

# North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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## Gas shortages lead to lines, price hikes at the pump

By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Damage to a major fuel pipeline in Alabama has had motorists feeling pain at the pumps throughout the southeast, as whole areas have come close to running dry and gas prices have skyrocketed in places.

The cause of the pipeline damage that ended up leaking more than 8,000 barrels of fuel had yet to be released as of press time Monday.

Area supply has been hard to predict, and prices have fluctuated between \$2 and \$2.50 locally, with some outliers reaching as high as \$4.69 reportedly in Hiwassee.

In Blairsville, for example, the Ingles gas station

was completely out Saturday, with employees saying it could be a week before the next gas delivery. However, a shipment did arrive over the weekend, and customers were fueling up for \$2.01 a gallon until the supply ran dry again Sunday afternoon.

The pattern so far shows that gas is available, it's just not available everywhere at once—deliveries are being made to the various gas stations, and customers are lining up until the gas is gone.

At gas stations that did have fuel over the weekend, lines often backed up into the street, and residents crossed county and state lines in search of gas.

Locally, some stations ratcheted up their prices in order to control the supply,

while others imposed gallon limits on a per customer basis.

Many residents filled up gas cans and took multiple vehicles for fill-ups where they knew gas to be, which contributed somewhat to the local craze and gas selloff through the weekend.

The crisis has left the region in limbo, with citizens not knowing where their next gallon of gasoline will come from.

In order to combat the shortages, Gov. Nathan Deal signed an executive order last Wednesday to allow fuel truck drivers to operate under extended hours in order to keep gas flowing into the state.

Gov. Deal extended that order on Friday to last another

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The Circle K at the four-way in Blairsville was one of the only places that had gas Saturday afternoon. Vehicles stuck out both ends of the parking lot to grab a place in line, and the police came by every once in a while to keep traffic flowing.

## City calls for water conservation after leak

By Lily Avery  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

While summer may be cooling down, the Blairsville City Council and Mayor Jim Conley are busier than ever.

At the September monthly meeting, matters of new city ordinances and an alarming water leak were top talking points.

With a warm season worsened by drought, water is always a concern, and water waste an even bigger one. For the last three weeks, the city has been faced with a leakage issue, causing a significant amount of water to never make it to some residential lines.

The exact amount of unmeasured water loss has not been determined, though its significance is reflected in the increased water output produced by the water plant in recent weeks.

"We have an emergency and a major problem," said

Mayor Conley. "I don't want to alarm anyone, but we need to conserve water. We have exhausted all of our efforts, and we don't have the proper equipment to really determine what is going on like a leak detection company does."

Three different companies have been approached to fix the leak, and the city is considering their options for the best bid. A leak detection service, Match Point, is also being hired by the city to check all water lines as a preventative measure.

"Match Point is going to come and go through all 85 miles of our lines," said Mayor Conley. "He's going to do the job, not to exceed \$25,000."

The city urges all residents to be conscious of their water use in the coming weeks.

Mayor Conley and the council have been working for many months redrafting the city's alcohol ordinance, striving to move forward with



Councilmembers talked about a water leak, the alcohol ordinance, and a replacement for City Attorney Janna Akins.

an ordinance that reflects that of Union County's in hopes to reduce confusion for any area residents.

"The general goal was to mirror the county ordinance as much as possible," said City Attorney Janna Akins. "We want to have as much symmetry as we can between the two."

Primary concerns discussed during the meeting regarding the new ordinance pertained to sign regulations and pouring permits.

Some talk was made in terms of regulating alcohol related signage, but the city opted against such actions, recognizing the correlation

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## Accident sends deputy to hospital in critical condition

By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

In the early morning hours of Monday, Sept. 19, Union County Sheriff's Deputy Mitchell Henderson was involved in a single-car accident while on his way to work.

The accident sent him to Northeast Georgia Medical Center in critical condition.

Deputy Henderson's condition was seen as improving as the morning wore on that Monday, and many of his friends and colleagues



Mitchell Henderson

— those not surrounding him at the hospital — posted their prayers and well wishes to

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## County receives final checks for disaster aid

By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Union County has received a final total of \$139,197.94 in reimbursement for countywide damages suffered during the winter flooding event that spanned Dec. 22, 2015, to Jan. 13, 2016.

The last of the federal and state money arrived earlier this month, when representatives from the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency (GEMHSA) paid a special visit to deliver the checks.

As background, President Barack Obama in February gave the winter flooding a disaster declaration. Union County missed the initial declaration, but petitioned to become part of that declaration on March 23, before being added on March 28.



L-R: front, Charles Worden, Lamar Paris, C.J. Worden; back row, Joe Edwards, Richard Jones, Larry Garrett, Pam Hawkins and David Dyer. C.J. Worden from the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency delivered the final checks earlier this month

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## Suspect arrested in connection with Sunday burglary



Chad Chevin

Red's Country Store & Kitchen was burglarized at about 5:30 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 18, according to the Union County Sheriff's Office.

Within hours, the

sheriff's office had posted to social media a screenshot from surveillance footage captured at the scene of the crime, asking for the public's help in identifying the suspect.

The tips poured in, and thanks to the keen observations of county residents, a man was arrested in connection with the Sunday evening burglary.

Chad Chevin of the Jonesboro area was apprehended midmorning Monday off Blue Ridge Highway near Nottely Dam Road by UCSO SSgt. Shawn Dyer, according to UCSO Lt. Daren Osborn.

Chevin is currently in custody at the sheriff's office, where he faces multiple charges, including several counts of burglary, according to Lt. Osborn.

Red's Country Store is located off GA 515 on Foster Road.

## Many substance abuse treatment options in county

By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Local addiction treatment, mental health and drug prevention services gathered at Meeks Park last week for the Second Annual National Recovery Month event.

One of the main goals of the event was to offer information and assistance for individuals or family members dealing with substance abuse and behavioral health issues.

The event also offered those in recovery an opportunity to share their stories with counselors and others battling addiction, alcoholism and



Mental health and substance abuse specialists met at Meeks Park recently to celebrate National Recovery Month

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## Manhunt leads to arrest of alleged child molester

By Shawn Jarrard  
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Staff Writer

A 33-year-old Blairsville man is behind bars after eluding authorities for more than a week, according to the Union County Sheriff's Office.

Jason Wayne O'Neal was arrested at his residence in the Bunker Hill area on Tuesday, Sept. 13, following a tip that led the sheriff's office to the scene, according to UCSO Detective Sgt. Tom Mangifesta.



Jason Wayne O'Neal

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Allegheny Masonic Lodge #114  
Semi-Annual BBQ Fundraiser  
Sept 30th, 2016  
Plates are only \$7  
Whole Butts Available

Kiwanis Golf Tournament

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Indian Summer Festival  
Oct 1 & 2  
Suches, GA

PANTHERS Softball  
Tues Sept 20 @ GAC 5 PM  
Thurs Sept 22 vs. Fannin 6 PM  
\*\*\*SENIOR NIGHT\*\*\*  
Football  
Fri Sept 23 @ GAC 7:30 PM