

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Scottish Festival, Highland Games return

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Dust off your kilt, tune up the bagpipes, and if you dare, begin stuffing the haggis because this weekend, Union County becomes Union Shire and Lake Nottely shall be referred to as Loch Nottely.

Beginning Friday at 6 p.m. and running through Sunday afternoon, Blairsville-Union County will host one of the largest family reunions in the state when the 12th Annual Blairsville Scottish Festival and Highland Games arrive.

Some think the festival is only for those with Scottish ancestry, and it's true. However there is no need to worry, everyone in attendance this year will be an honorary Highlander.



In a 2009, U.S. Community Census, almost 28 million Americans identified themselves as Scottish. A few of those 28 million might not be Scottish, but you can't blame them for trying to be one.

"You don't have to be

Scottish to enjoy this," Lynn Varian said. "It's very fun and educational for children. They will be able to get close to a falcon or a hawk, they get to do the games like the big athletes, but on a smaller scale."

On Friday, the festivities kickoff on the town square at

the Seasons Inn Plaza. Admission is free and there will be plenty of good food from the participating restaurants located around the Downtown Square.

From 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. the Ceilidh will also feature games for all ages, demonstrations, along with live music and comedy inside Blairsville's Historic Courthouse. The Blarney Girls, Colin Grant-Adams, Raven and Red, Scottish comedian Bob Valentine and others will perform.

"I can't thank Chris and Colleen Urbaniuk (the owners of the Seasons Inn Plaza) enough for all of their help with the Ceilidh on the square," Varian said.

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City holds first reading for proposed City Charter

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Mayor Jim Conley and the Blairsville City Council met for their regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, June 2, at City Hall.

In the meeting, Mayor Conley held the first reading to adopt Blairsville's City Charter, which was recently completed by Hulsey, Oliver, & Mahar, LLP, a law firm specializing in city charters.

City Council had previously determined that it would be "in the best interest of the residents of the City of Blairsville that the City Charter be updated and modernized," read Mayor Conley in the resolution to adopt the Charter



Betty Easter

during the first reading.

"The old charter was done in 1984, so it was time to get us in the 21st century," said Mayor Conley. "Our charter didn't really give the Council

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All roads lead to Farmers Market

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

As the calendar turns to June, school is out and the unforgiving Georgia heat is on its way, but after seven months of hibernation, the Union County Farmers Market didn't miss a beat in last Saturday's grand opening at 7 a.m.

The Market had a little something for everyone. If you came with \$5 to spend or \$500, chances are, you would not go home disappointed.

"Today has been a really good start for us and I think this summer is going to be bigger than last year," said Farmers Market Manager Mickey Cummings. "At 7 this morning it was a little slow but around 9 a.m. is when it really started picking up."

"We've had a really big day today, and we're covered



up down there," said Cummings as he pointed to the parking areas that were still three-quarters full at 15 minutes to closing.

As you entered the Market from either side and began browsing, one could quickly notice the available variety, not

only in the arts and crafts, but in the food as well.

When it comes to selling fruits and vegetables, that's one area you can't go wrong. By the time noon rolled around - one hour until closing, many vendors were sold out or on the

brink of selling out.

One vendor who nearly sold out of goods was Blairsville's 7M Family Farms, a family-run, greenhouse vegetable farming business.

"It's been a very busy day and tomatoes have been the big seller," said Latrece Mills, who was getting set up at the Market around 5:30 a.m. "We canned our first pickles yesterday and they're selling pretty well and now all we have left is a few peaches and melons."

Not all vendors at the Market were selling goods; some were raising money to go for a cause that they feel passionately about.

The Tri-State Native American Initiative (TSNAI) was at the Market to raise money to bring each of the

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Locals give historic Blairsville Cemetery a bit of a facelift

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Volunteers from Boy Scouts of America Troop 101, civic leaders, members of the community and even detainees from Union County Jail spent Saturday, June 6, restoring headstones, as the cleanup of the Old Blairsville Cemetery finally got underway.

Blake Holman, a 15-year-old Union County High School student, orchestrated the cleanup in a joint effort with Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris as his Eagle Scout Service Project.

His project was supposed to take place last fall,



Blake Holman

twice, but the previous cleanup dates occurred on days that saw temperatures dip below freezing.

"This is not only very

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Station 10 serves up sizzling burgers and dogs

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

Hotdogs and hamburgers were in ample supply at the Annual Open House for Fire Station 10 on Jones Road on Saturday.

