

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Ballot initiatives aim to amend state constitution

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

The Official General Election Ballot for the state of Georgia features four proposed amendments to the Georgia Constitution.

Voters will be directly responsible for deciding whether or not these amendments pass or fail at the ballot box, meaning that voters will be deciding which, if any, amendments will make it to the state constitution.

Therefore, it is important that voters understand what each amendment means in order to make informed decisions about potentially changing the state constitution.

The four amendments were placed on the ballot by Georgia legislators with the

purpose of garnering support from Georgia voters.

With General Election early voting well underway and Election Day rapidly approaching, here's a look at each of the proposed constitutional amendments and what they actually mean.

Amendment 1
Ballot Title: "Provides greater flexibility and state accountability to fix failing schools through increasing community involvement."

Ballot Question: "Shall the Constitution of Georgia be amended to allow the state to intervene in chronically failing public schools in order to improve student performance?"

So, what does this actually mean?

Amendment 1 is asking voters whether or not they



Dr. Fred Rayfield

support the state government stepping in and taking over public schools deemed "chronically failing."

The amendment is based on Senate Bill 133, which

requires support from a majority of Georgia's voters in order to be enacted come Jan. 1, 2017.

If passed, the state will be able to take control of "chronically failing schools," including all funding for such schools, meaning federal, state and local tax dollars.

The governor would appoint a superintendent to "fix" the schools as the head of something called an "Opportunity School District," or OSD, a proposed district made up only of schools around the state that are considered to be chronically failing by the

Governor's Office of Student Achievement.

Such a superintendent would answer only to the governor, and would have authority over all personnel issues for those particular schools within the OSD, potentially making elected

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Early voting continues through Nov. 4

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

General Election early voting began last week, and by the end of the week, more than 2,600 people had turned up to cast their ballots.

Those are big numbers in Union County, and even larger early voting numbers are coming, as thousands more are

expected to vote early ahead of Election Day on Tuesday, Nov. 8.

Every weekday between now 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 within the Union County

Courthouse at 65 Courthouse St. in Blairsville, 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 Saturday, Oct. 29, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., for those who find themselves too busy to vote

See *Voting*, Page 2A

A look back at the Poteete brothers in arms

By Lily Avery
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

The Poteete family has inhabited the Dooly District of Union County since the early 1800s, supporting the community in any way possible and fighting for the freedoms of this great country.

Barrett Poteete taught school in 1820, and much later the Poteete family yet again by donating land to be used for Mt. Zion Church and Cemetery.

Four such Poteete men - Billy, Bobby, Wallace and Jimmy, all brothers - kept that legacy alive, serving in the U.S. Army and Air Force during the Berlin Crisis and Vietnam War, with all four serving at the same time at one point.

According to Wallace, it was almost a rite of passage, not only for the four brothers, but also for the young men of



Wallace Poteete served three tours in Vietnam as a helicopter pilot, and he even survived a crash landing during his service

the community as a whole. At the time, Union County had not been industrialized, leaving those who were not farmers with one

See *Poteete*, Page 3A



Here are three of the four Poteete brothers that served in the U.S. Army at the same time. L-R: Billy, Jimmy and Bobby. Billy served in Korea. Jimmy served in Berlin, Germany, and Vietnam. Bobby served four years in the U.S. Air Force, then five years in the Army, with overseas duty in the Kwajalein Marshall Islands and Germany

Canning plant celebrates volunteers



This delicious medley of potatoes, carrots, sausage, cabbage and chicken, known as "Hobo Lunch," warmed the bellies and hearts of those who attended the volunteer appreciation luncheon at the Union County Canning Plant on Thursday, Oct. 20

By Lily Avery
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

The Union County Canning Plant runs smoothly, like a well-oiled machine, thanks to the countless hours put in by volunteers on a weekly basis during open season.

To show these men and women just how much their efforts are appreciated, Union County Farmers Market Manager Mickey Cummings and Assistant Market Manager Kristy Peney held an appreciation luncheon on Thursday, Oct. 20.

See *Volunteers*, Page 6A

DDA to host trick-or-treating, movie night

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Looking to scare up something to do this Halloween?

Well, look no further - Hometown Halloween on the Square promises to be a candy-filled costume extravaganza, and will run from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 31, right on the Blairsville Square.

Forty-six local businesses had already signed up to participate in this year's Hometown Halloween as of press time this week, and they will soon be filling up the Blairsville Square in order to give out as much candy as humanly possible on Halloween night.

Of course, Halloween

is a two-fold event - there's the dress-up, then there's the candy. The two go hand in hand, and there will be plenty of candy handed out to creatively costumed children and their parents come Monday evening.

Guaranteeing that the event will provide frightfully good fun for the whole family is Darren Harper, program manager for the Blairsville Downtown Development Authority.

