

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

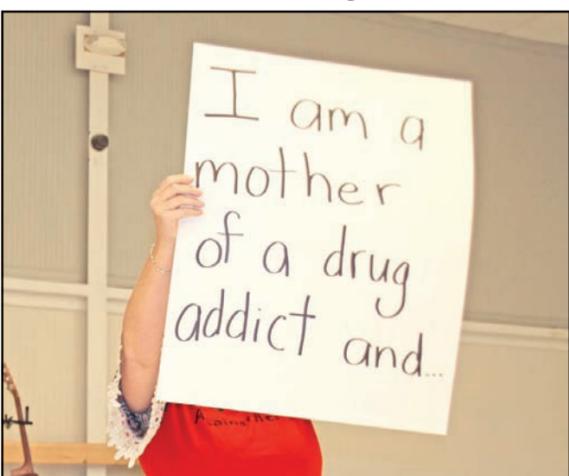
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Community comes together for 'Hope Against Heroin'



This mother participated in an emotional live slideshow of those whose lives have been impacted or nearly shattered by heroin and other drugs, at the Hope Against Heroin Rally on Thursday, Oct. 13

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Drug addiction is a disease, and as with any other disease, those suffering from the effects of drug addiction deserve treatment as well as respect.

And Joanne Sales wants everyone – especially “addicts” and their families – to know that, even if every next day seems dimmer than the last, there is hope against the growing darkness caused by drug addiction.

Sales, whom many will recognize from the Union County Historical Society, organized the well-attended “Hope Against Heroin Rally,” which took place on Thursday, Oct. 13, and left the Haralson

Memorial Civic Center with standing room only.

The event, attended by residents from around the region, focused on a collective message of hope delivered by people whose lives have been directly touched by drug abuse.

“This rally is to raise awareness of addiction in Union County,” said Sales in introduction, before listing several goals for the event. “One is that it will open your hearts and minds to the urgency of facing addiction.”

“Two, to encourage the people to look beyond the stigma and shame that addiction can and does impact the people they love the most. Three is to educate people that addiction is a disease, and that they need to be cared for just

like cancer, diabetes and any other health concern.”

Following her introduction, Sales, her featured speakers, and fellow event organizers put on an emotional

living slideshow set to music.

One by one, individuals stood before a captivated audience, posters held high

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Joanne Sales organized the “Hope Against Heroin” event

Cummings takes the reins as Blue Ridge Mountain EMC board president

By Lily Avery
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Mickey Cummings, former vice president of the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC Board of Directors, is stepping up to the plate as the newest board president.

While officer elections are internal among the board members, taking place immediately following the BRMEMC Annual Meeting each September, the change of command was brought about by a concern in the Minor Report that showed a need for implementing term limits to ensure democracy within the board.

Now, board presidents can only hold that position for a year before another member is elected to fill the slot.

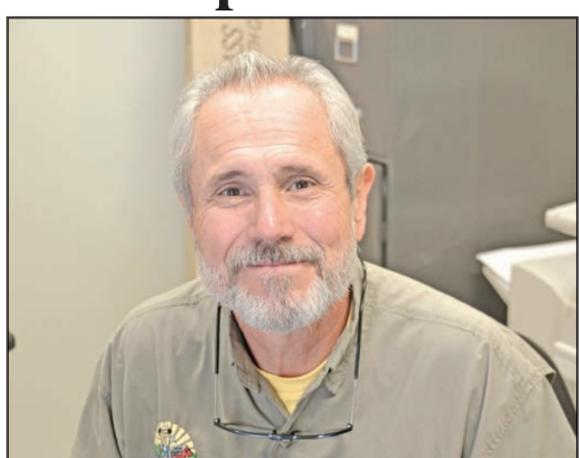
Cummings, voted onto the membership in September of 2015, has seen

the EMC undergo numerous changes throughout his term, and he aims to continue to make positive changes for the EMC, and in turn for the customers, in the coming year.

“We had a meeting the other night and we looked at some priorities for the board that are going to provide us direction for the upcoming year, in terms of decision-making,” said Cummings.

“We’re getting down to brass tacks in the board meetings, trying to make decisions that help the community. At the same time, we’re trying to be financially conscious and make sure that we’re spending the customers’ money wisely.”

According to Cummings, their recently discussed list of priorities will bring about the one thing that he wishes to see in the next year: a better community relationship with



Mickey Cummings

the EMC and, most importantly, transparency.

