

Pinwheels...from Page 1A



Photo by Shawn Jarrard

Blue pinwheels are the national symbol for child abuse prevention. These will remain on the Blairsville Square through April.

certainly, CASA is one of those that needs our support," said Commissioner Paris. "It's one of the most worthy causes because you're helping the kids."

D'Angelo said she appreciates all the different kinds of support Enotah CASA

and, by extension, the children receive on a regular basis.

"What we want to focus on is not so much, hey, this horrible thing happened, but how can the community help," said D'Angelo. "The community can help in many different ways.

"One, just being watchful for what's happening to children. What's happening to your neighbors' children? Do you see a child that needs to have some kind of help or support?

"Secondly, some of it is, parents just need some help. Sometimes, neglect just comes out of the fact that they aren't able to care for them for any number of reasons."

And there are any number of ways for people

to get involved in the lives of children who fall on hard times through no fault of their own.

"Become a mentor for a child in the school," suggested D'Angelo. "Become a CASA advocate for sure. Become a foster parent.

"We still have a high need for foster parents in our community so that children are not placed outside our own community."

For more information on how to get involved and to access a calendar of events, visit EnotahCASA.org.

Residents who suspect a child is being abused or neglected should contact the Georgia Department of Family and Children Services at 1 (855) 422-4453.

Council...from Page 1A



Photo by Shawn Jarrard

Blairsville City Councilmembers Betty Easter and Tony Dyer during the April 3 regular meeting.

BPD officer.

At the meeting's close, Sheriff Mason asked to have a word with the council and Mayor Jim Conley before they adjourned for the evening.

"We have a unique deal over here, one that I don't know of that exists anywhere in the state of Georgia," said Sheriff Mason. "I have deputized, as you well know, all of your officers.

"Part of mine work for you, and then part of yours work for us. And I don't know of that happening anywhere else in the state where a sheriff will let his deputies work for the city."

Sheriff Mason pointed out that the relationship helps both the city and county save money, as the officers and deputies benefit from making fully trained hires, and both officers and deputies can respond to situations within the other's usual jurisdiction.

"I have people ask me, they say, why does Union County have to have 42 deputies?" said Sheriff Mason. "Well, that's the grand total, and I can answer that very simply: the state of Georgia has gotten out of law enforcement, basically. They're regressing.

"Forty-five years ago ... they had 900 troopers when I hired on. Today, they've got 780, with no plans to increase the force. So, that's putting work on the counties and the cities. Stuff the troopers used to do, they're not doing, they don't have time.

"I'm not knocking the troopers, I'm knocking the legislators, because they've let us get in this shape. The GBI is the same thing. Region 8 of the GBI, 14 counties in the northeast up here, 35, 36 years ago, they had 10 agents working these 14 counties. Today, they've got six."

The sheriff continued to point out how much times have changed, noting that nobody expected the amount of growth Union County and Georgia have experienced in the last few decades.

"But the state's not keeping up with us, and my gripe is that they're not doing anything for the cities and the counties to fund law enforcement," said Sheriff Mason. "If they're going to

get out, that's fine.

"We can do the job, but just give us the money and get the burden off the property owners of the city and the county."

Sheriff Mason argued that if the state feels it has an interest in determining the pay of elected officials and teachers, as well as an obligation to enforce state-mandated training for peace officers, then it should definitely have an interest in making sure law enforcement is adequately cared for financially.

"It's an undisputed fact that 95 percent of the arrests in the state of Georgia are made by the city and county officers – it's not the state," said Sheriff Mason. "What are we enforcing? We're enforcing state laws, not city ordinances and county ordinances, although we do, but it's very minimal."

Added Sheriff Mason: "I appreciate y'all, I really do. Anything you can do for these officers, you know, a little bit more money, I would appreciate it."

At that point, Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley shared his feelings on the matter.

"We discussed in the last council meeting about an additional increase for our part-timers," said Mayor Conley. "I discussed it with our chief and assistant chief, and with the assistant chief's right-hand man, and I'm proposing to the council tonight that we give all part-timers an additional \$1 an hour raise."

The motion carried unanimously, and henceforth, deputies who work part-time with the Blairsville Police Department will make \$15 an hour.

Also in the meeting, the city council voted to finalize the annexation of the Conley Property, and developer David Brown, who was in attendance that evening, said that the property would be used to build apartments for elderly residents numbering approximately 70.

The council also approved the purchase of a 4X2 Gator from Nelson Tractor for \$5,525 in SPLOST funds, to be used by city maintenance.