

# North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

www.nganews.com

Legal Organ of Union County

Your Hometown Newspaper Since 1909

April 1, 2015

## Easter Egg Hunt: Cold weather, no problem

By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Hundreds of children and parents braved the cold weather on Saturday for the annual Community Easter Egg Hunt at Meeks Park.

The crowd was down to nearly a third of its usual size, according to Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris, due in large part to the wind chill in the mid-20s.

Still, the children would not be deterred as they raced to collect the 5,000 colored plastic eggs containing candy and toys.

One parent summed up the festivities as being "cold but fun," and the smiling faces of children who were wrapped in multiple layers of clothing and blankets toting overflowing Easter baskets served to reinforce that assessment.

"The weather does play a part," said Union County Recreation Department Director Larry Conley. "If it's pretty, we really pack the place. We get a lot of people from North Carolina, Fannin County. It draws from all surrounding areas, not just Union County. Of course, our main goal is for the Union County



See Egg Hunt, Page 2A

## Mountain Dawg 5K runners survive the cold

By Mason Mitcham  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

On Saturday, the Community Council of the Georgia Mountain Research and Education Center hosted the first Mountain Dawg 5K Run at Meeks Park in Blairsville.

The Council provides monthly environmental education programs for children and adults in Fannin, Union and Towns counties of Georgia and Cherokee and Clay counties in North Carolina.

There was a good turnout for the 5K, with more than 50 people running or walking.

Taking first place was Union County High School 14-year-old freshman Evan Browning with a time of 21:37.

Rebecah Rush, 29, of Morganton, finished second with a time of 22:57.

Steve Jarrard, 42, of Blairsville, finished third with a time of 23:47.

"My mom signed me up," said Evan Browning.

Freya Browning, Evan's mother, also volunteers for the Community Council.

"He's a running fool."

See 5K, Page 3A



## Havener hikes for Parkinson's awareness

By Charles Duncan  
North Georgia News  
editor@nganews.com

It's always been Don Havener's dream to hike the Appalachian Trail.

He's finally living that dream, but not for just the enjoyment or the thrill. He began his trek on March 23, his 76th birthday to honor his brother Bob who has Parkinson's Disease.

He began his hike at Springer Mountain, near Amicalola Falls, and on Thursday last week, he was treated with a breakfast at The Griddle Café in Blairsville, along with his wife Kathie.

It's Don Havener's goal to raise \$100 per mile of the more than 2,181-mile trek along the AT.

"It's my goal to try and raise \$100 per mile for the Ohio Parkinson Foundation, an or-



Cody, Don, Karen and Kathie after Don and Kathie Havener were treated to breakfast at The Griddle Cafe.

ganization that has been such a blessing to my brother during his five-year struggle with the disease," he said.

Don and Kathie are from Hiram, Ohio, and they've had quite an adventure in the early days of their AT experience.

They were grateful to Karen Brendle, owner of The

Griddle Café, who provided them with a free breakfast as her way of supporting their cause.

Don was starved and wasted no time eating The Griddle Café's delicious Gravy and biscuits, bacon, two eggs and drinking a whole lot of coffee.

"I started getting ready for this hike last year," Don Ha-

venner said. "My brother has Parkinson's and I decided I should try to do something to help him."

Don Havener said that the Parkinson's Support Foundation has been quite a help to his brother Bob, and he wanted

See Hike, Page 2A

## April is Parkinson's Awareness Month

North Georgia News  
News Special

No one knows Parkinson's Disease better than Suches' Chuck Esposito.

Esposito was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease in 2006, and in 2009, he joined the Blairsville-area Parkinson's Disease Support group. He has been the elected leader of that group since December 2011.

Esposito was on hand March 19, when Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris introduced a proclamation declaring April as Parkinson's Awareness Month in Union County.

"On behalf of the Blairsville Area Parkinson's Disease Support Group, I'd like to begin by expressing our appreciation to Lamar for recognizing the importance of getting the word out about April is Parkinson's Disease Awareness Month,"



Chuck Esposito

Esposito said. "Parkinson's Disease awareness is important to everyone here, for a number of reasons, not the least of which is, that one or more of you in this room, might already have it, and not know it," Esposito said. "We do know that since I stood here a year ago, 55,000

See Parkinson's, Page 2A

## Corps of Engineers, EPD cleared for city off ramp

By Charles Duncan  
North Georgia News  
editor@nganews.com

The city of Blairsville has cleared hurdles from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Georgia Environmental Protection Division and will soon seek construction bids for an exit ramp coming into the city from Georgia 515, Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley said.

