"We've put a lot of time into this, a lot of effort, and it's good to have everybody in our area to come in to help out, also," said Barley. "We have a lot of volunteers here today,

too, to help out.
"Walmart has been a good partner to us. They've really helped us out a lot, and they're willing to jump in there and help us out when they can."

Joining the Cruisers that Tuesday were members of the local law enforcement community, like Blairsville Police Chief Johnny Carroll, himself a Cruiser, and Chief Deputy John George from the Union County Sheriff's Office, also a Cruiser.

UCSO Capt. Doug Loyd was thrilled to be one

of many law enforcement representatives from each division of the sheriff's office on hand to engage positively with the youth of the county. "Special organizations

like the Blairsville Cruisers

have supported us for many years now," said Capt. Loyd. "It's awesome to see local groups like that come together to make Christmas for these "There's a lot of families in this area that are in need, and if it wasn't for the Blairsville

Cruisers or some of these other organizations that step up to the plate, some of them might not have a Christmas.' The Cruisers were able

to raise the kind of money they needed to take 62 children Christmas shopping, all the while donating to other causes, by soliciting help from the community in their fundraising

Every year, the Cruisers

sell raffle tickets for a car,

and the people who spend



Local law enforcement officers always lend a helping hand to the Cruisers during Shop with a Cruiser. Photo/Shawn

money on the raffle tickets know where the money will be going, giving them all the more reason to buy the tickets.



Blairsville Cruisers President Pete Barley and Danny Johns bagging purchases made by the kids that day. Photo/Shawn

The club is always accepting new members, like John Jacobs of Morganton, who has been in the club for about a year.

"It's important for us to be here this morning for the love of the kids, to help the kids," said Jacobs, a greatgrandfather. "I'm thankful for what I've got, and I look at other kids and see what they

don't have, and I just want to help them."

Walmart provided refreshments for kids and volunteers, and employees to assist with checking the kids out, and after the shopping, the Cruisers treated the schoolchildren to lunch at Papa's Pizza To Go on the Downtown Blairsville Square.

### VA's new Decision Ready Claims Program process



The Decision Ready Claims (DRC) Program is the fastest way to get your VA claim processed. You can get a decision on your claim in 30 days or less by working with an accredited Veterans Service Organization (VSO).

The DRC Program allows you to submit VA compensation claims that are decision-ready so you can get your claim processed as fast as possible.

To submit a DRC, you

must: Appoint and work with an accredited Veterans Service Organization (VSO); Gather all relevant and required evidence to support your claim; and Attend a VA claim exam, if needed, before submitting your claim.

When you work with an accredited VSO and provide all the necessary evidence with your application, you can get a decision on your claim in 30 days or less.

Currently, the DRC Program is available for the following types of compensation claims: Direct Service Connection Claims: Claims for conditions that began during your military service or were caused by an event while

Presumptive Service

Connection Claims: Claims for conditions that are presumed to have been caused by an event during your military service, even if there is no specific evidence showing a connection between your condition and your military service in your service records. This includes conditions related to Agent Orange, chronic disabilities, and the following conditions tied to service during the Gulf War: fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome, and functional gastrointestinal disorders.

Secondary Service Connection Claims: Claims for conditions that were caused or aggravated by a service-connected disability. Increased Disability Claims: Claims for existing serviceconnected conditions that you have medical evidence to show have gotten worse. Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) Claims: Claims for surviving spouses of Veterans whose death resulted from a service-related injury or disease or who was rated 100% disabled due to service-connected conditions (including entitlement to Individual Unemployability) for 10 years prior to their death. To learn more about DIC, including eligibility requirements, go to the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation

Pre-Discharge Claims: Claims for disability compensation filed by Servicemembers who have less than 90 days remaining before their separation from military service. To file a DRC, you must have previously filed a VA claim and received a rating decision from VA on that claim. See web site for excep-

Have more questions? Reach out to your local VSO or call the VA toll-free number at 1-800-827-1000; https://www.benefits.va.gov/ compensation/DRC.asp.

This message brought to you by VVA chapter 1101 Blairsville, GA. We meet every third Thursday of the month at 1:15 PM in the Major Leon Davenport Veterans Building located at 78 Blue Ridge Hwy., Blairsville. No meeting in December. In addition we meet every Wednesday morning at 8 AM in the Blairsville Restaurant for biscuits and BS. This organization is open to all Vietnam ERA Veteran plus we have an Associate group that is open to all people interested in helping veterans. Contact us at Blairsvillevva@gmail.com.



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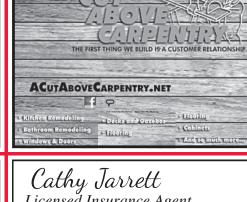
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