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that will need to be addressed during budget talks.

Several agencies will not have the full amount of money to needed to operate their programs, including Medicaid (short \$400+ million), Education/Higher Education Enrollment Growth (short \$150 – 200 million) and Retirement Systems (short \$100 – 200 million).

And to complicate matters further, we still don't

know the financial impact of Obamacare and what will happen if our nation does in fact go over the "fiscal cliff."

Our work is certainly cut out for us this year at the State Capitol, and the 2013 legislative session will be a busy one.

To my younger constituents, don't forget that the General Senate offers a great look at the legislative process through our Senate Page Pro-

gram.

Students ages 12 and over are able to serve as Senate Pages and deliver important information and messages to the Senators while in the Senate Chamber.

Each Senator is allowed to host 10 Pages during the Legislative Session, so if you're interested in this opportunity, contact my office at (404) 656-9221 as soon as possible.

Please feel free to reach out and contact me with questions or concerns about the district anytime.

We have moved into a new office, so please note that we are now in room 421 of the State Capitol.

I look forward to serving you again in 2013.

*State Sen. Steve Gooch represents Union County in Senate District 51.*

## Houdini...continued from Page 1A

escaped from the vehicle. He was still cuffed, with his hands behind his back, sheriff's reports show.

Smith then led authorities on a chase through the Fairview Church Road community, sheriff's reports show.

Deputies Sam Combs and Tyler Miller arrived, the latter with the county's K-9 Zoey, sheriff's reports show.

Smith was spotted in the Duncan Mill area, and later in

the Fairview Trail area, sheriff's reports show.

Later, Smith was spotted on the back porch of a residence on Fairview Church Road. As Blairsville Police Officer Seth Dyer arrived, Smith took off again, sheriff's reports show.

Officer Dyer gave chase, but lost contact with Smith. Apparently, by this time, Smith had picked the cuffs and his hands were free,

sheriff's reports show.

Smith was later subdued by Union County Jailer Cody Graham and Deputy Sheriff Adam Deyton on Graham-Stover Road, in the Fairview Community, sheriff's reports show.

With Graham's assistance, Deyton cuffed Smith, sheriff's reports show.

Smith was taken to the Union County Jail in the back of Officer Dyer's patrol cruis-

er, sheriff's reports show.

Smith was charged with peeping tom, obstruction, interference with government property, and escape, sheriff's reports show.

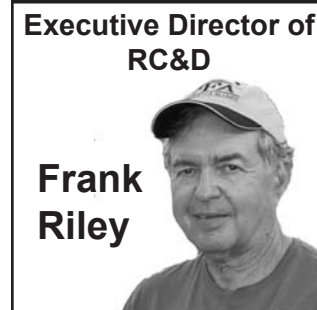
Earlier in 2012, Smith was arrested and escaped from a Union County patrol vehicle, Union County sheriff's spokesman C.J. Worden said.

Smith currently is being held in the Union County Jail, sheriff's reports show.

# Making a difference with the RC&D

By Frank Riley  
Executive Director  
RC&D

What is RC&D?  
The Resource Con-



servation and Development (RC&D) Program was created in the Agricultural Act of 1962 to assist local people in planning and carrying out activities that conserve natural resources, support economic development, enhance the environment, and improve the standard of living for all citizens.

All programs and assistance of the RC&D Council are available without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status.

RC&D Councils are 501(C)3 not-for-profit corporations.

They are not governmental entities, so the typical policies and constraints of local, state, and federal government programs do not limit the types of issues they address or the means they use for economic development in their work areas.

The RC&D Council that serves the Towns/Union area is the Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D that covers

the 13 counties in Northeast Georgia.

RC&D Councils have a high degree of independence to carry out activities that will achieve their most important goals.

RC&D Council volunteers are leaders and community stakeholders involved in multiple roles in local government, school boards, churches, and other civic activities.

These leaders identify unmet needs in their communities and create solutions that work.

The folks who make up an RC&D council are neighbors. At RC&D Council meetings, they draw from their professional expertise and community connections to determine the needs of their RC&D Council areas, address those needs, and make their communities better places to live, work, and play.

They know how to blend government programs with local needs to produce results.

In essence, they know how to speak the government's language, and yours.

Nationwide, more than 25,000 volunteers serve on local RC&D Councils.

The 375 RC&D Councils are located in all 50 states, the Caribbean, and the Pacific Basin and serve a combined 85 percent of all U.S. counties and 77 percent of the total U.S. population.

