

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

www.nganews.com

Legal Organ of Union County

Your Hometown Newspaper Since 1909

July 6, 2016

Jeremy Nelms is unanimous choice as EMC GM

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

Young Harris – The nightmare is over and healing has begun as Blue Ridge Mountain EMC's Board of Directors announces that they have hired a new general manager.

Jeremy Nelms is the unanimous choice of the EMC Board of Directors, EMC Vice President, Mickey Cummings said.

Nelms replaces Dan Brewer, who has been serving as interim manager since Aug. 26, 2015.

Brewer replaced Matthew Akins who resigned following months of speculation by the five-county cooperative.



Jeremy Nelms

The unpaid account of former BRMEMC President Terry Taylor eventually led to the selection of Nelms as the cooperative's new general manager.

Though the EMC



did collect a portion of the \$48,000-plus debt owed by Taylor, eventually, the legal costs to collect the remainder of the unpaid debt proved to cost more than the amount to be recovered.

Cummings said that

the search firm hired to find a new general manager acquired more than 100 names interested in the general manager's job.

"After sifting through all of those candidates, the search committee came to us

with about four applications. The search committee sifted through those and we like three candidates," Cummings said. "We did preliminary interviews with those three individuals, and after those interviews were over, we decided to submit all three candidates to the board.

"The board then took a day and interviewed all three candidates," Cummings said. "The board asked each candidate some real pointed questions. It was an attempt to get to the heart of their personality, their management styles – those kinds of things.

"One name rose to the top, and that name was Jeremy Nelms," Cummings said.

"It was a unanimous decision. We liked Jeremy, we were impressed with his experience,

and we were impressed with his technological skills and how he applied those skills to EMCs.

"We were impressed with his moral fiber, his honesty and the way that he deals with problems," Cummings said. "We were impressed with his experience in budget building. In Florida, he was tasked with developing a long-range plan.

"We were impressed with that as well, because we feel that we need a long-range plan moving forward," Cummings said. "We wanted somebody that could pull all the elements together for our EMC and develop a long-range plan."

Cummings referenced

See Nelms, Page 2A

Carlton Colwell turns 90 with friends and family



Retired State Rep. Carlton Colwell gathered with family and friends last week to celebrate his 90th birthday. The legendary state representative helped move Union County into the 21st century. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Union County owes a great debt of gratitude to one of her native sons, Carlton Colwell, for his years of service and dedication to the North Georgia Mountains.

Georgia State Route

515, North Georgia Technical College and Carlton Colwell Probation Detention Center are just a few examples of Mr. Colwell's lasting contributions to this community and others around the region.

Mr. Colwell has been an influential figure in moving the county into the 21st century, thanks to his ability

to form powerful relationships with other legislators – like Ralph Twiggs of Hiawassee, and Gov. Zell Miller – during his greater than 30 years stint in the Georgia General Assembly.

The Colwell Family has been a major asset to Blairsville and Union County for

See Carlton, Page 3A

Two-car crash claims one life

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

Tragedy struck on Georgia 515 shortly after lunch on Friday.

The tragedy came in the form of a two-vehicle accident, a Volkswagen Passat versus a 2016 Chevrolet Corvette, Georgia State Patrol Sgt. Jonathan Barrett said.

This crash occurred around 1:03 p.m. The Chevrolet Corvette, driven by 74-year-old Andrew Sekera, of Epworth, attempted to pull out of Lows Mill Rd on to Georgia 515, Sgt. Barrett said.

The Volkswagen Passat was traveling west in the right

See Crash, Page 2A



Emergency workers try to save Andrew Sekera's life on Friday.

Amended budget shows upward economic trend

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris amended the Fiscal Year 2015 Budget in a called meeting on Monday, June 27.

The amendment reflected an increase in revenues and a drop in expenditures, pointing to an upward trending economic environment in Union County.

According to the commissioner, this budget amendment is the final step in the yearly audit process, when the county's financials have to be in to the state by the end of June.

