

# Blairsville Cruisers honor veterans with 'Salute to Veterans Car Show'

By Jarrett Whitener  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

The Blairsville Cruisers welcomed a large gathering of car enthusiasts to their Second Annual Salute to Veterans Car Show at the Union County Farmers Market on Saturday, Nov. 2.

As with all Blairsville Cruiser events, the show featured a wide variety of beautiful cars, from classic to muscle to modern sports – basically, something for every guest to admire.

Enthusiasts enjoy car shows because of all the vehicles, but that's not all that brings them out. They also love the sense of community

that manifests in Cruisers car shows.

And Saturday's affair was special for its emphasis on honoring veterans specifically, with participation by area Vietnam Veterans of America, Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Legion posts, plus other veterans' organizations of North Georgia and Western Carolina.

All proceeds from the Salute to Veterans Car Show Saturday went to local veterans' organizations.

Peggy Sampson attended the show with a car decorated with memorabilia of the USS Missouri, which she inherited from her family.

"This has been passed

down three generations," Sampson said of the memorabilia. "Now our son is a back-seater in an F-18 (combat jet). He's in Okinawa right now, but I don't know anything else because when they get dispatched, they can't tell us where or when they are going and what's going on."

"This is three generations of family right here, and I wanted to do this because this is a veterans car show, and we love our veterans."

Cruisers gave out many awards that day, including a Best in Show Award to the car that the audience and judges admired the most. This award went to Ron Strickland of Blairsville for his 1963-1/2 Ford Galaxie 500 XL.

"I've been using this car for shows for about eight years,

and I've won a few trophies with it," Strickland said. "My old car has also done real good, and I use them both."

"I enjoy the car show and its recognition for working hard and all the people that helped me along the way with the car. I have the biggest time with the people, though."

"I met this boy this morning and flagged him down to talk about his car, and we had a great conversation that could last all day. That's the best thing to get out of it, and I've made a lot of great friends while building this car."

"That's the biggest part of it. Of course, I love the shows and appreciate the recognition, but we do it for the love of the cars and friendships we make out of it."

At the end of the show,



David Jarrard won the big car raffle at the Blairsville Cruisers' Salute to Veterans Car Show over the weekend, seen here with Lisa Abercrombie.

Photo by Jarrett Whitener

the Cruisers held the big fundraising raffle for the 2008 Ford Mustang Convertible, and David Jarrard of White County had the winning ticket. Jarrard was rendered nearly speechless when they drew his number.

"I can't believe I just won that car," Jarrard said. "I just can't believe it, and I'm glad that I bought the tickets."

A live auction also took place during the event using items donated by area busi-

nesses and organizations to help the show raise money for the Cruisers' regular charitable giving.

The Blairsville Cruisers organization puts on car shows to entertain people who love cars so that they can raise money for the different organizations they support, which include veterans' organizations, the school system, annual Christmas shopping for local kids and more.



Peggy Sampson inherited this USS Missouri memorabilia from her family. Also on display with her Dodge Challenger is a photo of her son, who is currently serving in the military.

Photo by Jarrett Whitener



Ron Strickland of Blairsville won Best in Show with his 1963 1/2 Ford Galaxie at the car show benefiting veterans on Nov. 2.

Photo by Jarrett Whitener

## State chamber president offers economic guidance in Power Lunch

By Mark Smith  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

The Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce welcomed Georgia Chamber President Chris Clark to offer a local and state economic outlook during the 2019 Power Lunch at the Community Center on Oct. 23.

"Georgia is going through an extraordinarily dramatic growth period," Clark said. "Right now, we're the eighth largest state in the United States. In the next 10 years, we'll be the fifth in population."

Given such rapid growth expectations, Clark said it was important to keep a historical perspective when attempting to forecast what future economies will look like at the local, state and national levels.

"The first industrial revolution took 100 years," Clark said. "So, in a hundred years, businesses changed, education changed to provide a workforce for those folks, government changed to tax those organizations."

"The next industrial revolution took 50 years. It was still enough time to change. The Information Revolution took about 30 years. We're about catching up with that right now. The pace of change is so quick now."

"There are almost a dozen different economic revolutions happening in the world as we speak, and it doesn't take 30 years, doesn't take 40 years – it only takes a year."

Clark listed several economic revolutions taking place in Georgia today, including the agriculture and eco economy,

the gig economy, the innovation economy with cutting edge technology, the data security economy and the digital content economy, among others.

"All of those things taken together is changing Georgia's economy. It's changing Georgia's government, our rules and regs, how we tax," Clark said, adding that with this changing economy comes plenty of risk and opportunity.

And according to Clark, it's not about "location, location, location" anymore, but "talent, talent, talent," which by 2025 will require a majority of job applicants to have some form of college education.

"If you've got a kid or grandkid that's under 18 years old, by the time they graduate from college or technical college, 65% of the jobs that they will apply for don't even exist today," Clark said.

As an example, Clark said the position of drone delivery pilot was an occupation that didn't exist five or six years ago, but that it is now "one of the highest in demand jobs in the world."

Switching gears slightly, Clark said people should be aware that almost 60% of jobs today are at risk of being taken over by automation.

"Think about this for a minute," Clark said. "We're training kids in our schools for jobs that are open today but won't exist by the time they graduate and preparing them for jobs that we don't even know what they are."

