

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

www.nganews.com

Legal Organ of Union County

Your Hometown Newspaper Since 1909

February 25, 2015

NWS: Snow through Thursday

Union County ready for another round with Mother Nature

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

Another round of Mother Nature's wrath is expected this week.

The National Weather Service is calling for snow through Thursday, with the precipitation turning to rain later in the week.

It's hard news for public safety workers considering what they had to deal with last week. Union County Road Department workers worked around the clock with help from the Georgia Department of Transportation to keep local roads safe.

The roads called for about an inch of snow for late Monday and a half-inch for Tuesday.

Up to three inches of snow is projected for Wednesday. Snow is the call for Thursday as well with the snow turning to rain in the afternoon, according to the weather service.

"Snow, we can deal with," Union County Fire Chief/Deputy EMA Director



Union County Fire Chief/Deputy EMA Director David Dyer sits through a weather briefing on Monday. Photo/Charles Duncan

David Dyer said. "Ice is a big problem, and it's a different ballgame. We were prepared for last week, ice accumulation, road conditions and power outages."

"The brutal temperatures are brutal to prepare for as well," Chief Dyer said. "If your power is out and it's 40 degrees, it's going to be cold. If your power is out and it's 5 degrees that is a serious

problem, and it's a different ballgame. We were prepared for last week, ice accumulation, road conditions and power outages."
Chief Dyer said the weather models keep changing, so, he's not sure what to expect.
"Weather is a moving target."
See Weather, Page 3

Fire claims Union home on Saturday

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

A Union County family was displaced early Saturday as a raging fire swept through their home on Woodstove Drive, Union County Fire Chief David Dyer said.

The fire call came at 7:30 a.m. Saturday with snow on the ground and icy roads and frigid temperatures making the situation even worse. The home was on a narrow roadway, with no fire hydrants in the area.

"Reports came in that the home was full of smoke and flames," Chief Dyer said.

UCFD rolled into action as Chief Dyer summoned tankers from Stations 1, 2, 3, and 4 to help battle the blazes.

"Firefighters arrived to find the home 40-50 percent involved with fire," Chief Dyer said. "A quick attack stopped the progress of the fire, but the home suffered considerable structure damage and major interior damage."

See Blaze, Page 3



Chambliss delivers Miller Lecture at YHC

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Young Harris - Retired U.S. Sen. Saxby Chambliss delivered the 2014-2015 Miller Lecture, now in its 40th year, in the Suber Banquet Hall of Young Harris College on Thursday, Feb. 19.

The former senator's lecture served as a retrospective on his political career, with an eye toward the future.

Sen. Chambliss retired from office earlier this year on Jan. 3, and has since joined a law practice in Atlanta.

During his last four years in the U.S. Senate, Sen. Chambliss served as the top Republican member of the Senate Intelligence Committee.

While in office, Sen. Chambliss enjoyed a reputation as a conservative willing to embrace bipartisan relationships.

"We have a 60-vote filibuster rule on the Senate side, which means that you have to have 60 votes in order to go on to a bill, before you



YHC President Cathy Cox, retired U.S. Sen. Saxby Chambliss and retired U.S. Sen. and former Gov. Zell Miller at Young Harris College last week. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

can even debate it," said Sen. Chambliss. "Then, you have to have 60 votes to pass any amendment. And then, you have to have 60 votes to get off the bill, to ultimately vote on it as to whether it's going to pass or not."
And because of the need for those 60 votes, Sen. Chambliss said that, between Republicans and Democrats in the Senate, "you have more camaraderie, you have more

working together to try to achieve that middle ground that's going to generate votes from both Republicans and Democrats."
See Lecture, Page 2

Make up days for Union County Schools on hold

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

Union County Schools will take a wait and see approach before scheduling make up days lost to inclement weather.

Mother Nature kept students out of the classroom for much of last week.

With the National Weather Service calling for snow throughout much of this week, Dr. Jeremy Williams said the school system will wait and see how many make up days will be necessary.

"Whatever decision we make, I don't think we'll touch the Spring Break Days," Dr. Williams said. "It's one of those scenarios where we have to see what the big picture is."

"Last year we extended the day a bit," he said. "This year, we want to talk with teachers, parents and students to see what the best situation is before making a decision."

