

Council...from Page 1A

as it preceded the coming of the Vietnam Moving War Memorial to Blairsville by two days.

Mayor Conley read the proclamation, which celebrated President George Washington's creation of the Badge of Military Merit on Aug. 7, 1782, which was the precursor of the Purple Heart Medal.

On Aug. 7, 1932, U.S. Congress authorized the creation of the Purple Heart Medal, commemorated by the bicentennial of Washington's birth and in conjunction with his Badge of Military Merit, which is to be awarded to any service member wounded or killed while serving in the United States Armed Services.

In proclaiming Blairsville as a Purple Heart City, the mayor and

City Council honored the selfless service of the men and women in Blairsville, especially those who have earned a Purple Heart. The city is also following the cue of Gov. Nathan Deal, who proclaimed Georgia as a Purple Heart State on April 26, 2014.

"Therefore be it resolved, we the mayor and the City Council of the City of Blairsville do hereby proclaim this as a time to honor the service and the sacrifice of our nation's men and women in uniform, wounded or killed by the enemy while serving to protect the freedoms enjoyed by all Americans, and declare the City of Blairsville as a Purple Heart City," said Mayor Conley.

Mayor Conley also read, and City Council passed, a resolution

declaring Nov. 13 as World Pancreatic Cancer Day in the City of Blairsville, another cause that embraces the color purple.

The council was informed that pancreatic cancer was the fourth leading cause of cancer death in the United States, projected to become the second leading cause of cancer death by 2020.

"Whereas good health and wellbeing of the residents of Blairsville are enhanced as the direct results of increased awareness about pancreatic cancer, and research into early detection, causes and effects, and treatment, therefore be it resolved that Mayor Jim Conley designates Nov. 13 as World Pancreatic Cancer Day in the City of Blairsville," said Mayor Conley.

Following the passing of the resolution aimed to spread pancreatic cancer awareness was

a vote to approve the Workplace Wellness Policy for the city.

"With the rising onset of health problems, the City of Blairsville, mayor and City Council have a growing concern for their employees' health and wellbeing, therefore we are dedicated to helping employees reach optimal health and improve their quality of life," said Mayor Conley. "The mayor and council recognize the benefits to both employees and employers of a program that promotes and supports workplace health promotion and wellness."

The goal of the program will be to educate city employees and give them the proper tools to implement positive and healthy lifestyle changes, and the program has already received \$2,000 in grant funds. The council voted to approve the policy.

Parade...from Page 1A

reminds me of them."

Virgil Elliott, 90, who joined the Navy during World War II and also served during the Korean War, rode with other veterans as part of the United Community Bank float.

"It means a lot for me to see these people," said Elliott of the turnout. "I feel like in Blairsville, we have a lot of good, patriotic people, so it just means a great deal to me to see the people out in this kind of weather, supporting this. And I appreciate The Wall coming. Vietnam Veterans weren't treated right when they came home."

Gilbert Emerson, 92, also served in the Navy during World War II, and was an honored guest of the parade.

"I'm proud to be a veteran, and I imagine all these people here are proud to be veterans of their service," said Emerson. "There's a camaraderie among service people that a lot of people, civilians, couldn't understand."

Veteran Rita Hammond sat next to Elliott on the float, and she enlisted in the Air Force from 1958 to 1961.

She witnessed many Vietnam Veterans returning from the frontlines, as well as the bodies of those Americans who died bravely on the field of battle, and

the Vietnam War is an emotional subject for her.

"When I was in, my permanent party base was Travis Air Force Base in California," said Hammond. "Almost anybody and everybody who went to Vietnam came through Travis Air Force Base."

Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley made his way through the parade driven by Joe Dyer, an Army veteran and member of the North Georgia Honor Guard.

Mayor Conley and Dyer have seen their fair share of parades - Dyer has been hauling people through the Sorghum Festival Parade since the 1970s, and Mayor Conley has taken part in the parade since before he became mayor - but this one was extra special because of The Moving Wall.

"For the city, this means an economic boost," said Mayor Conley on the draw of the parade and the Sorghum Festival itself. "Even though the festival is out at Meeks Park, still, if you wanted to find lodging in the city, you wouldn't be able to find lodging this weekend. And people who are coming through, they're going to stop and eat."

"And of course, The Moving Wall is the main thing that we'll remember about this festival for



years to come, and what it means to that chapter of the Vietnam Vets being able to get The Moving Wall here in Blairsville, in Union County. This festival will stand out as one to remember for years to come, just because of that."

Darrell Dorn, who recently moved to the community full-time with his wife Evelyn, watched the parade from Cabin Coffee Co. on the Blairsville Square, beneath the relative comfort of a patio umbrella.

"I've been looking forward to coming to the festival and the parade - I love parades," said Dorn, who thought the parade went well despite the weather. "It's just a mild sprinkle, it wasn't enough to deter anybody that wanted to actually see it from coming out. They had a lot of nice floats and great cars. The

cars are one of my favorite parts."

John Viera, whose son Buddy attends Union County High School, stayed busy selling smoked pork butts and food plates at the Sorghum Festival as part of the UCHS baseball team's booster club, the Diamond Club.

"The people, the festivals - there's always something going on that really makes Blairsville and Union County a great place to be year round," said Viera, who took the time to head out to watch the parade.

Viera and the Diamond Club will be back at the Sorghum Festival during its second weekend, on Saturday, Oct. 17, and Sunday, Oct. 18, selling pork butts for \$35 and plates for \$8, and they are currently accepting pre-orders.

Festival...from Page 1A

Festival and it was a very enjoyable experience. We've only ever passed through Blairsville but are glad we made the stop.

"We thought the water wheel (that was added to Meeks Park) that is new this year was nice touch," he added. "It gives the festival more of a rustic feel."

Sunday saw Ken Ensley start the day off right with bluegrass and gospel music. He was then followed by another local favorite, Raven & Red, an award winning acoustic duo whose genre crossing blend of Americana, Bluegrass, Country, and Celtic continues to gain popularity, took the stage around 11:30 a.m.

Paul Constantine "aka Dr. Paul" performed for the jam packed Sorghum Festival Crowd, later in the afternoon.

"We did the games (on Sunday) and the crowd has been awesome (on Sunday)," Bridges said. "We still haven't sold out (of Sorghum Syrup) but we expect to

be short on syrup next weekend if the weather cooperates."

Some festival visitors, like Mark and Amanda Weatherford of Clemson, SC didn't want to brave the cold and rain on Saturday but couldn't wait to pay Meeks Park a visit to get their hands on some syrup.

"We always enjoy coming over and getting a jar of syrup but my wife Amanda wanted to wait until Sunday to make the drive over," Mark Weatherford said. "On the way, we saw some syrup for sale in a grocery store and I asked Amanda if we should just go ahead and buy it here, but she was persistent and said buying it at the festival is 'part of the experience.' She was right and I'm glad we were able to buy a jar here today."

Next weekend's festival will feature returning artists Raven & Red and new acts Chase Thomas, The Band Kelley, gospel performer Alan Kendall, Dean Parker, and the Kembra Hughes Cloggers.



"We've got some new singers coming in next week and we have the car show going on in town which will bring more crowds in," Bridges said. "Usually

the second weekend is busier but it varies. Hopefully we have nice weather, but ya know, you just have to take the good with the bad but we expect big crowds next weekend."

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