

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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City sign ordinance done; sign permit fees waived; permit ban lifted

By Charles Duncan
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The Blairsville City Council has approved revisions to its Sign Ordinance.

The most prudent revision, sign permit fees have been eliminated to encourage local business in Downtown Blairsville.

In addition, the Council lifted a 90-day sign permit moratorium and eliminated sign permit fees to the delight of existing and new businesses in Downtown.

However, the vote to approve the City's sign ordinance revisions was not unanimous.

The Council voted 4-1 to approve the ordinance fol-

lowing its final public hearing on the matter.

Councilman Tony Dyer expressed his disapproval of the ordinance with a "no" vote.

"I can't support this ordinance," Dyer said.

Dyer told fellow Council members that he could support a sign policy, but he didn't think regulation of signs within the city was necessary or prudent.

He urged the council to support a joint city-county sign ordinance, keeping statutes uniform countywide.

"I think the sign ordinance is very business unfriendly," Dyer said.

Mayor Jim Conley told Dyer that regulations were necessary in society.

"Could you imagine



Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley defends the City's sign ordinance, telling the Council regulation of signs is necessary in Blairsville. Photo/Charles Duncan

the signage if we didn't have a sign ordinance," Mayor Conley asked. "We regulate ac-

within the dimensions of the ordinance."

Council member Betty Easter asked the city attorney to clarify the difference between a policy and an ordinance.

City Attorney Jana Akins quickly pointed out that the city couldn't enforce sign policies.

Councilman Buddy Moore weighed in on the debate.

"If you're waiting until you need a sign ordinance, you're too late," Moore said. "I think it works, I've seen it work, I believe in it."

Mayor Conley reminded the Council that the revised ordinance is no different from the City's original sign ordinance.

"The revised ordinance

deals primarily with size and dimensions of the signs against the store front," Mayor Conley said.

Mayor Conley then asked for a vote. Four raised their hand in support, Rhonda Mahan, Easter, Martha Cone and Moore.

In opposition, Councilman Dyer voted no.

The Council also lifted the 90-day sign permit moratorium, allowing requests for signage to continue.

Mayor Conley said that some local businesses have violated the moratorium since it was enacted in April, following the court ruling of Judge Robert Struble in the city's case against Allison Outdoor Advertising.

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Reece Family Reunion: 81 years and counting

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Somewhere up there, Jim Roberson Reece, Alice Reece Hayes, and Valentine "Fella" Reece were all smiling on Sunday.

That's because for the 81st year, the Annual Reece Reunion was the place to be on the second Sunday in August.

Since August 1931 the Reece family has gathered for the oldest organized family reunion in Union County.

The Annual Reece Reunion falls on the second Sunday in August every year.

Approximately 134 direct descendants of Quiller Frank and Eliza Reece attended the 2012 event at the House of Prayer Family Life Center on Sunday.

The attendees included 74 descendants of James Roberson "Jim" Reece; 57 descendants of Eli Josiah Reece, two descendants of Tom Joseph Hughes Reece, and one descendant of William Drury "W.D." Reece.

They were all under



The 25th Reece Family Reunion was just the tip of the iceberg. The historic Mountain Family celebrated its 81st Family Reunion on Sunday at the House of Prayer Family Life Center off Pat Colwell Road. Photo/Courtesy Duncan Family Album

the same roof on Pat Colwell Road at the 81st Annual Reece Family Reunion on Sunday.

The Reunion is a tribute to the family that descended from William Reece of Wales, who was born in 1709. Actually, when William and Mary Reece's son, Valentine "Fella"

Reece came along in 1750, one might have had to wonder if such a reunion would ever take place.

Valentine "Fella" Reece was the only child of William and Mary Reece.

Valentine didn't let his family down. He and his wife

Christina actually launched the Reece Reunion, after having nine children between 1770 and 1792.

The line that followed included Jacob Reece, William "Billy" Reece and Quiller Frank Reece, one of

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Allison ready for November

By Joe Collins
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

YOUNG HARRIS – State Rep. Stephen Allison, who represents Union, Towns, and Rabun counties and a portion of White County in Georgia House District 8, kicked off his reelection bid Friday at the weekly meeting of the Mountain Movers and Shakers in Young Harris.

The Movers and Shakers are a group of nonpartisan conservative men and women reaching out to serve their community's many needs, raising voter awareness and providing nonpartisan political education.

