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A. Each year for the past five years, our SPLOST Revenues have increased. The chart below shows the increases over the last 5 years. This increase is evidence that our county businesses are healthy with their revenues increasing each year.

2017	\$4,138,425
2016	\$3,971,793
2015	\$3,806,952
2014	\$3,681,848
2013	\$3,518,272

Q. Does the County give the City of Blairsville any portion of SPLOST Funds that are collected?

A. The County has an Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Blairsville. All SPLOST Funds that are collected in the county are sent to the County by the State and then we give the City 7.89% of the SPLOST money that we receive.

Q. How much money was collected in SPLOST 3 and so far in SPLOST 4?

A. SPLOST III lasted for 6 years and the total amount of revenue was \$20,419,015. SPLOST IV that started in April of 2015 has already reached \$10,789,853. In 2 years and 8 months SPLOST funds received has already reached over half of what was collected in the entire 6 years of the previous SPLOST.

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morning. Surprisingly, we learned she was once part of a gospel singing quartet. Looking back this should not of surprised me. I can still hear all those favorite hymns of mine ringing in my ears while we worshipped at the Blue Springs Missionary Baptist Church. And I can still hear Delph singing those wonderful old songs. None of her grandsons acquired the gene that allowed us to tickle someone's ears with the melodious notes of "I'll Fly Away," but, that didn't stop Maw maw from sending us to "Singing School" each summer. Actually, the only thing I remember learning was how to smoke. Another cousin of ours stole some of his dad's Lucky Strike cigarettes one morning and brought them to Singing School. A bunch of us boys slipped out of class and hid out at the outhouse trying not to get sick from inhaling those Lucky Strikes.

Maw maw never spanked us. She didn't even talk sternly. All she said was that she was disappointed. I never tried another cigarette.

One day for some reason she took me fishing at her brother's catfish pond. I didn't know it at the time but, Uncle Rufus' pond was a pay to catch fishing pond. I remember catching 4, enough for supper, three pound catfish and was told that it was time to go. I begged to just catch one more. She didn't have the heart to say no and Uncle Rufus only grinned. By the time I had caught 9 I only wanted one more. I was using a cane pole longer than my short body and wanted to reach out as far as possible. So, I drew the pole toward me in an effort

to sling the bait far out into the lake. The only problem was that I caught my lower lip. Uncle Rufus had to cut the hook out of my lower lip. I was so embarrassed. Here I was nearly a man at 12 and yet my uncle and grandmother were having to cut a hook from my lip. But, they turned my embarrassment into pride because I was told, "Mick, you didn't even cry. You're a tough old nut".

Later in life Maw maw came to my house for a visit. I invited her to travel with me to Helen, Georgia. A 4-H Rewards Trip was scheduled that day and I wondered if she might be interested in going. I really didn't think she would because we were going to float in tubes down the Chattahoochee River. My 72 year old grandmother jumped at the opportunity. The water was cold and the rocks were sharp, but, she had a ball. Later that same week I asked her about the time Dad Baker caught her dancing. She smiled as she remembered. Then I prodded her a little and told her I had never witnessed anyone doing the Charleston. Immediately, she jumped to her feet and in my living room at 72 years old she demonstrated the dance that nearly resulted in getting her spanked 60 years prior.

Another thing about Delphia Adams is that she felt she was never too old for her to learn something. When she was 70 years old she went back to school and received her High School Diploma. She enrolled in Northwest Alabama Community College as a student at the age of 72 which resulted in my belief that Delphia Adams never grew old. She only wore out.

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Santa does not make this day special, as the coming of Jesus Christ will! It is not a Santa, Happy Holiday! HE

came to us, a tiny baby who is the Son of God, and coming back! No on a Happy Holiday, but a day of separation of the two!

I am sure we will not greet Him saying Happy Holiday, Jesus or the man up stairs or down the chimney! I am

so happy it is CHRISTmas, and HE is within my heart! I met Him at age 9 years old at the cross. You can too, Merry Christmas! Go fishing like he said, "I will make you fishers of men" on your holiday! Rest for your should and work! Be thankful for all He has done for you, tell Him so, and others!

Merry Christmas, "World". Merry Christmas to you!

Irene Porter

Coalition... continued from Page 4A

disconnected family structure and added pressures to succeed. Kids using drugs in middle school, however, tend to come from less wealthy families.

A teen's decision to experiment with drugs is often a perfect storm of these various factors. But in some cases, even the least likely of teens will dive into drug use, simply for the thrill, to stoke their curiosity or to be cool. Little do they know that one night of "trying something new" can potentially trigger a lifetime of problems.

