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North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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November 9, 2016

Countywide burn ban aims to prevent wildfire

By Lily Avery
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

The mountains are catching fire.

On Sunday, the U.S. Forest Service found wildfire so near the Richard Russell Scenic Highway in White County that authorities immediately closed the highway to through traffic until the blaze could be controlled.

Union County had its own wildfire on Chimneytop Mountain last week, and Fannin County has more than 4,000 acres burned in its Cohutta Wilderness.

Hayesville, North Carolina, is struggling with wildfire, too, and no one in Union County can step outside

without smelling the acrid smoke of these nearby fires.

In order to protect Union County, which is well into an extensive drought and situated dangerously close to a growing numbers of raging wildfires in the region, the city of Blairsville and Union County have joined together with the Union County Fire Department and Union County Sheriff's Office to issue a countywide Burn Ban, effective immediately as of Friday, Nov. 4.

According to the ban, all outdoor open flames of any form or fashion are prohibited, including warming fires, campfires, burn barrels, fire rings, fireworks, charcoal grills, cooking fires, fire pits and chimineas.



UCSO Capt. Doug Loyd, Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris, Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley and Fire Chief David Dyer met on Friday, Nov. 4, to sign a countywide burn ban.

Brush pile burns and agricultural fires are also strictly prohibited. Outdoor gas grill cooking is allowed, but anything aside from gas will

be considered a violation of the ban, meaning no charcoal or other combustible material allowed.

According to Union County Fire Chief David Dyer, the Burn Ban will be in effect until further notice.

"Anything that can have an ember that can fly off isn't okay," said Chief Dyer. "We know it's an inconvenience in this season where everybody likes to have a burn pile and bonfire and all that stuff, but it's very unsafe to have any kind of open flame anywhere. We're in a bad situation right now."

While indoors, controlled flame fireplaces are

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Forest Service to temporarily close 180 bridge

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Lake Winfield Scott on the Chattahoochee National Forest – a high elevation, 18-acre lake approximately five miles north of Suches off State Highway 180 – has experienced significantly reduced water levels this year due to damage to the water control structure that controls the lake level.

The repair work to the lake's water control structure will require temporary closure of State Highway 180 at the Lake Winfield Scott Bridge on Nov. 9, Nov. 10, and Nov. 14, from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., and 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. each day.

During these dates and

times, thru traffic will be detoured around State Hwy 180 via US 19 and GA 60. Local traffic, both north and south of the State Hwy 180 Bridge, will remain unrestricted other than the fact that the bridge will not be passable during these dates and times.

Lake Winfield Scott Recreation Area will remain open, for winter services only; however, motorized vehicles will need to access the area via Hwy 180 north from Suches.

"We understand this is a significant inconvenience for our local community and visitors, and we are working closely with the Georgia Department of Transportation and our local emergency



Lake Winfield Scott Bridge on SR 180

management partners to minimize the road closure impacts to the public," said Andy Baker, District Ranger for the Blue Ridge Ranger District.

Added Baker: "At the same time, we are excited to be able to complete repairs to the water control system at the lake so that next year, this

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Coosa Methodist thanks veterans with annual brunch



Nadine Michaels, left, has been organizing the Coosa United Methodist Veterans Appreciation Brunch since 2010. Michaels is pictured here with co-organizers Butch and Becky Quick.

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

the community observe the day by thanking friends and relatives who have served in the U.S.

Veterans Day is this Friday, Nov. 11, and many in

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Locals dance the night away for Enotah CASA

By Lily Avery
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Towns and Union County locals took to the stage on Saturday, Nov. 5, for Enotah CASA's "Dancing with the North Georgia Stars" at the Union County Schools Fine Arts Center, where they danced their hearts out all that night.

The event, a charitable take on the hit reality TV show, featured 11 local celebrities from both Towns and Union counties performing a wide variety of dances with professional dance partners, in front of a crowd of nearly 700 people.

Following the show was a Dancing with the North Georgia Stars Gala at the North Georgia Technical College, catered by Copperhead Lodge, where patrons could meet the

couples and celebrate a night of dancing and fellowship.

Enotah CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates for children) is a nonprofit organization serving four Georgia counties: Towns, Union, White and Hall. Dancing with the North Georgia Stars acted as a fundraiser for Enotah CASA, with all proceeds going to help abused and neglected children within the four-county district.

CASA volunteers typically handle an average of two cases that they will work on for at least two years. In the last year, CASA members have served 219 children from the area, and most of these children are under the age of 12.

Initially, the projected goal for the event was \$20,000, but after an astounding amount of community support and



Angela Thompson-Puleo and Lee Knight took a trip back in time with their disco dance routine straight out of the 1970s.

outreach, the organization was able to raise over \$40,000 through the fundraiser, doubling the proposed target sum.

"This is better than I thought it would be," said Linda D'Angelo, Enotah CASA executive director. "I'm so appreciative and so

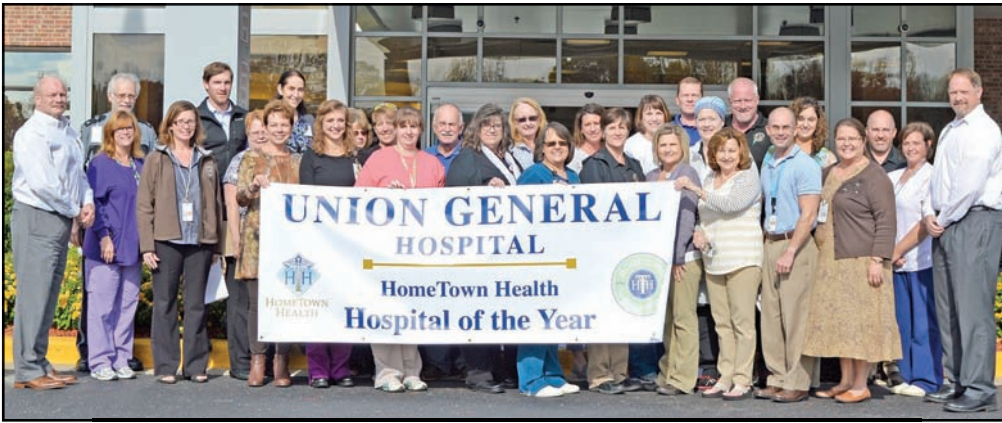
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Union General Hospital named 2016 Hospital of the Year by HomeTown Health

News Special
North Georgia News

HomeTown Health, LLC recognized Union General Hospital as the "Hospital of the Year" at its 2016 Annual Conference at Callaway Gardens in Pine Mountain, Georgia from among 70 hospital members across the Southeast. Union General Hospital received this prestigious award for providing exemplary leadership by adopting "Best Practices" for rural hospital improvement, and making a commitment to staff education, advocating to state policymakers while emphasizing technological advances and superior patient care.

Union General Hospital was willing and com-



Union General Hospital staff proudly display "Hospital of the Year" banner

mitted to being a part of the Rural Hospital Stabilization Pilot program in year one, and they have risen above and beyond in response to this role. As part of the Rural Hospital

Stabilization, their team has put in numerous hours and shown thorough dedication not only in improvements for their own facility, but being a willing leader in sharing best practice

solutions with other hospitals in our network," says Jimmy Lewis, CEO of HomeTown Health.

Union General Hospital
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Police chief seeks help with 'Shop With A Cop'



Cindy Neely and Chief Johnny Carroll of the Blairsville Police Department

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Police Department took 100 kids shopping at Walmart for Christmas.

Last year, the Blairsville

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