# North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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**Legal Organ of Union County** 

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May 10, 2017

# Deal signs important legislation to protect firefighters

North Georgia News Staff Writer

ELLIJAY – Firefighters don't ask what they might be exposed to before running into burning buildings.

And before the signing of House Bill 146 on Thursday, May 4, if they contracted cancers from exposure to carcinogenic burning chemicals, Georgia firefighters were on their own. Effective Jan. 1, 2018,

firefighters all over Georgia will gain access to insurance coverage for cancers specific to firefighting. Gov. Nathan Deal met

with legislators to sign what has become known as the "firefighter cancer bill" last Thursday at Gilmer County Fire Station No. 1.

During the signing ceremony, which was attended by more than two dozen area firefighting agencies, bill sponsor and District 67 State Rep. Micah Gravley of Douglasville highlighted individuals important to the

He spoke on the advocacy of Atlanta firefighter Frank Martinez, who died last year of cancer before being able to benefit from the bill he fought to secure for all firefighters in Georgia. Martinez' children attended the signing and collected pens used to sign the bill from Gov.

Present for the signing was bill advocate and Gilmer County Firefighter Brian Scudder, who previously underwent more than a year of chemotherapy for a firefighter

Gov. Deal, who vetoed a similar bill last year, called HB 146 an innovative solution in the way it provides "compensation and money for treatment and care for firefighters who contract cancers that are related to their work."

Moving forward in 2018, the bill will require fire departments to have insurance coverage to pay for cancer claims, to include lump sum payments to firefighters when they are diagnosed with cancers related to the job. Furthermore, firefighters

diagnosed with a "firefighter cancer" will be eligible for up to three years of disability payments if they can't work because of their illness.

After the signing, District

See Firefighters, Page 6A



-R: District 51 State Sen. Steve Gooch, Towns County Fire Chief Harold Copeland, Gov. Nathan Deal, Union County Batt. Chief Richard Jones and Union County Fire Chief David Dyer. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

# First Baptist Church hosts annual National Day of Prayer

North Georgia News **Staff Writer** 

Thousands upon thousands joined in prayer across the nation last week for the 66th National Day of Prayer, including dozens of Union County residents who gathered in prayer at the First Baptist Church of Blairsville on Thursday, May 4. The National Day of

Prayer is always on the first Thursday of May each year, and according to the National Day of Prayer Task Force, it is an occasion to promote prayer in America and encourage righteousness in the culture.

A number of pastors from around the county showed of the community, from the local levels of county and city government, all the way up to missionaries around the world

Richard and Sharon



Morrison of Blairsville organized and coordinated the event, reaching out to the pastors who participated in the ceremony last Thursday.

"Thousands of people

have gathered together today all across this great nation to pray," said Sharon Morrison. "We still have the freedom as

See Prayer, Page 6A

#### Sheriff's Office to crack down on speeding, texting while driving

By Shawn Jarrard North Georgia News Staff Writer

For the safety of the public, the Union County Sheriff's Office will soon be increasing its efforts to crack down on certain offenses. The top two problem

areas for patrol deputies have been speeding on Georgia 515 and texting while driving, activities that are both potentially deadly to drivers and innocent bystanders, according to UCSO Lt. Daren "Here lately, we've had

some that's been clocked in the 90s and 100 plus miles per hour," said Lt. Osborn, speaking on GA 515 speeding. "That's too fast, and in my opinion, it's stupid."

Other offenses the sheriff's office will be looking to curtail are blackout tinted windows and unsecured loads, according to Lt. Osborn.

All of the issues



**Union County Sheriff** Mack Mason

enumerated above are becoming more and more of a problem in the county, according to Lt. Osborn.

"We're giving the public a chance to pull the reins back in," said Lt. Osborn. "There's going to be more of a concentrated patrol of 515 no

The sheriff's office has been averaging more than 100 traffic tickets a month, a good portion of them for speeding, according to Lt. Osborn.