The National Weather Service is forecasting a serious threat to school for Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, calling for snow each day.

Dr. Williams is taking part in countywide weather briefings at the Union County Emergency Operations Center



Dr. Jeremy Williams

at Union County Fire Station 1 on Shoe County Road.

Dr. Williams said he's ready for spring, and so are the students.

"I really don't think the students are excited about the snow days because it means the school year will be a bit longer in most cases," Dr. Williams said.

"Everyone wants to see an occasional snow day, but the thought of missing an entire week just isn't appealing to teachers, students or administrators," Dr. Williams said.

It could be a couple of weeks before make up days are decided.

A weather week to remember

Valve gives way and Union County Courthouse floods

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

Union County dodged a weather bullet last week.

Yes, the temperatures didn't get in the single digits, and yes, there was frozen precipitation. However, the ice on power lines and trees didn't materialize, and the county suffered only sporadic power outages.

The event was nothing compared to the happenings in Lumpkin, Dawson, White, Hall and Habersham counties.

Union County Fire Chief/Deputy EMA Director David Dyer said the county was blessed to come out of last week's weather system virtually unscathed. Regardless, Union County public servants were working around the clock bracing for the worst, Chief Dyer said.

"It has been busy," he said. "We had more weather briefings than I can remember. We were prepared, but we were very lucky. Our



Snow covered Union County on Saturday morning. It was a fitting end to a frozen week. Photo/Charles Duncan

neighboring counties got hit pretty hard with the ice, power outages, and wrecks.

"We monitored the situation the entire time and got ready for power outages," Chief Dyer said. "The Road Department was always out taking care of the roads and bridges. It was a stressful time trying to stay prepared." Chief Dyer praised the Road Department for keeping road conditions passable during some difficult times.

"The county road crews went with us and salted roads anywhere we needed them treated," Chief Dyer said. "Luckily, we only had one structure fire. There were some rough conditions, but it didn't slow us down. We had good response times. There

wasn't anywhere that we couldn't get to."

From the onset, the Fire Department had all of its four-wheel drive vehicles in service, fully equipped and ready to go, Chief Dyer said.

"We had chains on most of our fire trucks," Chief Dyer said.

Chief Dyer said the weather didn't slow down the number of calls that required an immediate response.

"We had a heavy load of calls," he said. "We had a half-dozen or more extra events, accidents that we responded to that the snow contributed to. There were no major accidents, no major fires with the exception of Saturday. We were very lucky to have had no major incidents."

Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris said he couldn't be more proud of the work by county workers, firefighters and the Union County Sheriff's Office.

See Weary, Page 3

Two charged in meth bust

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

A Union County couple are behind bars following an extensive investigation by the Union County Sheriff's Narcotic Squad, Sheriff Mack Mason said.

The Narcotics Squad took Robert Hughes, 48, and his wife JoAnne Hughes, 52, into custody following three undercover buys, Sheriff Mason said.

Following their arrests for three counts each of possession of a controlled substance, the Sheriff's Office Criminal Investigations Division sought and received search warrants to search the couple's home, Sheriff Mason said.

The arrests were made Thursday following a lengthy investigation, Sheriff Mason said.

Investigators recovered numerous weapons, \$7,000 in cash and 75 grams of meth-



JoAnne Hughes



Robert Hughes

See Bust, Page 2

Vol. 106 No. 9
18 Pages
Weather
Thurs: Sunny Hi 21 Lo 6
Fri: Snow Hi 36 Lo 21
Sat: Rain Hi 41 Lo 35

Inside
Arrests 8
Church 9
Classifieds 15
Opinion 4
Legals 17
Obits 11
Sports 12

Senator Gooch wants YOUR input, because your opinion MATTERS!

See page 7

Meeting Thursday Feb. 26th!

See page 8

A request from your local Lions... Check the page below for all the details!

See page 6

UCHS Baseball
Feb 24 vs. Towns 5 PM
Feb 25 @ Lumpkin 5:30 PM
Sat Feb 28 vs. Gilmer 11AM
Sat Feb 20 vs. Fannin 5 PM
UCHS Soccer
Feb 24 @ Rabun 5 & 7 PM
Feb 25 @ Fannin 5 & 6:30 PM