

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Blairsville welcomes 44th Sorghum Festival; parade on Saturday

By Charles Duncan
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You know it must be October, the smell of sorghum is in the air.

The 44th Annual Blairsville Sorghum Festival Parade begins on Saturday, with the annual Blairsville Sorghum Festival Parade scheduled for 11 a.m. in Downtown Blairsville.

If you want to get a head start on the festival, the Sorghum Mill starts crushing and cooking at 9 a.m. at Meeks Park.

Vendors open their booths, demonstrations begin, and food vendors start selling their delicious treats, also at Meeks Park.

Indeed, it is that special time of year again in Union County.

"It's going to be a great festival," said Sorghum Festival spokesperson and co-organizer



Biskets a plenty will be available at the 44th Annual Bisket Eat'n' Contest on Saturday at Meeks Park. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Kim Bridges. "We've certainly got a great lineup of entertainment."

Bridges said the event provides an opportunity for the entire community to reap rewards.

"We have 80 vendors as of right now," she said. "It's much more than we had last year.

There will be canning demonstrations, the moonshine still, wood-carving and many more demonstrations, Bridges said.

The parade format has changed in the way floats are judged and awarded prizes, Bridges said.

"We're giving out four cash awards," she said. "If a business wins, the award goes to the charity of their choice."

"If it's a club or church that wins, they'll keep that prize," she said. "I think that will help churches and different groups get involved in the parade."

The prizes will be broken down as first, second, third and Overall Grand Prize Winner.

Prize amounts are \$400 for the grand prize, \$300 for first place, \$200 for second place and \$100 for third place.

The traditional fun includes the annual Bisket Eat'n' Contest.

That kicks off at 1 p.m., on Saturday. The competition is open for all comers, 16 years and older.

It usually takes downing 10 or more biskets to win, and the girls usually give the boys

See *Sorghum*, 2A

City fines Circle K for violation of Alcohol laws

By Charles Duncan
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Mark Dehler, attorney for Circle K Convenience Stores was all about being on the up-and-up.

He told the Blairsville City Council that a convenience clerk at Store No. 2008 beside First Baptist Church did violate the City's Alcohol Ordinance.

The store has videotape evidence of the violation. The clerk in question, who committed the violation, was sick that evening. He had a terrible tooth ache and was not at all himself, Dehler said.

"The confidential informant's birthday was Sept. 21, 1992," Dehler told the Council. "He punched in Sept. 21, 1991. It was a simple mistake on his part."

That simple mistake cost



Mark Dehler

the young clerk his job, led to his arrest, and spending a night in jail.

"It was a simple mistake, but, Circle K has a zero tolerance policy when it comes to adhering to Alcohol ordinances," Dehler said.

With that being said, De- See *Fines*, 3A

Run Above the Clouds and Indian Summer Fest celebrated in Suches

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Suches - Summertime may have officially passed us by, but Indian Summer lasts well into October in the tight-knit community of Suches.

Last weekend, Woody Gap Schools hosted its 36th Indian Summer Festival, held annually during the first full weekend of October.

The festival is kicked off with the Race Above the Clouds. At more than 3,000 feet above sea level, the race is the highest 10K run in the state.

Following their trek See *Indian Summer*, 2A



Runners hit the road early in Suches on Saturday for the Run Above the Clouds. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

City holds the line on millage



Council member Tony Dyer, left, and Mayor Jim Conley, far right, discuss the City's millage rate last week at Blairsville City Hall. The Council kept the City's millage rate at 2 mills. Photo/Charles Duncan

By Charles Duncan
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The Blairsville City Council voted unanimously last week to keep its maintenance and operation millage rate at 2 mills.

"Nobody likes to pay taxes. Nobody likes to have their taxes increased. We have to face facts, the economy just doesn't warrant a millage rate increase," Mayor Conley said. "People are hurting as it is. As a government, we just have to

stay the course and keep costs in line as much as we can. We'll keep looking for ways to save the City taxpayers' money."

The City's move follows suit with the Union County Board of Education to keep the millage rate at status quo.

Union County Government will drop its millage rate slightly, Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris said.

Commissioner Paris will drop the county's millage rate from 5.410 mills to 5.408 mills.

"It's a feat not to raise taxes and continue to provide the services that we're providing," Commissioner Paris said.

"I'm proud that we're able to maintain our budget and millage rate with a slight decrease," he said. "The only way we're able to give a millage break is because of our SPLOST revenues. They pay for so much that ordinarily would have to come from the general fund budget."

The BOE voted earlier to keep its millage rate at 11.798 mills.

Philanthropists save Pre-K from Fed for now

By Charles Duncan
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The Pre-K program in Union County was shutdown indefinitely on Monday due to the budget showdown in Washington, D.C.

Miraculously on Tuesday, the program was open again even as Americans were being held hostage by Congress and the White House.

Union County Assistant School Superintendent Dr. Jeremy Williams couldn't confirm why the program - defunct of federal funds - was reopening.

