

McAfee...from Page 1A



The new floating boat dock at the Canal Lake Boat Ramp, which inhabits land originally donated by the McAfee Family decades ago. Photo by Mark Smith

Next up, the county worked with Colwell Construction to build the road to the future site of the ramp, "so between us and the DNR and the county and Colwells, that's the way it got built," McAfee said.

New to the area of the boat ramp is the recently

installed floating boat dock and sign stating that "the Canal Lake Boat Ramp was made possible by a generous land donation from the McAfee Family to Union County."

Furthermore, Kemmy Garrett with TVA said the federally-owned corporation spent about \$40,000 on

materials to build up the bank for the dock.

The McAfees are lifelong residents of Union County. Jim is well-known for his work with the Scottish Festival; Lewis is a former Union County Schools superintendent; and Melva Lynn is retired from a 33-year career with United Community Bank.

But the McAfees go back much further than that, Paris said in his remarks at the ceremony. Arthur McAfee and his wife Mattie – parents to Lewis, Jim and Melva Lynn – built Canal Lake Resort on the banks of the Nottely River in 1926 and 1927, years before Nottely Dam was built.

Canal Lake Resort was located across Canal Lake from the present-day ramp/dock, where the old Murphy Highway used to meander along the banks of the Nottely River before the dam was built in 1941 and 1942.

Today, that entire area is underwater, as is the island that used to be in the middle of Canal Lake.

During the ribbon cutting, Paris distributed aerial maps with markings showing the



An aerial map outlining the old grounds of Canal Lake Camp before TVA put in Lake Nottely.

location of the old resort and the old roadbed before it was all submerged.

He also handed out copies of old pictures depicting the Canal Lake Resort, which showed that there was even a resort swing bridge that crossed over the Nottely River.

"How Canal Lake was formed and what it is and where it is – it's a fascinating story," Paris said.



Bud Akins at the Aug. 1, 2019, ribbon cutting honoring the McAfee Family, pictured here with a photo of himself holding a 52-pound yellow catfish caught in Lake Nottely in 1958. Photo by Mark Smith

Fire Department...from Page 1A

much training they had to do," Paris said. "They were always going to a class and always taking a class and always training."

"This was before we had any of them paid, and I thought, why do these guys do that, and why are we lucky enough in Union County to have volunteer firefighters?"

Added Paris, "Families are a part of this, too, because you have ladies that give up their husbands part-time to do this. But I think you understand because you are that family, and it's something that's required of you."

"It's not required because you have to do it, but for the most part, I think you want to do it, too, and you're proud of your husbands and wives, and we are proud of the ladies and gentlemen of the Fire Department."

The guest speaker for the event was Pabel Troche, who used to be a Union County firefighter but now teaches classes all around the country.

Troche gave a speech on how firefighters are different from other people and how they use bravery every day in emergency situations.

"We put words into actions and make a conscious decision to put humanity before ourselves," Troche said. "If we dig deep inside, you will find a



Firefighters lining up for some good eats at the Aug. 3 awards ceremony held in their honor at First United Methodist Church. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

sense of purpose in firefighters that drives them to do what they do."

Following Troche's encouraging words to those gathered, many awards were handed out to deserving firefighters, with many of them receiving recognition for their many years serving the community.

Also handed out that evening was the Firefighter of the Year Award, the recipient of which was voted on by the firefighters themselves, ensuring it is a fair award that everybody agrees on.

Eric McClure won this year's Firefighter of the Year

Award.

"I'm really humbled, and I can think of a lot of folks that deserve this more than I do, but I just do my part," McClure said. "I did it because I've been helped in the past, and I wanted to pay it forward and help others. I wanted to be part of a family, and that's what the Union County Fire Department is, a family."

"When you're at your lowest of lows, your brothers and sisters step in to help you out, and you just return the favor to help people out even more."

Schools...from Page 1A

regardless of whether students want to further their education or move straight into the workforce.

Two guest speakers took the stage to talk to the faculty and staff, with the first being former Young Harris College Professor Dr. John Kay, who spoke on the impact that teachers can have on students' attitudes toward learning.

"The most important thing in education at any level, and this applies to everyone, not just the teachers in the classroom, is your capacity to care about every student, even the most difficult," Kay said.

Brian Buffington with Pioneer RESA was the second guest speaker for the event, and he got the audience excited for the new school year while advising them on changes in the modern classroom.

One of Buffington's main points revolved around the advancement of modern technology, which makes classroom content easily accessible to anyone who simply looks up the information they desire.

Because of this, Buffington advised the faculty and staff that teachers should strive to be more creative in



Dr. John Kay offered words of wisdom to school employees during the Aug. 1 kickoff event. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

their classrooms.

"The price of content has cheapened," Buffington said. "It's freely given, pretty much. We can get content anywhere. I know you know content, and that's great, but you know what? We can find content anywhere. From you, they need opportunities for application and discovery."

Buffington also encouraged school employees to work hard in getting to know the students and trying to make the schools more

enjoyable for them, because it may be the only place that some of them receive any positive reinforcement.

Also in the meeting, Hill noted that, while Blairsville-Union County may be a small mountain town area, "we have the potential to be a world-class school system."

"It's not because of money, it's not because we have nicer things than other people, it's because of you," Hill said, speaking to the employees gathered for the occasion.