

# North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Legal Organ of Union County

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February 13, 2013

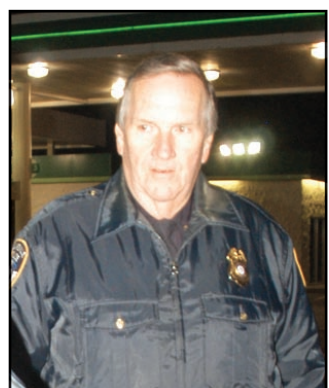
## BPD busts second rolling meth lab since 2009



Appalachian Drug Task Force Hazmat officers prepare to disassemble a rolling methamphetamine laboratory in Blairsville. Photo/Charles Duncan

By Charles Duncan  
North Georgia News  
editor@nganews.com

Blairsville Police Department Assistant Chief Michael "Bear" Baxter has done it again. For the second time since 2009, Baxter has taken a rolling methamphetamine laboratory off the roads. Baxter was following a Union



Michael Baxter

County School Bus on the Murphy Highway when a Chevrolet Trailblazer driven by Robert Kornet of Blue Ridge ignored a the bus' stop arm as children were exiting the bus, Blairsville Police Department records show.

Baxter made the stop on the afternoon of Feb. 6th. "He was talking on a cell

See *Bust*, Page 3A

Johnny Carroll

## Mock Trial Team claims fourth Region Championship title



By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

**Dalton** - The Union County Mock Trial team formerly known as the three-time Region Champions can now be referred to as the four-time champions.

reasonable doubt that they are the best team around. In a seven-team competition, Union County picked up 18 of the 18 first place ballots as they defeated Grovetown in the finals to complete the clean sweep.

"This may be a young team. They proved beyond a doubt that they are the best team around. In a seven-team competition, Union County picked up 18 of the 18 first place ballots as they defeated Grovetown in the finals to complete the clean sweep." See *Mock*, Page 2A

## BOE puts ELOST on March 19 ballot

By Charles Duncan  
North Georgia News  
editor@nganews.com

The Union County Board of Education has filed paperwork to put the Educational Local Option Sales Tax to a vote on March 19th.

Under the sales tax extension, the school system projects to collect \$21 million for acquiring, constructing and equipping new school system facilities, including classroom additions, an agricultural sciences center, a field house and a multi-use auditorium, according to the legal advertisement submitted for publication this week in the North Georgia News.

The ELOST would be for a period of five years.

The funds also would include adding to, renovating, repairing, improving,



Gary Steppe

and equipping existing school buildings and school system facilities, including athletic facilities, acquiring miscellaneous new equipment, fixtures and furnishings for the school system, including instructional and administrative technology equipment and safety and security equipment.

The 1-cent sales tax

would also pay for acquiring school buses, vehicles and transportation and maintenance equipment, acquiring textbooks and other instructional materials, including band instruments and equipment, acquiring land for school system facilities.

If approved, the school system would move forward with general obligation debt by the school system not to exceed \$13.5 million to pay for the projects and for the purpose of payment of a portion of the interest on the debt.

The maximum rate of interest on the debt would not exceed 6 percent annually, according to the paperwork filed by the Board of Education.

The amount of principal to be paid in each year during the life of such debt would be \$2.6 million in 2014, \$2.7 million in 2015, \$2.8 million in 2016, \$2.9 million in 2017, \$3.0 million in 2018, \$3.1 million in 2019, \$3.2 million in 2020, \$3.3 million in 2021, \$3.4 million in 2022, \$3.5 million in 2023, \$3.6 million in 2024, \$3.7 million in 2025, \$3.8 million in 2026, \$3.9 million in 2027, \$4.0 million in 2028, \$4.1 million in 2029, \$4.2 million in 2030, \$4.3 million in 2031, \$4.4 million in 2032, \$4.5 million in 2033, \$4.6 million in 2034, \$4.7 million in 2035, \$4.8 million in 2036, \$4.9 million in 2037, \$5.0 million in 2038, \$5.1 million in 2039, \$5.2 million in 2040, \$5.3 million in 2041, \$5.4 million in 2042, \$5.5 million in 2043, \$5.6 million in 2044, \$5.7 million in 2045, \$5.8 million in 2046, \$5.9 million in 2047, \$6.0 million in 2048, \$6.1 million in 2049, \$6.2 million in 2050.