However, the *North Georgia News* has learned that the program is being funded in six states by philanthropists Laura and John Arnold through October. The program is in jeopardy again in November if the federal government shutdown has not been resolved.



Dr. Jeremy Williams

Essentially, 84 Pre-K students and 12 Union County Pre-K employees were furloughed on Monday because of the federal government shutdown that entered its second week.

"For nearly 50 years, Head Start has been the window of opportunity for more than 27 million of our nation's

poorest children as they embark on their journey to achieve the American Dream," said Yasmina Vinci, Executive Director of the National Head Start Association. "The Arnolds' most generous act epitomizes what it means to be an angel investor; they have selflessly stepped up for Head Start children to ensure their path toward kindergarten readiness is not interrupted by the inability of government to get the nation's fiscal house in order."

Dr. Williams learned that the program would resume locally on Monday. He was shocked to learn of the generous gift.

"I knew for some reason that the doors would be open on Tuesday," he said. "I didn't know how, who or what made that happen."

Prior to learning the news, Dr. Williams was in a state of disbelief that the shutdown

See *Shutdown*, 3A

Mason: 'Tip leads to Ohio fugitive's arrest'

By Charles Duncan
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A 23-year-old man is expected to be extradited to Cuyahoga County, Ohio to face charges of assault, Union County Sheriff Mack Mason said.

Wade Allen Huffman, 23, was staying at a home off Plott Town Road at the Union County/Towns County line, Sheriff Mason said.

A tipster alerted Union County Sheriff's deputies that Huffman was staying at the residence, Sheriff Mason said.

"He was wanted out of Ohio on felony assault charges," Sheriff Mason said. "It was a fugitive warrant."

He also was a convicted sex offender out of Ohio. Georgia law required Huffman to register as a convicted sex offender once he set up residence here. He did not, the



Sheriff Mack Mason

sheriff said.

"Our deputies went out to the house after they confirmed the fugitive warrant," the sheriff said. "We went out there to make contact and our deputies made contact with two females at this residence."

"The deputies approached the two females, they were belligerent and believed to be drunk," he said.

"They denied that Huffman was there."

Meanwhile, deputies set up a perimeter around the house, the sheriff said.

"They could see him inside the house," Sheriff Mason said. "He matched the picture we had. The two women did what they could to say that he wasn't there and that they didn't know him."

"They slammed the door," the sheriff said.

Deputies saw Huffman running inside the house. He eventually made a statement to law enforcement that he wasn't coming out.

"He yelled out that if we wanted him to come and (bleep) get me," Sheriff Mason said. "He barricaded himself in the house for about an hour."

While the Sheriff's Office was assembling a response team, one of the two females

See *Fugitive*, 3A

Wings of Freedom Tour comes to Blairsville Oct. 21-23

By Charles Duncan
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The aircraft that won World War II, the Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress, Consolidated B-24 Liberator and North American P-51 Mustang are coming to the Blairsville Municipal Airport Oct. 21st through Oct. 23rd, Mayor Jim Conley announced during the monthly Blairsville City Council meeting.

It's all part of the Wings of Freedom Tour featuring vintage WWII aircraft, Mayor Conley said.

The Wings of Freedom Tour is sponsored by the Collings Foundation, a nonprofit group dedicated to living history.

The Wings of Freedom Tour arrives at Blairsville Municipal Airport at noon, Oct. 21st and will be on display at the North Ramp at Blairsville Airport until the aircraft depart Oct. 23rd at noon.

The hours of ground tours and display are noon through 4:30 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 21st; 9 a.m. through 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 22nd; 9 a.m. through noon on Wednesday, Oct. 23rd. Thirty-minute flight experiences can be scheduled before and after the ground tour times.

The nationwide Wings of Freedom Tour is in its 24th year and visits an average



Come and visit history Oct. 21st through Oct. 23rd at the airport.

of 110 cities in more than 35 states annually. Since its start, tens of millions of people have witnessed the splendor of the B-17, B-24 & P-51 displays at locations across the nation.

The Tour is one of the most extraordinary and unique interactive traveling historical displays of its kind.

The Tour travels throughout the nation as a flying tribute to the flight crews who flew these gems, the ground crews who maintained them, the workers who built them, the soldiers, sailors and airmen they helped protect; and the citizens and families that share the freedom that they helped preserve.

The B-17 Flying Fortress and B-24 Liberator were the backbone of the American effort during the war from 1942 to 1945 and were famous for their ability to sustain dam-

age and still accomplish the mission. Despite the risks of anti-aircraft fire, attacking enemy fighters, and the harrowing environment of sub-zero temperatures, many B-17s and B-24s safely brought their crews home. The P-51 Mustang was affectionately known as the bombers "Little Friend" - saving countless crews from attacking Axis fighters. After the war, many aircraft were scrapped for their raw aluminum to rebuild a nation in post-war prosperity and therefore very few were spared.

The rarity of the B-17, B-24 & P-51 - and their importance to telling the story of WWII is why the Collings Foundation continues to fly and display these aircraft nationwide.

At each location we en-

See *Wings*, 6A

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