is not a federal holiday, we should take a moment to remember the contributions of the Buffalo Soldier to our nation.

We Salute you! And until we muse again, I bid you, "At Ease!"

## Mackey...

continued from Page 4A

improved efficiencies, made better deals with suppliers, improved productivity, avoided overtime? Tell us what you are doing to avoid increases, not just business as usual.

I would think this would go a long way toward justification on any increase. On a personal level, wouldn't I be more receptive to an increase if local roads I travel that need repair were listed? It just makes sense to tell the public specifically where the money is going. Local government needs to be up front and honest if they want to ask the public for any additional funds. Justify what you do and trust will improve dramatically.

Thomas Mackey

## Swaim...

continued from Page 4A

Union County is ONE of only eight counties (Bartow, Bleckley, Chattooga, Murray, Pulaski, Pickens, Towns and Union) in the entire U.S. that operates under this medieval system. An elected board may be more responsive to the voices of the citizens. Walker County, in northwest Georgia, just implemented a county board system for this very reason. Such a proposal was a straw vote on the Republican side (Paris is a Democrat) of a Union County primary ballot and lost by less than 1%. Instead of a SPLOST referendum, how about one on a modern, representative form of government? He's scheduled a TSPLOST Referendum, how about adding one for a Board of County Commissioners?

D.B. Swaim

## UC Emergency Management Agency to test Emergency Notification System

Union County Emergency Management Agency (UCEMA) will be conducting a county-wide test of Union County's Emergency Notification System, CodeRED, on August 4, 2021, at 2 p.m.

This alert is being conducted to test our emergency notification system. We will perform this test twice a year going forward. During this test, you may receive a text message, email, and/or a phone call with a recorded message stating that is the test of our notification.

If you would like to reg-

ister to receive emergency notifications and weather alerts for Union County, you can do so at [www.unioncountygga.gov/CodeRed](http://www.unioncountygga.gov/CodeRed). If you do not receive the message on August 4th, you are not registered in the system.

If you need assistance registering, you may call the Union County EMA office at 706-439-6091.

Please visit [www.unioncountygga.gov/CodeRed](http://www.unioncountygga.gov/CodeRed) for additional information and frequently asked questions regarding Union County's Emergency Notification System, CodeRed.

## Collision...from Page 1A

and enjoyed reading, riding motorcycles and spending time with his family, especially his granddaughters.

"He was a member of several HOG chapters and was a past director of the Corning HOG chapter.

"Vern" is survived by his wife Mabel of Wellsboro, PA, and two sons Neil Miller of Coudersport, PA, and Cory (Gina) Miller of Lawrenceville, PA; brother Meredith (Joyce)

Miller of Manheim, PA; sister Carolyn (Roland) Longenecker of Manheim, PA; several stepbrothers and sisters; and granddaughters Kamryn Miller, Mara Miller and Brenna Miller.

He was predeceased by two brothers, Marlin Miller and Lamar Miller.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Green Free Library, 134 Main St., Wellsboro, PA 16901.

## Cummings... continued from Page 4A

of land in the Wilscott Valley, and as each of his sons married and began their own families, Daves was able to give each of them a nice tract of land. He nor his sons owned slaves. However, they were pro-Southern and viewed the Civil War as one of Northern aggression. And because he was too old to serve in the army, he served in the Home Guard.

While serving in this capacity, he was very stern with people who roamed this area, because many of them were robbing and stealing from his friends in the community. Years later, age began to catch up with this Mountain Man and forced him to walk with a cane or a stick. One day when he was in his 80s, while in Morganton, he was confronted by a group of six men. These rascals had been drinking and wanted revenge for the way he dealt with them during the Civil War.

The men surrounded Daves and backed him against a building. He used his heavy stick on three of the men, and the other three ran from the scene. The Mountain Man walked back to his buggy leaving three bullies sprawled on the street moaning in pain.

Green Daves was a man which could take care of himself, and yet he was a devout Christian and devoted husband.

## Dyer...

continued from Page 4A

may be called to respond.

The career firefighters work with the many volunteer firefighters who are on the department. They are one part of a wonderful team of public safety professionals who are dedicated to the health, safety, and protection of Union County.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

## Fowler...

continued from Page 4A

you a place in the family! "See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are" (1 Jn 3:1).

As for Blasio, her birth mother died before they could meet. But that doesn't mean she doesn't know her identity. She writes, "If there's one thing in life I'm sure of... it's that God loves you and knows who you are and has known you from the beginning." She has found the answer to the question. Have you?