"This year, Walmart is going to be bringing their big inflatables to decorate the square. We'll have that," said Harper. "A lot of businesses dress up or have themes at their tables. Last year, Lake Nottely Marina had Pirates of the Caribbean."

See *Halloween*, Page 8A



Last year, Hometown Halloween on the Square brought out hundreds of parents and children dressed up as everything from superheroes to Little Red Riding Hood.

Woman dies in Murphy Highway crash

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Sharon Burdick of White County, formerly of Blairsville, died in an afternoon traffic accident on Thursday, Oct. 20.

Union County Deputy Coroner Jeff Fortenberry responded to the scene, and he confirmed that she had died.

Burdick, 72, pulled out of the 19th Hole Plaza onto Murphy Highway, in front of an 18-wheeler that was unable to stop in time before

See *Crash*, Page 6A



Sharon Burdick

UCSO teams up with neighboring law enforcement

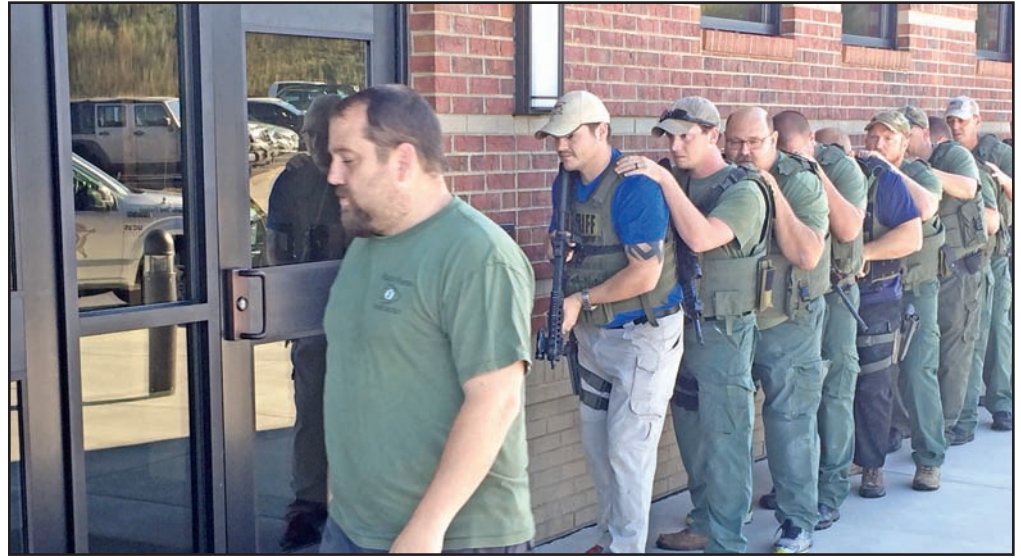
By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Last month, deputies with the Union County Sheriff's Office spent five days in a class called "Advanced SWAT."

Most of the training occurred at Woodruff Scout Camp in Blairsville, with boot camp-like conditions of exercise and teambuilding, and the last day of training featured several maneuvers simulating an active shooter scenario at the Union County Schools Fine Arts Center.

Valuable lessons learned and honed in the training included working as a team, as well as various shooting

See *UCSO*, Page 6A



Maj. Jonathan Roberts of the Cornelia Police Department recently led an "Advanced SWAT" training class in Union County. Pictured here, those in the class are getting ready to train inside the Union County Schools Fine Arts Center

July Term grand jury indictments continue

The following were indicted during the July Term 2016 of the Union County Grand Jury, which met in October for the second time:

Michael Andrew Moore, four counts possession of a controlled substance; two counts possession of marijuana less than an ounce; battery, Family Violence; two counts cruelty to children in the third degree; simple assault, Family Violence; driving on wrong side of roadway.

John Herbert Schweinhart, three counts terroristic threats.

James Anthony Morris, terroristic threats.

Jeffery Keneth Stiles, four counts; two counts theft by taking.

Donna Michelle Morrow, three counts burglary in the first degree; two counts theft by taking.

Christopher Dixon Redfern, burglary in the first degree.

Jason Shane Crenshaw, two counts possession of a controlled substance; operating a vehicle containing a secret compartment; driving while license suspended; driving on improper registration; operating a vehicle without insurance; improper lane change.

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Fri: Sunny Hi 74 Lo 47
Sat: Cloudy Hi 76 Lo 47

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Fright Night At The Fort
At the Old Fort Jorghum
Oct 29th & 31st 6-9:30 PM
Admission \$5.00 Children 5 & Under \$3.00

See page 1C

Dancing With the North Georgia STARS
Nov 5th

See page 8C

Union County Schools to host Veteran's Day Ceremony

See page 4B

Union County Panthers Football
Fri. Oct. 28 @ Fannin Co 7:30 PM

Cross Country
Thurs. Oct. 27 Region Meet @ Unicoi State Park - Helen
Girls 2 PM - Boys 2:45 PM