More than 40 people gathered at the low-key event hosted by Mary's Southern Grill in Hiawassee to witness Allison's announcement.

They came to hear Allison speak about his record within the Georgia General Assembly and his hopes for future legislation that will make an impact for them here in the mountains.

"The Mountain Region doesn't get a lot of respect from the state legislative body and I have to fight for our



State Rep. Stephen Allison

voices to be heard on any issue that concerns us," said a frustrated Allison.

Allison, a graduate of the Virginia Military Institute, is a Blairsville attorney. He met his wife Regina while at VMI.

"I was at a VMI function one night and the prettiest girl I ever saw walked in on the arm of another cadet and the rest is history," said a proud Allison.

Stephen and Regina have two sons, Thomas and Nathanael, who are students in the Union County Schools System.

The Allisons moved to Union County in 1997, where Stephen Allison opened a pri-

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Farmers Market makes impact

Special to NGN
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A decline in agricultural income and concern about losing farms to development were the impetus behind the highly successful Union County Farmers Market, which generated \$280,000 in income in 2011 for local growers.

The bustling market in Blairsville now features an average of 63 vendors, of whom 30 are farmers, on Tuesdays and Saturdays during the June to October season. Shoppers not only find homegrown fruits and vegetables, but they also can purchase crafts hand made by local residents.

Market days draw visi-



The Union County Farmers Market has been an economic shot in the arm for local farmers. The state Department of Agriculture says The Market is setting an example for rural communities in Georgia. Photo/Joe Collins

tors from Union, Towns and Fannin counties in Georgia as well as Clay and Cherokee

counties in North Carolina. The market also has become a destination for tourists vaca-

tioning in north Georgia.

The Union County Farmers Market joined Georgia Grown, the new program of the Georgia Department of Agriculture, as a next step in its outreach to the public, says Market Manager Mick-

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Meeks Park scare is over

By Charles Duncan
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A suspicious package within the confines of Meeks Park last week proved to be nothing dangerous, Union County Sheriff Scott Stephens said.

Sheriff's deputies were alerted to a suspicious package left behind by a person in a Ford Taurus who was spotted tossing out a suit case by a member of a church group attending a back to school event at the Park, Sheriff Stephens said.

"We would rather have 20 false alarms taken seriously than one device taken for granted," Sheriff Stephens said. "With the times we live in, we must all be aware of our surroundings and be willing to act when things don't look right."

Marcia Jones, of First United Methodist Church spotted a person pull up in a



The discovery of a suspicious package led to the evacuation of Meeks Park last week.

green Ford Taurus near the pavilion where the church was holding a back to school event, Union County Sheriff's reports show.

After watching the man for 10 minutes, she observed the man toss out an old suit case from the vehicle and then speed away, Sheriff's reports show.

She immediately contacted Union County sheriff's

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Byers seeks Post 3 BOE Seat Nov. 6th

See Page 2A for details



Cindy Byers

City approves Veterans' Memorial Drive request

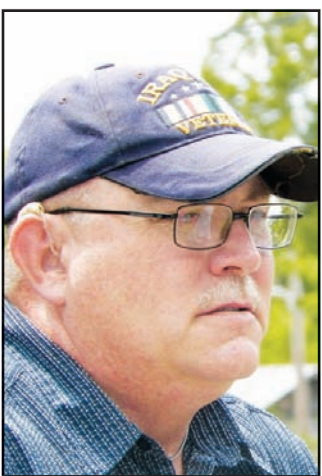
By Charles Duncan
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The drive to rename School Street to Veterans' Memorial Drive has been a success.

The Blairsville City Council, after learning the results of a survey of School Street residents, voted unanimously to rename the street to honor Blairsville and Union County war veterans.

Council members Rhonda Mahan, Betty Easter,

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Chuck Honaker

North Georgia 'shine' at Mash Bash

By Libby Shook
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

YOUNG HARRIS – The Fourth Annual Haulin' Mash Bash Kickoff jump-started the Fourth Annual Mountain Moonshine Cruizin' at the Ridges Resort & Marina on Thursday evening in Young Harris, with hundreds of folks turning out to

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It's perfectly legal to hand out free samples. Never mind that it's moonshine. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

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Red Lights Blue Lights

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Blairsville Cruisers Cruise-In on the Square Car Show

Saturday August 18
4 PM - Dusk
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Meet the 2012 UCHS Football Team & Coaches

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