

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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General Election early voting begins Monday, Oct. 17

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Early voting begins next week, and will run for three weeks leading up to the big General Election on Tuesday, Nov. 8.

Every weekday between Monday, Oct. 17, and Friday, Nov. 4, during the hours of 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., registered Union County voters will be able to walk into the Union County Registrar's Office to cast their votes.

The Registrar's Office is located in the Union County Courthouse, and will be open to voters even during lunchtime hours.

There is one weekend day set aside for voters at the Registrar's Office, which will

be a.m., Oct. 17, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., for those who find themselves too busy to vote during the scheduled weekdays of voting.

"We do expect a big turnout, so there may be a little longer wait this time for the early voting than there normally is," said Union County Deputy Registrar Diana Nichols. "Hopefully not, but we don't know that. It won't be a long wait in any case, but we are expecting a heavy turnout on Election Day and for early voting."

Voters looking for absentee ballots will need to contact the Registrar's Office in the courthouse, or call (706) 439-6016.

Nichols and the Union County Board of Registration handle all early voting, while

Election Day voting at the polls is handled by the Union County Board of Elections, chaired by Libby Stevens.

"As far as I'm concerned, I just want them to vote," said Stevens. "That's the biggest concern that I have about this election, is that everybody has the opportunity to exercise their right. Whether they vote early, vote by absentee mail-in ballot or go to the polls - I don't care. I just want Union County to turn out and vote."

According to Stevens, the voter turnout in Union County has been fairly robust historically, though it has experienced a downward trend in recent years.

"In the last couple of elections, it's almost like people didn't care what was going on," said Stevens. "This election for



Union County Deputy Registrar Diana Nichols

the county and for the nation is very important. I'd just like to see everybody that will turn

out and vote." Tuesday, Oct. 11, was the voter registration deadline

leading into the General Election just a few short weeks away.

The following candidates will appear on the ballot:

For President of the United States, Donald J. Trump, with his vice presidential running mate Michael R. Pence, Republican; Hillary Clinton, with her vice presidential running mate Tim Kaine, Democrat; and Gary Johnson, with his vice presidential running mate Bill Weld, Libertarian.

For U.S. Senate, Incumbent Johnny Isakson, Republican; Jim Barksdale, Democrat; and Allen Buckley, Libertarian.

For Public Service Commissioner, Incumbent

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At 90, Nix shows no signs of slowing

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

If you ask Gene Nix the secret to long living, he'll tell you right off that it's hard work, and plenty of it.

The 90-year-old Choestoe native wakes up well before dawn each day to begin his morning routine: he feeds his cats, makes himself breakfast, maybe reads an article or two, and generally gets ready to start his other daily routine - taking care of his land.

Oftentimes for upwards of 15 hours a day, Nix does it all. He mows his many acres, weed eats uneven terrain, uses tractors in his field, takes care of the falling leaves in the cooler weather, conducts maintenance where it's due, and overall keeps both his property and his home in tip-top shape.

And while he's at it, he lends a helping hand to any neighbors in need.

Keeping in mind that Nix stays this busy at 90 years of age, one might guess that he is no stranger to hard work.

In fact, hard work is the only kind of work Nix has ever known, and it's a bit of a family tradition.

The Nix family stretches back generation after generation in the Choestoe area, as they were some of the first settlers in Union County. As pioneers, they practiced the one way of life known to these parts back then - if you didn't grow it, you didn't eat it.

Born just before the onset of the Great Depression, Nix grew up a poor but happy youngster.

He did receive some schooling, having attended both Pine Top and Town Creek schools, where he made excellent grades. But like many in those days, Nix never finished his education because

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Gene Nix, a Union County native and World War II veteran, planted this pecan tree on his property more than 30 years ago, when it was still a finger-high plant growing out of its shell.

Hometown roots for Henderson's recovery

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Union County Sheriff's Deputy Mitchell Henderson remains in serious yet stable condition, following a Sept. 19 car accident that sent him to Northeast Georgia Medical Center in Gainesville.

The accident occurred near the Towns and Union County line, as the Young Harris native made his way to his first call of the day shortly after going on duty that morning.

Those following Henderson's medical battle are aware that his family is staying nearby the hospital, and there has been a tremendous outpouring of community support to help Henderson and his family in their time of need.