Amending the budget is a process that allows the county auditors, who conduct the yearly audit report, to finalize their report with actual



Commissioner Lamar Paris

numbers instead of previously budgeted numbers.

"Because we had the new revenues, it does make our budget go up, so the accountants for our financial statement and our audit require that we amend the budget prior to the audit report being complete," said Commissioner Paris.

missioner Paris. "So that's what we're doing now, we're amending that budget."

Commissioner Paris said in the meeting that more details concerning the 2015 audit report will be available in the near future, hopefully around the first week of August or so, when it's time to set the millage before getting property tax bills mailed to residents.

He also spoke briefly on what exactly was amended that Monday.

The FY 2015 Budget was amended from \$14,420,923 to \$15,650,950, taking into account an increase in revenues of more than a million dollars.

"Increased revenues came from property taxes, sales taxes, motor vehicle taxes – a combination of all the taxes," said Commissioner Paris. "It's an economic indi-

See County, Page 7A

Garmon retires; Cox sworn in

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Johnie Garmon spent his last few hours as Union County Chief Magistrate Judge with family and friends, celebrating an early retirement from his elected career.

Immediately preceding Judge Garmon's retirement reception, which took place in the Jury Assembly Room of the Union County Courthouse on the afternoon of Friday, July 1, Probate Judge Dwain Brackett held a swearing-in ceremony with Garmon's replacement, Cary Cox, whose term would have normally started at the first of the New Year.

During the election that awarded Cox his seat as Chief Magistrate, Judge Garmon declared to each candidate his intention to retire early from the office, following 17 years of faithful service to Union County and her residents.

Judge Garmon ran unopposed in each election since his first in 2000, and it wasn't until his announcement that he would not seek another



Magistrate Judge Cary Cox, and longtime Magistrate Judge Johnie Garmon share a moment at Garmon's retirement party on Friday at the Union County Courthouse. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

term that others decided to vie for the seat.

The timing was just right, said Judge Garmon, on why he decided not to run and to retire early, and spending quality time with family played a major role in his decision.

"I'll spend more time with family, travel," said Judge Garmon. "I'm also very involved with the Masonic Fraternity. I will stay busy, busy, busy."

As the lively reception

See Garmon, Page 2A

Cannery now open, Farmers Market expecting more business

By Lily Avery
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Canning season is not complete without the Union County Canning Plant and, thankfully, it is officially open.

The Canning Plant hosted tours by Patrick Fix from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Saturday, July 2, as a way to kick off their opening day, which will be Tuesday, July 5.

"We're going on the fifth year of being open," said Fix. "We worked for several years, Mickey and I, trying to

See Canning, Page 7A



The Union County Cannery is now open as canning season is upon us

Nottely Marina tradition continues

By Lily Avery
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Fourth of July weekend is not complete without some fun in the sun out at Lake Nottely, particularly with Nottely Marina's Boat Parade.

The 20th Annual Fourth of July Boat Parade started things off with a splash on Saturday, with nine decorated boats on display and countless others scattered across the lake to join in the excitement.

Nottely Marina Owner Carleen Doucette began the Boat Parade in 1996 and it has been a huge success ever since. Rain or shine, commu-

See Boat Parade, Page 8A



Boating lovers really got creative with this entry in the annual Fourth of July Boat Parade at Nottely Marina. Photo/Lily Avery

Vol. 107 No. 26
4 Sections 28 Pages
Weather
Thurs: T-Storms Hi 88 Lo 68
Fri: Sunny Hi 91 Lo 68
Sat: T-Storms Hi 92 Lo 67

Inside
Arrests 2B
Churches 2B
Classifieds 3C
Obituary 4A
Opinion 4A
Legals 4D
Obits 5C
Sports 4B

HIGH COUNTRY ARTISANS
Butternut Creek Festival
July 16-17
See page 7A

Union County Library
Puppet Show
July 8 ~ 11 AM
See page 5B

Early VOTING weekdays through July 22nd

66th Annual GEORGIA MOUNTAIN FAIR
Begins July 15th