"It's done," Mayor Conley, said of the mitigation process with Corps of Engineers, and the environmental study with EPD. "The engineer is



working on the design plans as we speak, and hopefully we'll be able to put something out to bid by the end of April."

The new road will aid considerably in the Downtown Development Authority's efforts to develop the 6.4-acre Haralson property behind City Hall, Mayor Conley said.

Once the project is put out for bid, the process lasts 30 days, Mayor Conley said.

"We hope to be in the construction phase no later than the first of July," Mayor Conley said.

The existing off ramp will continue to exist until the road is built, with the new road coming into the city opposite Young Harris Street, Mayor Conley said.

The existing off ramp, once closed, will be given to the city to be used for parking, Mayor Conley said.

Mayor Conley said the project, once complete, will bring about a huge boon to the city.

"It's the No. 1 priority for the city," Mayor Conley said. "It's taken us a long time to get to this point, basically because of the Corps of Engineers."

"It will open the city up to Georgia 515, and we'll be able to put our development

See Haralson, Page 2A

## Reece Center highlights ARC's 50th anniversary



The Byron Herbert Reece Heritage Center opens on Thursday. The Center has benefited from \$100,000 in funding from the Appalachian Regional Commission. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

North Georgia News  
News Special

Since 1966, Blairsville and Union County have benefited from investments by the Appalachian Regional Commission.

Blairsville water line extension, Union County Cannery Building, and work on the Byron Herbert Reece Farm and Heritage Center are just a few of the projects the ARC has had a direct hand in bringing to the community in the past few years.

The ARC was established by Congress in 1965 as a regional economic development agency that represents a partnership of federal, state, and local governments.

Each year ARC provides

funding for several hundred projects in the Appalachian Region, in areas such as business development, education and job training, telecommunications, infrastructure, community development, housing, and transportation.

The agency's 420-county territory includes 25 million residents and pieces of 12 states stretching from New York to Mississippi.

That funding includes nearly \$6 million in the past five years, said Heather Feldman, Georgia Mountain Regional Commission's economic development director.

She cited other numbers, including 1,089 jobs created and another 47.9 million

See ARC, Page 2A

## Super Chef Showdown a huge success for Hope House

The Hope House Super Chef Showdown 2015 was a superb success.

More than 200 people gathered at First United Methodist Church on Saturday, March 14th to enjoy good food, listen to good music and support a good cause.

This was the fourth year that Hope House has held the Super Chef Showdown.

The Showdown is not your average chili cook-off event. Rather, the chefs prepare any dish of their choosing and serve samples to the public.

This year's Showdown had 16 community leaders who became chefs for the day. Dishes included Mexican



chickpea chocolate brownies, stuffed mushrooms, buffalo chicken dip, oreo truffles, blackberry cobbler, and smoked Boston butt just to

name a few.

The public paid one admission fee and then was welcomed to try as many of the chefs' dishes as they liked.

They also voted for their favorite dish or chef.

Top winners in this year's event went John Barber, of St. Clare's Episcopal Church, first place; second place went to Mark and Shannon Burgess of First United Methodist Church; third place went to the Rev. Roy Watkins of Coosa United Methodist Church.

Two extra awards were also given out.

The first was the "Most Likely to Cause Heartburn" Award. This award went to Dave Wesche of All Saints Lutheran Church, with his buffalo chicken dip.

The second award was

See Showdown, Page 2A

Vol. 106 No. 14  
2 Sections, 24 Pages

Arrests 8A  
Church 10A  
Classifieds 2B  
Opinion 4A  
Legals 5B  
Obits 12A  
Sports 14A

Weather  
Thurs: Rain Hi 63 Lo 55  
Fri: Rain Hi 73 Lo 53  
Sat: Clouds Hi 61 Lo 35

8 0 4 8 7 9 1 9 3 1 4 2

RELAY FOR LIFE  
American Cancer Society

Yard Sale  
For more information  
See page 7A

Byron Herbert  
Reece Farm and  
Heritage Center  
opens April 2nd  
See page 8A

Derrick Whittle  
Memorial  
Blood Drive  
Union Countyhouse  
April 9th  
See page 6A

UCHS Baseball  
Mar 31 vs. Riverside 5 PM  
Apr 3 @ Greene Co (DH) 5 PM  
UCHS Soccer  
Mar 31 vs. Gilmer Boys 5 PM  
Apr 2 vs. Lumpkin 5:30 & 7:30  
UCHS Golf  
Apr 2 vs. Rabun @ Old Union 4 PM