

# Heroin...from Page 1A

Each poster contained a personalized testimonial, such as, "My life is consumed with anger and resentment," and, "Faith, hope & love! Never give up!"

Speakers for the

evening ranged from those who had experienced firsthand the crushing stages of drug addiction, the hope of recovery and ultimately the joys of living drug-free lives, to friends and family members who have

looked on helplessly as loved ones deteriorated before their very eyes.

All who spoke did so bravely, defying the negative stigma associated with drug addiction, and instead attaching positive messages of hope and understanding that addiction doesn't have to live in the dark.

Ian Petkevich—one of the young men in whose memory the rally was dedicated—died of a drug overdose in June of 2015. Since then, his mother, Tonka Rennie, has become an advocate for the life-saving drug Naloxone, which can reverse the effects of a drug overdose within minutes of application.

Rennie is able to train others to use the drug, and she encourages both active drug users and the loved ones of active drug users to get their hands on one of the Naloxone kits.

"Naloxone is the drug that will bring your child or your loved one out of a heroin overdose," said Rennie, holding up a kit used to administer the drug. "If you find your loved one not breathing, in the process of dying of an overdose, this drug will save their life. And I wish to God I'd had this drug when my son was an avid user."

Those looking for more information about the Naloxone kits can contact Rennie via Facebook or at tonkarennie@yahoo.com.

Sales made sure to invite

as many of the local leaders and elected officials as possible in an effort to maximize the outreach potential of "Hope Against Heroin."

Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris, Union County Sheriff Mack Mason, Shawn Dyer with the Blairsville Police Department and Enotah Judicial Circuit District Attorney Jeff Langley all attended the rally.

Full Throttle Ministries cooked up some delicious barbecue for the event, and Bradley Grizzell provided live and pre-recorded musical accompaniment during the rally.

Debuting his Addicted Ministries, Cory Davis shared information about his new venture, and he led a small fellowship at the close of the meeting.

The North Enotah Drug Accountability Court held a graduation of five individuals



**More than 100 people from several nearby communities attended the Hope Against Heroin event at the Blairsville Civic Center**

who had recovered from drug addiction on the same day

as the "Hope Against Heroin Rally."

# Queen...from Page 1A

Peggy Deyton retired in March of 2015, leaving the position open for the most qualified candidate.

That was when Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris named her to the interim position, which came with another title—executive assistant to the commissioner.

As both county clerk and executive assistant, Queen stays busy.

She's responsible for maintaining Commissioner Paris' robust schedule, meeting with residents who walk in to the office, and answering hundreds of phone calls a month, usually dealing with questions and concerns from the public.

Plus, Queen still has her county clerk duties. She prepares agendas and meeting minutes for Union County Commission meetings and for Union County Alcohol

Board meetings, and must also handle right of way deeds, keep up with county records, and follow the strict records retention schedule.

All in all, a day in the life of Union County Clerk Jennifer Queen starts around 8 a.m. and ends sometime in the evening, give or take weekend work, though she only gets paid for a 40-hour workweek.

And the thing is, she honestly likes her job.

"Every day is different," said Queen of her position. "You never know who's going to walk in the door, what questions are going to be asked, where you're going to end up, what you're going to end up doing. I like the different people I get to meet, and I like the challenge. It's always something new, something unique—it's not the same old, same old every day."

Queen, a Union County

native, graduated from Union County High School in 2002, and went on to earn an associate's degree from Young Harris College. She said that she loves the area and enjoys being able to serve the people of her home county.

Commissioner Paris was more than happy to learn last month that Queen had received her official certification from the Carl Vinson Institute.

"She's really a dedicated employee," said Commissioner Paris. "She is really energetic and does a great job for the citizens, and I'm proud of her certification and of the service she provides to the citizens, as are all of our county employees."

"Peggy Deyton had been there a long time and did a great job, and so we were all concerned when Peggy retired that it would be hard to find somebody to replace her. But Jennifer has really stepped in and done a good job."

# Cummings...from Page 1A

As of right now, many customers have expressed frustration about a portion of the monthly bill labeled as a "customer service charge," even when the customer has not required at-home service.

"Basically, it's a fixed cost," said Cummings. "It's the cost of delivering electricity to a person's house, not the amount of electricity the individual uses, but what it costs the EMC to deliver the electricity to a home."

As for the fiber optic and broadband internet options available through the EMC, many residents who live on the outskirts of town have been faced with the inability to receive EMC internet access. With the age of technology, it can be difficult to stay informed and connected, especially for students who require such availability for schoolwork.

"There are places in our community that can't get good service," said Cummings. "I'm talking about from other providers too, not just us. So, we're trying to come up with ways that we can meet those needs so people aren't having to go without internet simply because of where they live."

Cummings and the board wish to see this become a thing of the past.

In an effort toward Cummings' primary focus for the upcoming year, transparency, the board will be developing a strategic plan that will provide direction for the next five to 10 years.

"If you don't have a plan in place, then you're just going to flounder about," said Cummings. "Our new manager is talking about a new work plan, beginning in the next year, to put in place that's a long-term work plan. We're all trying to consider everything electrical, substations and everything, so we can meet the growing need of the people who live here."

"We have to prepare for the future because people want to come here and they love living here."

Coinciding with this new strategic plan will be a consultative effort on media releases. According to Cummings, he wants to see more communication between the EMC and local media to provide more membership involvement within the company and promote customer knowledge.

"We think it's very important for the community to see what we're doing and what's going on out there," said Cummings. "We want to be able to ask the community for their input on things. We want to be able to give the membership a voice in what's

going on. We want to represent our members out there as best we can."

The newly elected board members and Cummings are more than ready to take on a new season at the EMC, where they hope to continue to provide the best customer and community care available. Cummings is positive about the upcoming year and hopes to represent his constituents as justly as possible.

"Myself and the other board members that we have, it doesn't matter who you talk about," said Cummings. "Whether it's Steven Phillips,

Roy Perren, Chris Logan, Charles Jenkins, Larry Williams, Ray Cook, Cory Payne, Gene Mason, it doesn't matter—they're all in it for one reason, to make the EMC a better place.

"They all want to make sure that the EMC is a place our public can trust to get the job done, and an organization that keeps the lights on for the rest of us—an organization that gives back to the community."

Owing to the new policy suggesting term limits for board presidents, former EMC Board President Steven Phillips was elected internally by the board to be the new vice president of the BRMEMC Board of Directors, after Cummings took over as board president.