

Rescue...from Page 1A

by Station 5 Rescue. They took a boat out to the dock to get the man and wife. They had to bust through the ice to get there and used a rope to pull the boat back to shore. It could have been a very tragic incident and they were very lucky. We had a fire call at the same time this incident was unfolding."

Search and Rescue also had come to the aid of two hikers last week in separate

incidents, Chief Dyer said.

"We had two rescues on the Appalachian Trail during the snow," he said. "We had a 21-year-old who was at a Trail shelter. We had to get him off the AT because he was close to hypothermia. It took a while to get to him and get him out."

"A second hiker was having medical issues that were compounded by the cold. He walked out to a cabin be-

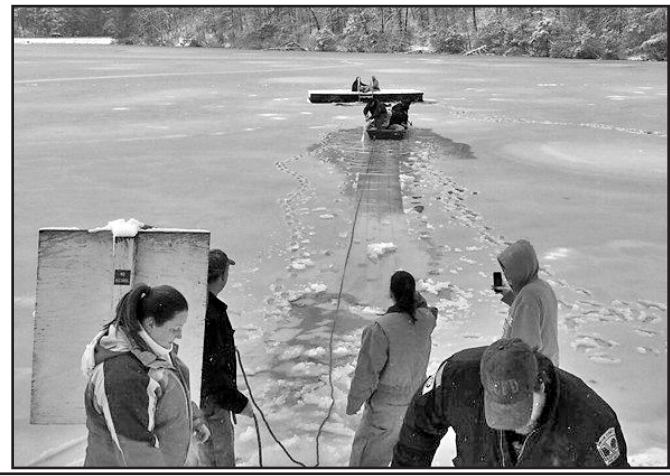
fore we could get to him. He was picked up by Search and Rescue," Chief Dyer said.

Chief Dyer said that the most recent round of snow and ice was a challenge.

"But we spent a great deal of time preparing and planning. We were ready. We had the operations center open all week monitoring the situation and coordinating," Chief Dyer said. "We had only one major fire and several minor

accidents during the course of the winter weather events. The road department did an excellent job at clearing the road. They had some help and I think that is important to report.

"I am very proud of our department, and I am proud of their hard work and dedication and the work done in tandem with other public safety workers. All were tired by the end of the week and it took a while to rest and recover."



Weather...from Page 1A

careful, and hopefully we'll get through this next round, should it happen."

Commissioner Paris said the recent weather events have impacted local businesses because people just couldn't get out to do business.

"It's easy to tell everybody to stay at home. And if they're staying at home, they're not going to the grocery store, they're not going to restaurants or the gas stations," Commissioner Paris said. "Events like these have an impact on your economy."

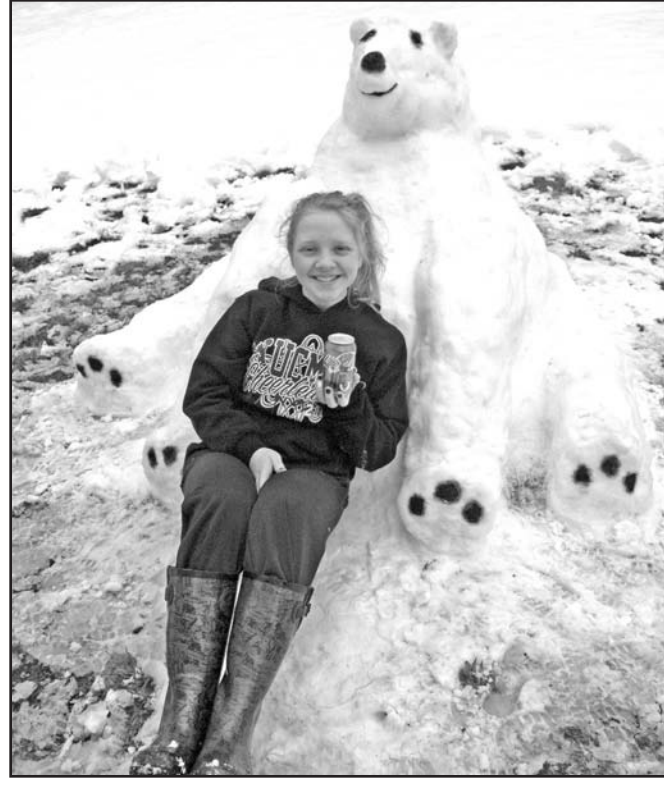
"We're ready for some warm weather so people can get back into their routines," Commissioner Paris said. "Part of that routine is having the ability to get out, shop, and do business as usual."

Depending on the location within the county, the typical snow count in terms of inches ranged in the 5 to 6 inches in depth.

"The night of the big snow storm (Wednesday into Thursday) I drove 125 miles," Commissioner Paris said. "I drove all night to get a personal look at the roads. I was looking to determine if there was somewhere that we needed to be working on. We were worried about the depth of the snow, because it was such a wet, heavy snow we were concerned about the power lines."

"We actually dodged another weather bullet," he said. "The snow stopped at the right time, or we could have been facing some major power outages."

The cost of the weather events has yet to be deter-



Left, a snow sculpture by Katie Dixon and her mom, on the right, a snowman submitted by Michel Briggs



mined, Commissioner Paris said.

The county contracted with seven motor graders to keep the snow off the roadways at a cost of \$10,000. As for the manpower costs, he'll know that figure soon.

Even with Gov. Nathan Deal's declaration of a State of Emergency, the county won't see much of a return from the federal or state governments.

"The good news is we're still within budget," Commissioner Paris said. "We try to build these type of events into the budget based on the previous year's totals. We just plan for these types of events. We were prepared for some bad

weather budget-wise."

One storm story that will stick in Commissioner Paris' mind was a 911 call by a 90-year-old resident, who had no heat for three days. The reason: she lived on the north side of the mountain and the propane truck couldn't get to her home because the snow had not yet begun to melt.

"The call came in on Saturday, when you think pretty much everything is clear," Commissioner Paris said. "There was a 90-year-old lady in her house who had been without heat for three days. The head of our Road Department and a mechanic had both gone up there. I

went up there thinking that it couldn't be that bad in terms of road conditions.

"I got up there, it was on the north side of a mountain, it was just as bad or worse than it was right after the snow," Commissioner Paris said. "There was no way the gas truck could get up there."

"We worked for two hours solid spreading gravel just so we could get our vehicle up there," he said. "Later, we were able to get the propane vehicle up there. It was 47 degrees in the lady's home and had been that way for three days."

"I asked her why she waited so long to call, and she

said she knew that everyone was busy and she didn't want to bother anyone," Commissioner Paris said. "We made sure we took care of her, and we'll be looking out for her in the future."

Not everyone was upset by the snow. Many took advantage of the weather event to build snowmen, and snow

sculptures. Some used the opportunity to break out their sleds.

The Tanner Family took first place in the Third Annual Blairsville Snowman Contest. The Tanner Family was one of 186 entrants to the contest, with more than 12,500 voters from across the United States and Canada.

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