Two current situations that Cummings and the board wish to address as they move forward are clarification in

customer billing and lack of fiber optic and broadband options for certain area residents.

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Queen fully certified as county clerk

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

It’s official – Jennifer Queen is now the fully certified county clerk of Union County.

Altogether, that’s Union County Clerk Jennifer Queen, a title she has worked hard to earn.

She received her Georgia Certified Clerk certificate just last month, in September. In order to acquire the certification, she attended 101 credit hours of training in Athens with the University of Georgia’s Carl Vinson Institute of Government.

Queen started her journey to become a certified county clerk more than three years ago, when her Carl Vinson training began. She actually finished up in record time, considering that classes are only available two at a time twice a year, for a total of four



Union County Clerk Jennifer Queen

classes each year.

When she began her training in 2013, Queen was deputy county clerk and handled accounts payable for the county.

Longtime County Clerk

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Georgia DOT evaluating one-lane option at 180 bridge to and from Suches

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

The Georgia Department of Transportation has decided to reconsider the 23.5-mile detour around the Lake Winfield Scott Bridge on SR 180 leading to and from Suches.

As such, GDOT is currently evaluating the potential of keeping one lane of the existing bridge open during construction of the proposed bridge with signalization to control traffic operations,” according to a letter sent by GDOT’s Eric Duff to Union County Sole

Commissioner Lamar Paris earlier this month.

GDOT’s willingness to reconsider the detour and evaluate the one-lane option comes as a direct result of the Aug. 25 Detour Open House at Woody Gap School, where residents from Suches and Union County attended in order to file comments regarding the detour.

Statistics from that meeting and subsequent comments are as follows: 225 people attended the open house; 165 people formally responded with a comment

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This is a meeting with the Woody Gap Auditorium during the Aug. 25 meeting with GDOT representatives, who at the time were seeking public comments on the proposed closure of Lake Winfield Scott Bridge

Community continues support for Deputy Henderson

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Mitchell Henderson, who as of late has been in serious but stable condition, proved well enough to undergo pelvic surgery last week, and his family hopes he can return to Atlanta’s Shepherd Center this week for further rehabilitation, according to UCSO Lt. Daren Osborn.

Henderson, a deputy with the Union County Sheriff’s Office and native of Young Harris, has been in Northeast Georgia Medical Center in Gainesville since his Sept. 19 car accident, with family staying nearby in hotels and friends from Union and Towns counties visiting regularly.

Shepherd Center is a rehabilitation hospital

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The Cove at Nottely Boat Club recently held a Shake the Lake Challenge plus a concert benefit, giving the community another opportunity to show its support for Union County Sheriff’s Deputy Mitchell Henderson and his family

Early voting has begun; vote now

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Early voting began Monday, and will run for three weeks leading up to the big General Election on Tuesday, Nov. 8.

Every weekday between now and Friday, Nov. 4, during the hours of 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., registered Union County voters will be able to walk into the Union County Registrar’s Office to cast their votes.

The Registrar’s Office is located within the Union County Courthouse, and will be open to voters even during lunchtime hours.

There is one weekend day set aside for voters at the Registrar’s Office, which will

be Saturday, Oct. 29, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., for those who find themselves too busy to vote during the scheduled weekdays of voting.

Voters looking for absentee ballots will need to contact the Registrar’s Office in the courthouse, or call (706) 439-6016.

Tuesday, Oct. 11, was the voter registration deadline leading into the General Election just a few short weeks away.

The following candidates will appear on the ballot:

For President of the United States, Donald J. Trump, with his vice presidential running mate Michael R. Pence, Republican;

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Project celebrates history of Appalachian Trail

By Lily Avery
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

The Appalachian Trail has been a staple of North Georgia history for almost a century, bringing environmental conservation and tourism to the area for many years.

To celebrate this abundance of history and culture, the Appalachian Trail Community unveiled a project highlighting the national treasure at the Georgia



Dayton Miller

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Library Sculpture Dedication correct time is Wed. Oct. 19th at 1:30 PM
See page 7B

N. Georgia Motorcycle Show
See page 2A and 8C

Food Drive for Hurricane Victims at Aviagen
See page 5A

Panthers Softball Class AAA State Sweet 16 Wed. Oct. 19 @ SE Bullcok Noon and 2 PM
Football 3 Oct. 20 if necessary Bye Week