

Early Voting...from Page 1A

Mayor Conley said there is still SPLOST money available that can be used to improve City Hall.

Also, the city has just completed the grading and paving of the land to be used for the construction of a new North Terminal at the Blairsville Municipal Airport, thus, further enhancing the city's economic development attraction.

Mayor Conley said that some of the biggest accomplishments during his tenure included water and sewer improvements, manhole rehabilitation projects, replacement of antiquated water lines from the 1940s with new industrial

lines, and rehabilitation of two city water tanks.

Meanwhile, county residents will decide if the county's current SPLOST will be extended for another six years.

The six-year run of SPLOST III comes to a close in March 2015. The county is looking to extend the 1-cent sales tax for six years with an affirmative vote in November.

Collections, if approved by voters, would begin in April 2015.

The early ballot for SPLOST IV allows time to put the measure back on the ballot in two years if there is a negative vote with only minimal lapse in sales tax collections.

The city will receive 7.89 percent of the total collections from SPLOST IV, per an intergovernmental agreement with Union County government.

According to the accord, if project revenues exceed the amount called for in the referendum, the county may use those funds to complete any other county project.

Likewise, if the proposed city projects, come in under cost, the city may use those funds for other projects or purpose, according to the agreement.

The county is responsible for the cost of the election, according to the agreement.

The proposed projects for the county include approximately \$5 million to pay off the bond debt of the Union County Community Center, \$3.4 million for parks and recreation upgrades and improvements, solid waste upgrades and improvements, library upgrades and improvements, roads, streets and bridges, and economic development facilities and land acquisition.

The City of Blairsville's proposed projects include water and sewer improvements, public safety equipment and vehicles, public works vehicles, equipment, roads, and sidewalks.

Bridge Work...from Page 1A

Traffic will continue to use the existing structure just like they are doing today.

"Once the new bridge is finished, then traffic will be shifted over to use the new bridge," Pope said.

"After traffic is using the new bridge, the original bridge will be demolished," explained Harold Mull, GDOT District Construction Engineer.

The 474-mile-long bridge project was awarded to Talley Construction Company, Inc. of Rossville, for a contract price of \$3,578,685.77 with a completion date of Dec. 31, 2014.

The existing bridge was built in 1940. The new structure will include shoulders on both sides of the bridge and be built to current engineering standards improving safety for motorists.

The Murphy Highway bridge project is part of a \$55 million improvement package approved by GDOT, Pope said.

The new bridge in Union County is one of 17 North Georgia projects awarded by GDOT, Pope said.

The North Georgia projects costs total \$55 million, Pope said.

"The projects will improve mobility and safety," Pope said.

Emily Dunn, who represents the 9th Congressional District, which includes Union County, said construction of the Ivy Log Creek Bridge is

exciting news for Union County residents.

"This is great news for our community and construction will not impact traffic," Dunn said. "The new bridge will be built parallel to the existing bridge to the west. Traffic will continue to use the existing structure until the new bridge is finished then traffic will be shifted over to use the new bridge and the original bridge will be demolished."

Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris was all smiles about the Ivy Log Creek Bridge project.

He praised GDOT's leadership team.

"That project is a long time coming and we're excited to see it come to fruition," Paris said.

"GDOT has always worked with us, and we now feel fortunate to have Todd Long as our Deputy Director over GDOT. He was the area engineer here.

"We also have Russell McMurray as the chief engineer for GDOT and he was the engineer for our district," Paris said. "We

know these guys, they know our roads and they know what and where we're talking about when we bring up a road name. "That's very important for us," Paris said. "Both of these guys have been all over Union County."

Paris said Long and McMurray understand Union County's specific road needs and that's important in the long haul.

"I think these guys are going to work with us as much as they can," Paris said. "We want to get the Glen Gocher By-Pass reworked in a couple of years. We want some turning lanes to make some intersections safer, and traffic lights on the South end.

"GDOT's also going to be buying right-of-way on 515 East towards Young Harris for that widening project in 2014," he said. "We still have some other projects that we need addressed. It's important to have the right GDOT guys in place to make some of those projects happen."

Big Breakfast...from Page 1A



Allegheny's Big Breakfast attract big families, including newborn twins. Photo/Charles Duncan

milk and tea. What ever you want."

The price of admission wasn't enough for some folks. They gave more.

"With additional donations from wonderful, caring people like yourself, we experienced one of the most successful Big Country Breakfast's as far as profit, or revenue for our charitable endeavors is concerned," Shea said. "It was a great success."

The proceeds of the event go toward local scholarships, food boxes during hard times, to helping families at Thanksgiving and Christmas, and to the Masonic Homes, and the Widow's Fund.

"We couldn't have pulled this off without our incredible crew of volunteers," Shea said. "It's all about brotherhood, community and making a difference here.

"It's good brotherhood for those who come to help, it's good brotherhood for those who come to dine with us," Shea said. "It also lets everyone know what we're trying to accomplish in the community. We want to do good things in this community."

Brother Ed Turner was there helping. He's been around for quite some time, and he says the annual breakfast event has been going on ever since he can remember.

"We've served a lot of meals out of this Lodge," Turner said. "And we've enjoyed every minute."

Brother Turner said the events aren't just about raising money. It's also about fellowship.

"It's all about bringing people together," he said. "They come in here, they spend time with us, and they see what all this is about. The icing on the cake is they get a good meal to go with that.

"We get to help make a difference for some lucky students each year with some scholarship money," he said. "Hey, they're our future, and every little bit helps."