

Measles...from Page 1A

will also be offering immunizations for students during "Meet Your Teacher" at the Union County Middle School on Aug. 5 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Also in the meeting, Environmental Health Manager Mark Jarrett reported several potential animal bites.

"Under the rabies program, we had five bite reports, two specimens tested, one cat, which was negative, and one dog, which was negative," Jarrett said.

The board voted unanimously to stop purchasing insurance on packages containing rabies specimens sent for examination in cases where human exposure is involved. Jarrett said the intrinsic value of the contents of such a package is zero and a claim wouldn't be honored.

This will save the department \$15 per package. Union County is the only county in Georgia that has that practice, and the shipping agent advised against it, Jarrett said.

Georgia District 2 Administrator Lisa Hocker, in her financial report, said they had just wrapped up the 2018-2019 fiscal year as of June 30. "The fund balance



District 2 Public Health Director Dr. Pamela Logan with District Administrator Lisa Hocker on July 24. Photo by Mark Smith

is \$858,750, which is approximately 11 months of operating funds," said Hocker.

In comparing FY 2018 to FY 2019, Hocker said that total revenues were up by \$123,972. Expenses were also up \$62,414, which included increased operating expenses, plus salaries and benefits.

"Salary and fringe are up by \$44,274 because we're bringing in what the state is giving us for the merit increases and the revenues," Hocker said.

Hocker pointed out indications that more people with private insurance elected to utilize the local Health Department in FY 2019, which she said speaks to the great customer service and the fine job the staff is doing in Blairsville.

"So, it's overall, in my opinion, a great financial report for the fiscal year, and I appreciate all the hard work that goes into this by the staff here at the Health Department," Hocker said.

CASA...from Page 1A

Children Services.

Between July 2018 and June 2019, Enotah CASA served 42 children in Towns and 75 children in Union County, Lonano said.

"We only have one foster home in Towns County, so unless they go with a relative that's in the area, a lot of them get housed outside of Towns County," Lonano said. "That's the kicker. There's just not enough foster homes to keep them close to home."

And it's the same in Union County, she said, estimating that about 80% of children that are removed from their homes — due mostly to parental neglect or abuse stemming from drugs and alcohol — are relocated to foster homes or group homes far outside of their home areas, which creates huge travel problems for everyone.

To clarify, a foster home usually consists of a family that has gone through foster training

and has agreed to take over the care of a child. A group home is more like an orphanage, where several children are placed in a facility and several trained adults care for them.

Simply put, the job of volunteer CASAs is to ensure whatever is best for a child, mostly through court proceedings, though CASAs travel great distances to be with their charges, which helps give these children a sense of stability in their disrupted lives.

CASAs are the only unpaid individuals appointed in these unfortunate court proceedings and are, therefore, motivated solely by the best interests of children. And because they don't have the caseload of an attorney, they have the time to genuinely focus on their children.

Furthermore, CASAs save their counties hundreds of thousands of dollars because they replace court-appointed attorneys, who must step in



Nicole Lonano

when CASAs are unavailable because there aren't enough volunteers.

Starting Aug. 26, Enotah CASA will be hosting classes on how to become a CASA volunteer. For more information, call 706-864-0300.

The nonprofit recently announced that its 2019 Dancing with North Georgia Stars fundraising event will take place on Oct. 26 at the Union County Schools Fine Arts Center.

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