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Union County Sheriff's Deputy Mitchell Henderson

Blairsville Sorghum Festival continues this weekend

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Beloved and much anticipated year after year, the Blairsville Sorghum Festival returned to Meeks Park on Saturday, Oct. 8, making its 47th appearance since 1969.

The four-day festival, which spans the second and third weekends in October, commenced at Meeks Park as it always does, with the making of that sweet, sweet nectar of the South - sorghum syrup.

A highlight of every festival, and one that does a particularly good job of bringing out the locals, is the annual Sorghum Festival Parade.

Picture this - community-concocted, handmade floats and classic cars driven by hosts anxious to impart as much candy as possible to the youngsters lining the streets of

the parade route.

This year's parade suffered about a 30-minute delay, as the trailer carrying the parade route on Georgia 515 blew a tire, thus was a might slow in getting there.

Parade emcee Libby Stevens - who stays busy in the community, both as chairperson of the Union County Board of Elections and president of the Union County Historical Society - well, she made the most of the situation, telling jokes and keeping the crowds entertained, all the while encouraging folks to meet and greet one another while they waited.

This is Stevens' fourth year handling emcee duties at the Sorghum Festival Parade, and this year she got help from her granddaughter Aspen, who is a junior at Union County High School.

"I announce the games at the Sorghum Festival, have probably the last 20 years," said Stevens. "I do the biscuit eating contest, and the farthest away in the state of Georgia, farthest away in the continental United States and the oldest person."

"So it was just kind of a natural flow - when the other person who had been announcing the parade wasn't able to do it anymore, they asked me, and I don't mind getting out here and doing this. I also do the Christmas parade, so that's kind of how I fell into the job."

Once the parade finally did get rolling, the hundreds of parade patrons lining up and down Cleveland Street, three quarters of the way around the square and over to the Blairsville Restaurant ogled the many floats and classic cars that drove by.

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The theme for this year's Sorghum Festival Parade was "Bring Out the Kids," which is exactly what the Blairsville Sorghum Festival Club did with their sorghum cane float. This was the first year the parade took the Bob Head Street route.

Council goes over airport updates

By Lily Avery
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Fall is officially here, the leaves are more vibrant than ever, and the Blairsville City Council and Mayor Jim Conley are busy readying the city for the cooler months.

At the monthly meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 4, updates on new possibilities at the Blairsville Municipal Airport and the status of city water leaks were highlights of the evening.

As the development of the new terminal at the airport progresses, its popularity continues to grow. According to Airport Manager John Hamler,

the airport has been busier than ever, with a 16 percent increase in usage and sales since last year.

This increase not only effects the airport but also the businesses that share the same customers, primarily car rental services and area hotels. Because of this, Enterprise Car Rental has approached the city about renting office space for an onsite location in the new terminal. Enterprise is the primary rental service used by current airport patrons, but as of right now only works out of its office on Blue Ridge Highway. Having an onsite location would not only be more convenient for the



Mayor Jim Conley company, but for customers as well.

Currently, Enterprise rents around 30 cars a week, mostly one-way to Atlanta,

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State salutes local Vietnam veterans

By Lily Avery
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Although the Vietnam War ended decades ago, area veterans have only recently begun to get the "Welcome Home" they so rightfully deserve.

Ten local Vietnam-era Veterans were honored by the Georgia Department of Veterans Service in a special ceremony on Saturday, Oct. 8, at the Maj. Leon Davenport Veterans Center.

Back in February, close to 200 Union and Towns Vietnam Veterans were given

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Mike Priven, president of the Vietnam Veterans of America Blairsville Chapter, hands out certificates to local Vietnam Veterans, with Bob Spaulding of the Georgia Department of Veterans Service. Photo/Lily Avery

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Fall Hammer-in Event at Trackrock October 28-29

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Hope Against Heroin

DRUGS WILL CHANGE YOU TO SOMEONE YOU WOULD NEVER WANT TO BE

What: "Hope Against Heroin"
Who: For Concerned Parents
When: Oct 13th at 6:30 PM
Where: Civic Center
Welborn Street
Why: To Unite to Face Addiction

PANTHERS Softball
Tues Oct 11 @ Lovett (Best of 3)
Football
Fri Oct 14 vs. North Hall 7:30
(Pink Out Game)
Cross Country
Thus Oc 13 @ Meeks Park 4:30 PM