Drugs can destroy a life, cutting it short in many cases. The harder the drug and the longer your teen abuses it, the more extensive the risks. There is no simple drug problem. Even the "lesser" drugs carry a serious weight and can have a domino effect in many areas of your teen's life. Young people may feel invincible and immune to the dangers of

the risks of teen drug use can include serious illness, injury or death, suspension or expulsion from school or extra-curricular activities, being arrested, losing friends and damaging family relationships. If they are working they could be fired and have trouble getting hired in the future, and get deep in debt. This same risky activity can lead to thoughtless sexual behavior, rape and sexually-transmitted diseases, not to mention unwanted pregnancy and possibly birth defects.

These things happen to teens — and pre-teens — every day. The old saying that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure is surely true. In fact, a weekly ounce of drug and alcohol prevention discussions with each of your children may be worth more than a ton of heartache and treatment.

S.A.F.E. needs volunteers

S.A.F.E. (Support in Abusive Family Emergencies): we are in need of volunteers for our Thrift stores and our Shelter! We need help in every area. Thrift store, monitoring, newsletters, childcare, life coaching, transporting, crafting, shelter repair, computer lessons, whatever skills you may have!

(All volunteers must submit to a criminal background check and depending upon your area of interest, may be required to obtain fingerprinting at our cost.)

You can make a difference in your community. Our purpose is to help those who have been affected by abuse.

Mattee...

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on crape myrtles, especially aphids. In severe infestations, aphids will secrete honeydew onto leaves that can lead to sooty mold, a black discoloration that can occur in the summer and fall. This honeydew can also attract ants.

Sooty mold usually causes little damage, but it can

reduce the plant's vigor and look unsightly. Insect resistant crape myrtle varieties are available if this is a consistent problem. Always follow pesticide label instructions carefully, and spray late in the day when bees are not active. Crape myrtles are important food sources and habitats for important pollinators, so it is important to disturb these creatures as little as possible.

Fowler...

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and acceptable and perfect" (Rom. 12:2).

A noble resolution for this year, and for every day actually, is to put on your new self which is like God, righteous and holy. "Be imitators of God, as beloved children, and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you" (Eph. 5:1-2). Let that love be the motivation for your resolutions, and for life.

Harper...

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where networking is critical to business success and growth, Monthly Mingle is certain to help members connect with other business owners to form working relationships that will prove beneficial to all parties involved.

The first Monthly Mingle will be held on January 17th. Charles White, of S.C.O.R.E. in Gainesville, will be our speaker. He will be sharing numerous free resources available to help business owners grow and strengthen their business.

Seating is limited and pre-registration is required. The cost for lunch is \$12 and all inclusive. The January menu includes baked ziti, garlic bread, Caesar salad, and a drink. For additional information, please contact Dawn Saraney, Member Services Coordinator, at 706-745-5789 or at membership@blairsvillechamber.com.

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creators from building their businesses within America's shores.

For too long, America's corporate rate effectively subsidized the economies of other nations by driving production overseas, where corporate tax rates are less absurd. By lowering the corporate tax rate from 35% to 21%, we're rehabilitating one of the worst tax systems in the industrialized world so that it serves our citizens again.

By allowing businesses to see more return on their investment in America, we finally make room for the economy to expand, to the benefit of all Americans. History bears this out. The Obama Administration attempted to manufacture growth by shelling out taxpayer money. As a result, Obama's presidency is the first on record not to have a single calendar year with a 3% rise in GDP.

Yet taxes aren't the only millstones hanging around the necks of Georgia's people. Obamacare has punished individuals by taking away their access to doctors and affordable health care. Nineteen of the Ninth District's 20 counties now have only one option for health insurance, meaning they have no choice – the government compelled them to buy insurance on a crippled market. But our tax reform package repeals the individual mandate, a cornerstone of the Affordable Care Act that inflicted IRS penalties on anyone who chose not to purchase health insurance.

While Republicans are making good on our promises to reform the tax code and dismantle Obamacare, we're also encouraging energy independence. The tax bill ends a shortsighted energy policy and gives Americans the freedom to develop more of our own resources rather than rely on foreign oil suppliers.

The primary need of Georgia's farms, families, small businesses and entrepreneurs is to be unshackled from policies that have proven toxic to growth and liberty. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act does that in partnership with regulatory reform initiatives like the REINS Act, which I introduced – and President Trump supports – to make it harder for federal agencies to implement costly programs without approval from Congress and the president.

Together, the president, House and Senate have reinvented a faulty tax system and complemented it with a deregulatory agenda that further peels big government off the back of the little guy.

We've been faithful to keep these promises because we have faith in our neighbors, the people who have always made America great and who deserve to keep more of their own money to pour into their own dreams – starting now.

U.S. Representative

Doug Collins

Ninth District of Georgia