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in 1990 when Union County was clearing land of homes to make room for the Union County Industrial Park.

A small 1,200 square-foot home was moved to the property just beyond the old Georgia Boot Plant.

The building would become the headquarters for the county's ever growing Fire Department.

Today, it still houses fire operations and also serves as Union's Emergency Management Agency operations headquarters.

The only thing that has changed since 1990 is a mold situation in the basement of the building, where firefighters used to sleep during their 24-hour work shift.

That problem forced the county to purchase a FEMA trailer to house its rotating shifts of on duty firefighters.

"The trailer is their home-away-from-home," Fire Chief Charles Worden said. "They work 24-hour shifts. They eat here, they sleep here, they wait for an emergency call here."

Obviously, the firefighters couldn't keep living in mold conditions. However, in the trailer accommodations, the four on duty fighters are living in somewhat cramped quarters.

The 6,000 square-foot addition and new construction

at Fire Station 1 will be completed with the help of Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax dollars.

The addition will include firefighter living quarters, a day room, a kitchen and a training room/disaster planning room, Chief Worden said.

Also, the building will serve as the fire department's new headquarters and headquarters for Union's Emergency Management Agency.

A decision will be made on the future of the existing facility when that time comes,

"We just ran out of room," Chief Worden said. "We're elbow-to-elbow; we need more space as soon as we can get it. It's a real important project for us, especially where the living and sleeping quarters are concerned. These people come in at 8 in the morning, they go home at 8 in the morning the next day. They're here 24 hours straight. It's kind of like a home-away-from-home."

The additional facilities at Station 1 will be attached at the far side of the fire truck bays. A portion of the facility will be two stories, the front portion will be one story.

"This is a SPLOST project and we're proud to be moving forward with this one," Paris said. "We categorize projects and put them in

order of priority. We're to the point where we have the funding available to begin work on this site. You can ask any of the firefighters, they're ready for this project to begin."

Construction of the facility is just around the corner.

"It takes about six to eight weeks to get the metal buildings in," said Pam Worden, purchasing coordinator for the County. "It's hard to set a time table for the project's completion, but I'd estimate around next spring, just to be conservative."

"We're proud of our full-time fire department, but we're also proud of our team of volunteers," Paris said. "They supplement everything that is done here, with donations that come into the different stations. They've all bought rescue trucks, the Jaws of Life and all the extrication equipment."

"When the local folks support our fire department stations through donations, it just makes our community that much more safer," Paris said. "We've got some grants out there for some additional new equipment."

"It's about a \$400,000 grant and the county will have to contribute 10 percent of that. We're working hard to make our department one of the best in the state," Paris said.

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9,000 animals since 2001.

The \$10,000 in prize money and the additional \$1,000 from Petco will help many more local pets, according to Petco Foundation.

Castaway Critters Pet Rescue's mission is to rescue animals in need regardless of age, medical condition, injury or breed.

The grant money will help the group continue its mission by helping to pay various veterinary costs.

The 100 Celebrations contest ended Friday, Oct. 5.

Over the four weeks of the contest, scores of groups – many of them serving small communities – rallied thousands of votes from supporters across the country.

Nearly 60,000 votes were cast and the contest was shared about 36,000 times with other Facebook users.

According to Petco's Web site, all 100 groups who participated in the contest re-

ceived a \$1,000 grant at the outset of the competition, so none should feel like losers.

Our world is the real winner, being a better place because these organizations are in it making a difference every single day.

Congratulations to all the groups who saw their supporters rally behind their cause and help each gain some national attention for the good works that they really do in their communities.

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Halloween, don't forget to grab non-perishable items on your way out the door.

Raffle tickets will be given out for each food item so the more you bring the more chances you have to win.

Raffle prizes include local restaurant gift certificates, a Logan Turnpike Mill basket, and a Hallmark gift.

Drop off boxes will be located at Nantahala Bank and volunteers will be on hand to exchange raffle tickets for donated items.

A Hometown Halloween Costume Contest for kids and teens will be held at 4:30 p.m. – an hour before candy is distributed.

If you want to enter the contest, then arrive early and head to the Blairsville City Hall parking lot to sign up for the competition.

Halloween music from the clock tower will add to the carnival-type atmosphere of Halloween on the Square.

Thanks to the Union County Historical Society for welcoming all the little munchkins and pumpkins to the square for this much anticipated evening.

Event organizers remind folks that this event is not for pets or political campaigners.

Hometown Halloween is for the kids.

Many children are afraid of dogs and they are not old enough to vote.

Please adhere to this policy.

Businesses and organizations that want to give out candy are encouraged to register by Friday.

There is a \$10 fee for participating businesses (to

help cover costs of the event).

Please call (706) 994-4837 to sign up and learn additional details about Hometown Halloween.

Georgia State Patrol Career Fair

The Georgia State Patrol will be hosting a career fair on Friday, November 9, at the Georgia State Patrol Post 6 in Gainesville, 2000 Cleveland Highway, from 1-3 p.m. The patrol will be accepting applications for the 93rd Georgia State Patrol Trooper School.

More information is available at www.dps.ga.gov.

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