The answer to the potential problem of automation, Clark said, is adaptability of education systems to change with the marketplace, lest they

risk leaving future generations behind.

"In America 10 years ago, 60% of all families were middle class," Clark said. "Today, it's 50%. We're shrinking that middle class, and we're actually growing our poverty numbers."

"We're pricing people out of houses, and we're not providing them with the network or resources to be successful. That's one of your biggest problems here, is affordable housing. I promise you, everywhere I go in Georgia, that's our biggest issue."

"So, there's opportunities there, but we have to retrain and rethink differently about the workforce."

Keeping all that in mind, Clark said Union County should focus on a select few things as it makes its way into an uncertain future filled with risk and opportunity alike.

For starters, it should maintain political capital, with one way of doing that being ample participation in the upcoming census to ensure the area and state are apportioned proper congressional representation.

Community stakeholders can also make sure they're growing small businesses and providing capital for investment, and they can scrutinize the education programs in the schools and colleges and consider the impacts of a changing world, then adapt.

Local entities can foster the latest internet connectivity



Georgia Chamber President Chris Clark

throughout the area, all while taking care to protect the natural resources that are such a big asset to the area.

Affordable housing should be a goal for local leaders and developers moving forward, Clark said, before affirming that the community as a whole can better recruit talent to the area by offering greater incentives for people to make their homes here.

Clark also recommended that established businessowners prioritize continuing education in the workplace, especially given the fast pace of changing technologies and market preferences of today and tomorrow.

The annual Power Lunch event was sponsored by Union General Hospital and catered by The View Grill.

### UNION COUNTY DOCUMENT DESTRUCTION & ELECTRONIC RECYCLING:

November 9, from 10:00 until 12:00

(if raining, event will be rescheduled)

Keep Union County Beautiful will hold this event in the parking lot of North Georgia Technical College located at 121 Meeks Avenue, Blairsville, GA 30512. A reminder: a volunteer donation of \$5.00 per car will be requested with all funds going to the Mountain Animal Shelter. They will have their volunteer there to collect the donation. Over the last four years we have been able to supply them with close to \$4,000.00 to support animals until they find their "forever" homes. We appreciate our partnership with the Mountain Shelter!

At this event we WILL take televisions for a \$20.00 fee and old CRT monitors will cost \$10. This is what it costs to recycle TV's and monitors due to the high amounts of mercury in the glass.

#### Items ACCEPTED Free of Charge

- |                            |                         |               |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| Desktops                   | CD-ROMS                 | Printers      |
| Laptops                    | Floppy Drives           | Fax Machines  |
| Servers                    | Circuit Boards          | Copiers       |
| Mainframes                 | Power Supplies          | Scanners      |
| Network Hubs               | Hard Drives             | Typewriters   |
| Network Switches           | UPS and UPS Batteries   | Modems        |
| Cell Phones                | Ni-MH/Ni-CAD Batteries  | Stereos       |
| Desktop Phones and Systems | Lithium Batteries       | VCR           |
| Keyboards/Mice             | Blu-Ray Players         | Radios        |
| Check Processing           | Cable/Wire              | DVD-Players   |
| Gaming Consoles            | Gaming Controllers      | CD-Players    |
| LCD Monitors               | Toner/Inkjet Cartridges | Dock Stations |

NOTE: To help us make your drive through quick so you can enjoy your weekend, please remove all cabling from your devices and place them in a bag.

#### Items NOT ACCEPTED

- |                           |                      |               |
|---------------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| Projection/Console TV's   | Car Batteries        | Tires         |
| Washer/Dryers             | Toaster Ovens        | Freezers      |
| Vacuum Cleaner            | De-Humidifiers       | Blenders      |
| Speakers (Wooden)         | Gas Powered Tools    | Mixers        |
| Gas Grill Tanks           | Household Trash      | Ovens         |
| Battery Powered Tools     | Microwave Ovens      | Hair Dryers   |
| Liquid Containing Devices | Radioactive Material | Ceiling Fans  |
| Alkaline Batteries        | Humidifiers          | Refrigerators |

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For information please call 706-318-5448

## Hometown Halloween...from Page 1A



The Union County Schools Police Department was just one of dozens of local groups handing out candy to youngsters outside the Old Union County Courthouse on Saturday.

Photo by Jarrett Whitener

a statue. Also on Nov. 2, the First Baptist Church held its Fall Festival just down the street from the square.

"This is something we do in conjunction with the city to provide a safe and fun opportunity for Halloween," Associate Pastor Derrick Hartley said. "What we have here are games and some trunks for trunk or treat."

house, hayrides, Kona Ice is here, and we have giveaway hotdogs and popcorn and stuff. It's just something we do to provide a great family time."

With First Baptist being so near the square, many local trick-or-treaters attended both events over a period of two hours Saturday evening.

Now that the Halloween season is officially over, residents can begin to focus on the next big holidays that are

coming up, which will bring with them more fun events throughout the community.

Looking ahead, the annual Christmas on the Square and Parade will return on Saturday, Dec. 7, with festivities beginning at 10 a.m. and a 6 p.m. parade.

For more information on upcoming events, check out the "Visit Downtown Blairsville" Facebook page.