**The Four Focus Areas**  
*Land Conservation*

RC&D Councils work with local partners to identify, fund and complete land conservation projects of all types.

**Water Management**  
RC&D Water Management Projects often create recreation opportunities that also create jobs and make communities more attractive to development.

**Community Development**  
The RC&D provides training, coordination and communication services that help community development projects.

**Land Management**  
The RC&D works with funding partners to make sure worthy projects find the financial assets they need to be successful.

For more details on the Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council or to get involved, please visit the Chestatee/Chattahoochee Web site [www.chestchattrcd.org](http://www.chestchattrcd.org); call the Demorest office at (706) 894-1591, or e-mail us at [susan.ccrd@gmail.com](mailto:susan.ccrd@gmail.com).

The Executive Director of the Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council is Frank Riley who lives in Hiawassee.

You may contact him personally by e-mail at [frank.ccrd@gmail.com](mailto:frank.ccrd@gmail.com) or call (706) 894-1591.

The Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council is here to serve you.

## Garden Club and YHC students improve Mountain Shelter



YHC students donate wheelbarrow to the Shelter.

On Sunday, December 2, 2012, members from the Blairsville Garden Club and twelve students from Young Harris College met at the Union County Humane Society Mountain Shelter to participate in a community improvement project.

The students from Young Harris College were all freshmen enrolled in a class called First Year Foundations. New students selected to participate in Young Harris College's First Year Foundations program learn to manage time and stress, set priorities and understand academics and campus life at YHC. They are expected to demonstrate engagement within the Young Harris community through meaningful class discussions, small group interactions and event participation. Their participation in this project was a student led initiative for community engagement. The freshmen donated a "badly needed" wheelbarrow to the Mountain Shelter, and assisted members of the Blairsville Garden Club in planting trees.

The two trees were Red Maples and the final installment of donated plantings; a project started by the Blairsville Garden Club in February 2012. In addition to the donated Red Maples, the Blairsville Garden Club donated and planted ten Flowering Dogwoods, ten Pin Oaks, and five Saw-tooth Oaks in February 2012.

The Red Maples were planted inside of the outdoor dog runs to provide shade for the dogs while they play in these areas. The Young Harris

students dug the holes, added soil amendments, prepared the root balls, planted the trees, mulched around the trees with pine straw and erected fencing around each tree to keep dogs away until the trees become established. It was a poignant learning experience for most of these students who had never planted a tree.

The members of the Blairsville Garden Club were extremely appreciative to these fine students for their hard work and participation. Their instructor is Danae Turchyn, YHC Instructor of Outdoor Leadership and Asst. Director of the Outdoor Leadership Center. The Blairsville Garden Club members would also like to thank Mountain Shelter staff for their assistance with this community improvement project. This garden club project follows state and national goals encouraging horticultural achievement, beautification of our surrounding communities and preservation of wild flowers, trees, and birds, and education of these goals.

The Blairsville Garden Club is a non-profit, service organization. Anyone interested in learning more about the Blairsville Garden Club and its activities are encouraged to visit our website @ [www.blairsvillelegardenclub.com](http://www.blairsvillelegardenclub.com). NJan2,2)SH

## Diamond Pageants presents Old Fashion Christmas Pageant

Diamond Pageants presented its Old Fashion Christmas Pageant last month at the Blairsville Civic Center. 16 girls of all ages participated. In the Toddler Miss Division, Cheyenne Nicholson was named Queen. Ansley Roper was Queen for the Toddler Miss, 3-4 age group. Ansley also won first in the Talent Competition. Zaydee Webster took First Runner Up.

In the Little Miss, 5-7 year olds, Siara Caspari was named Queen and Ultimate Supreme for seven years and younger. Kayce Kennedy was First Runner Up and Haley McElhannon was Second Runner Up. Dallas Spratt was Queen for Petite Miss ages 8-10. Keera Smart was First Runner Up.

Haley Carr was named Ultimate Supreme for ages 11-and-up and was Queen for the 11-13 Junior Miss age group. Brittany Denmon was First Runner Up. Madison Hayes was Queen for the



Haley Carr - Ultimate Supreme Teen Miss 14-16 year old age group. Mary Mauney was First Runner Up.

Sarah Archer was Queen for the Miss 17 & Up age group and won the Talent Competition. Melissa Savage was Queen in the Ms. division while Susan Ethers was named Christmas Diamond. Finally, Tina Howard was Queen in the Mrs. division. NJan2,2)CA