## Chamber...

continued from Page 4A

time and a chance to help a good cause! Vendors scheduled to compete are Rib Country BBQ, Papaw's Trading Post & Backyard BBQ, Jim's Smokin' Que, Dam Good BBQ, The Smoke Out & BBQ, Chill & Fill Café, and Greg Staffins. You do not want to miss this!

Many of you may have noticed the big yellow school bus in front of United Community Bank. The bus is for "Stuff the Bus" which helps collect school supplies for our local students. The Chamber has issued a challenge to all local businesses to help Stuff the Bus and help a local student. Let's pull together and help our children as they start back to school!

And remember, It's Better in Blairsville!

### Bell Ringing Union County Old Courthouse



**July 4, 2021**  
In Memory of  
**Earl Warren**  
on his 90th Birthday  
By Mike and Janice Marsh

**July 10, 2021**  
In Memory of  
**William T. Meeks, Sr.**  
on the Anniversary  
of his Death  
By Ginger & Terri Meeks

**July 19, 2021**  
In Memory of  
**Sybil Harkins Tyre**  
on her 83rd Birthday  
By Exola and Leola

**Bell ringing information at 706-745-5493**

# Back to School...from Page 1A

Principal Jerry Bavero) said it best: ‘We don’t want to go back to where we were, we want to be better than where we were.’ But we’ve got some ground to cover, so we’re going to ask people to use common sense.

“We are going to be really strict about (cleanliness). We’ll have contingency plans in place if things go bad, but we’re going to do everything we can to go status quo.”

Each of the principals of the five schools that comprise the School District gave an update on progress toward Aug. 12 opening day, which is just a few weeks away.

The many problems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic throughout the system, such as loss of personnel, facilities maintenance issues, lack of effectiveness of online learning, parent-led homeschooling not aligning with school curricula, just to name a few, are being addressed.

All principals, however, assured the board that their respective schools, cumulatively serving about 3,000 students, will be ready for a return to a standard school year.

Hill also addressed the subject of the school millage rate that makes up about 2/3 of



**Jeannine Murphy received the “Going the Extra Mile” Award last week following her retirement in May after 10 years with the school system.**

Photo by Mark Smith

the county’s total millage rate to determine the amount of property taxes levied each year.

“We’re not ready to set the millage rate,” he said. “We have not seen the tax digest yet, none of us in this room have, so we’re totally unaware of what that’s going to look like.

Hill explained that part of the state’s funding formula established by the Quality Basic Education Act of 1985 requires each school district to chip in a “local fair share” of at least 5 mills, which is then deducted from the amount the state sends to fund the cost of public education each year.

Given the recent state-

mandated countywide property revaluations, Hill said the local fair share could be higher, which would negatively impact the total of QBE dollars the district receives through the Department of Education.

“We have the sixth lowest millage rate of all 159 school districts (in Georgia),” Assistant Superintendent David Murphy said. “When you take the county tax and you add the school tax, in millage rates, we are continuously third (lowest) in the state. We’re actually beating counties that have the (permanent Education Local Option Sales Tax).”

Contributing to the tax conversation, Board Chair Tony Hunter said he sees real value in the way taxes are being spent in Union County.

“Educating children is No. 1; saving taxpayer money is No. 2,” Hunter said. “I see what’s going on and I think the public would do themselves a service if they would come and see, really see, what’s going on with their tax dollars.”

A highlight of the meeting was the presentation of the “Going the Extra Mile” Award to Jeannine Murphy.

“Ms. Jeannine Murphy has been with us since 2011 and has retired this past May,” said Special Education Services Director Tiffany Setzer. “Jeannine has been a paraprofessional in Special Education with us, and not just in Special Education. Jeannine has worked with some of our most challenging students to reach.”

Setzer and Hill both indicated that Murphy will be missed.

The Union County Board of Education meets at the Board Office the third Tuesday of every month, starting with a work session at 6 p.m. followed by a regular meeting at 7 p.m.

## Army Veteran Douglas Carlton of Blairsville receives Quilt of Valor



**Douglas Carlton and family**

On July 20th, Homestead Hospice of Blairsville presented Douglas Carlton of Blairsville with a Quilt of Valor for his service in the Army.

The Quilt and Pillowcase were donated by the Quilt of Valor Foundation and locally made by the Misty Mountain Quilters Guild.

The ceremony was held at his home in Blairsville sur-

rounded by his family.

Shannon Larsen of Homestead Hospice read about the Quilts of Valor; sharing their meaning and their history and quilted Mr. Carlton. Veteran and Homestead Hospice Office Manager, Dawn Lively pinned Mr. Carlton as an Honored Veteran. Congratulations to Mr. Carlton and we thank him deeply for his service!