Station 10 Lt. Alan Foster said that 150 hamburgers and 150 hotdogs were fired up on Fire Station 10's grill. The volunteers at Station 10 also were serving up baked beans, slaw, sliced and diced onions, chips - wavy or original Lays, as well as a variety of cakes for dessert. Also, there was an ample supply of soft drinks and bottled water to be had.

The event is part of an annual opportunity to come inside the fire station, get a good look at the equipment and the people that operate it, and it's also a chance for volunteers to collect donations



for future needs.

"We had a good turnout," said Lt. Foster. "This is an opportunity for us to give back to the people, the people who support us, and the people who need us. It also serves as a donation drive. People come in and help us, and we're proud to give back to the community on this day.

It's a fun day for everybody.

"Everybody that's come in has told us 'thank you' and we're very appreciative," Lt. Foster said. "Volunteers give up a lot to be a part of this, and to hear the words thank you means the world to us."

"These folks know we've got a good volunteer force, and they know if they

need us, we'll be there for them," Lt. Foster said.

The event even attracted some neighbors of the four-legged variety.

A small black Chihuahua ventured into Station 10 from a neighboring home. The friendly dog undoubtedly

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Awake America celebrates 2 years

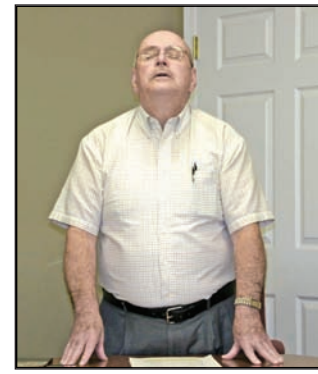
By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Awake America, the community prayer meeting that takes place at 11:59 a.m. on the first Thursday of every month at City Hall, just celebrated its second anniversary in Blairsville.

Two years in, local Awake America founder Lydia Long says that the key to success is prayer.

"To the success, I would attribute it all to God's will being done in the earth as to what he's called us to do," said Long.

Long has been part of a growing movement, one that has seen these prayer meetings spread into other



Mayor Jim Conley

communities.

The first Thursday of every month is reserved for Blairsville, while the second Thursday's Awake America meeting takes place at the gazebo in the city park of

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City, county receive high honor

North Georgia News
News Special

During a ceremony at the annual Power Luncheon hosted by the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce, Mike Beatty, President, CEO and founder of the Great Promise Partnership named Blairsville-Union County a Marquee Community.

The designation recognizes the community leadership's commitment to both the youth in the community and to helping provide an educated and well-trained workforce to Union County's businesses by working together.

Beatty presented the proclamation to the County's leadership, which included Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley, Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris, Union County Schools Superintendent Gary Steppe, Development Authority Director Mitch Griggs, and Chamber President Cindy Williams.

Union County is only the second community in the state to be named a Marquee Community, which marks the County's full participation in the program.

Great Promise Partnership™ is a program that identifies youth who are at risk



of not graduating from high school and through the community's private and public sector partners, offers economic opportunity to those youth with their commitment that they will stay in school and prepare for post secondary education, military service or the workforce after graduation.

The program is modeled after the successful 12 for Life program implemented by the Southwire Company in Carrolton.

While Commissioner at the Department of Community Affairs, Beatty drew together numerous public sector organizations and private sector business leaders to design

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Rite Aid: Wellness is the way of the future

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Rite Aid Pharmacy off Blue Ridge Street held a ribbon-cutting Grand Opening for its new Wellness Stores concept on Saturday, June 6.

"It's a concept that focuses more on the health and wellness of our customers and patients, more so than being just the normal old convenience store type drug store," said Manager Scott Harrelson.

Construction in the store finished about two weeks ago, and along with a new line of organic foods, Rite Aid now offers a stronger emphasis on community health and wellness education.

"Rite Aid is moving more to this concept," said Harrelson. "The higher volume stores, the higher profit stores are going first, and



eventually, within the next several years, most of the company will turn over to it. It's the face of the future in the drug store industry."

As technology improves, basic services such as checking blood pressure, weight and body mass index

become simpler outside of the doctor's office, and Rite Aid has a new health station that does all of the above, then emails the results to the customer's doctor.

"The biggest change to the store, we added the Wellness Ambassador," said Har-

relson. "The Wellness Ambassador is pretty much the bridge between the community, the customers and the patients, into the pharmacist to help them find what they need and to facilitate the

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