"It's getting worse, and we've got to do something about it," said Lt. Osborn. "We're writing tickets, but we're not a revenue machine. This is to save lives.

'Look at the deaths out there. We've been looking at the citations and looking at the deaths, and all that's going up. so it's got to be stopped."

To Lt. Osborn's point, the sheriff's office operates on a budget through the county that is independent of the number of citations issued, meaning that the sheriff's office is funded even if it writes

"Texting and driving, I see it more and more every day," said Lt. Osborn. "I see it every day, and I have pulled people over for it, but now we're going to start writing

See Speeding, Page 2A

## Life of Martha Cone celebrated in memorial

**North Georgia News Staff Writer** 

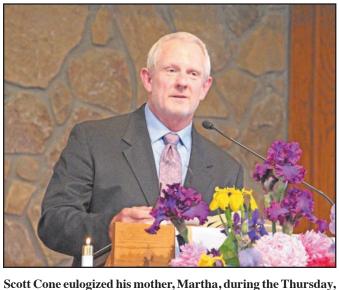
Family and friends gathered to celebrate the life and legacy of Martha Cone on Thursday, May 4.

Cone, 78, passed away at Erlanger Medical Center in Chattanooga, Tennessee, on Monday, May 1, following a brief illness.

Her memorial service

took place inside the sanctuary of her home church, First United Methodist of Union County, where she directed the church's Child Enrichment Center for more than 20 years.

As guests filed in before See Cone, Page 3A



May 4, memorial service. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

### **Union County woman dies** from injuries in Sunday evening motorcycle crash

By Charles Duncan North Georgia News editor@nganews.com

A53-year-old Blairsville woman succumbed to injuries sustained in a one-vehicle accident Sunday on Track Rock Gap Road, just east of Foggy Bottom Farm Road, according to Staff Sgt. Bradley Glass of the Union County

Sheriff's Office. Chanel Hilliard lost control of her Harley Davidson Cruiser and skidded 50 feet before her motorcycle left the roadway, Sgt. Glass said.

North Georgia News

Every child deserves

Enter Title I, a federal

According to the

equal access to a quality

education, including those

who face financial and other

disadvantages on the home

front, as is the case with many

program designed to help

schools with the highest

percentages of children from

families in Union County.

low-income families.

Staff Writer

"She collided with a telephone pole," Sgt. Glass said. "She died at the scene from injuries sustained in the crash as emergency personnel was arriving at the crash scene. She was pronounced dead at the scene.

This crash occurred around 7:55 p.m. on Sunday, May 7. Hilliard was traveling north on Track Rock Gap Road attempting to negotiate a left-hand curve. The motorcycle traveled onto the east shoulder of the roadway

See Crash, Page 2A

**Union County home to two** 

Title I Reward Schools



# TVA: Lake Nottely means jobs and money

By Lily Avery North Georgia News **Staff Writer** 

As part of a yearly "River Tour," the Tennessee Valley Authority held a briefing for local officials at Cabin Coffee in Blairsville to discuss area lake levels and recent recreation studies on Monday,

Members of the various departments within TVA spent the last week traveling throughout TVA properties in the valleys in

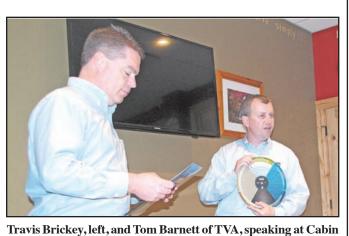
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Coffee on Monday, May 1. Photo/Lily Avery

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Legals

Obits

**Sports** 

**Meals on Wheels** Yard Sale **May 11-12 Senior Center** 

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Class AAA **Championships** May 11-13 **Hugh Mills Stadium** Albany, GA

UCES Principal Trish Cook, Schools Superintendent Dr. Fred

numbers, greater than 60 Rayfield, and UCMS Principal Gwen Stafford. Photo/Shawn See Schools, Page 7A