See *ELOST*, Page 3A

## Conley: House Bill 128 could reshape Downtown Blairsville's future

By Charles Duncan  
North Georgia News  
editor@nganews.com

The Blairsville City Council is in support of the Georgia Renaissance Act, in hopes of revitalizing Downtown through public/private partnership tax incentives.

The act, House Bill 128, currently in the House Ways and Means Committee, would create \$20 million per year in statewide tax incentives ranging from 10 percent to 25 percent for investments in new construction or renovation of existing buildings within clearly defined downtown boundaries called Renaissance Districts, Mayor Jim Conley said.

It also would create \$5 million per year in statewide incentives for the purchase of, and, or, significant improvements - 15 percent of the cost of improvements - of own-



Mayor Jim Conley



State Rep. Stephen Allison

er-occupied housing within Renaissance District, Mayor Conley said.

Also, for individual or corporate contributions, there would be \$5 million per year in statewide tax incentives for contributions to the Georgia Renaissance Fund.

Proceeds of the fund would be used for low-interest subordinated loans to businesses making investments and creating jobs within Renaissance Districts, Conley said.

"The Renaissance Act embodies a basic premise that healthy and vibrant downtowns are vital to Georgia's economic development future," Mayor Conley said. "Downtowns are the heart of a community, the pulse of the local economy, a barometer of our quality of life and play an integral part in defining the Georgia brand."

See *Renaissance*, Page 3A

## Reece Center looking for a few good people

By Charles Duncan  
North Georgia News  
editor@nganews.com

The Reece Farm and Heritage Center is looking for a few good men and women.

The highly successful tourist attraction on U.S. 19/129 needs volunteers before the center's next Open House in early April, Reece Society spokesman Dr. John Kay said.

"We did an incredible job with the volunteers we had last year," he said. "The only problem is, the volunteers we have are getting on up there, or they're having trouble walking."

The Reece Farm site manager is one of the most important positions available. The site manager makes all arrangements for needs



Byron Herbert Reece

well in advance of scheduled events and tours. The site manager also meets and greets all tours, and makes visitors feel welcomed, especially the tour driver and step on guide. "We need volunteers to help make our second year as successful or more successful than our inaugural year," Dr. Kay said. The need for a volunteer, site manager is immediate, other volunteers are also in need, including folks willing to do site work chores like clearing fallen limbs and other debris from all areas of the venue. There's also a need for volunteers to insure that exhibits and outside signage of the educational exhibits housed in the farm buildings are kept clean and orderly. A sweeper, yes, with a broom, also is needed to keep exhibit areas and clear cobwebs as needed, Dr. Kay said. "We've got a number of volunteer opportunities available," Dr. Kay said. "We're hoping to get some folks involved in a very worthy and interesting

successful than our inaugural year," Dr. Kay said. The need for a volunteer, site manager is immediate, other volunteers are also in need, including folks willing to do site work chores like clearing fallen limbs and other debris from all areas of the venue. There's also a need for volunteers to insure that exhibits and outside signage of the educational exhibits housed in the farm buildings are kept clean and orderly. A sweeper, yes, with a broom, also is needed to keep exhibit areas and clear cobwebs as needed, Dr. Kay said. "We've got a number of volunteer opportunities available," Dr. Kay said. "We're hoping to get some folks involved in a very worthy and interesting

See *Reece*, Page 6A

## County gets funds to resurface Beasley roads

By Charles Duncan  
North Georgia News  
editor@nganews.com

The Georgia Department of Transportation has provided funds to resurface Beasley Circle and Beasley Street, Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris said last week.

Commissioner Paris held a special called meeting at the Union County Courthouse last week to approve and sign GDOT road contracts related to Beasley Circle and Beasley Street.

"GDOT is supplying the entire amount for this project," Commissioner Paris said. "We've got to bid this project out, and hopefully, we'll have it done by June. We'll have longer than that to complete the project, but, that's when we're hoping to be completed."



Lamar Paris

ed." Commissioner Paris was required by law to hold the county meeting to sign the contracts from GDOT.

"If we had waited until our regular meeting, we would have wasted a couple of more weeks," Commissioner Paris said. "This way, we can get these documents signed and back into GDOT."

GDOT had some special

funds for road projects like the Beasley roads, Commissioner Paris said.

"At my request, these funds were made available to Union County," Commissioner Paris said. "I had heard that these funds were available, and that these funds could be used for a possible Industrial Park paving upgrade."

"After talking with Sen. Steve Gooch, we were able to determine that these funds were available for the Industrial Park resurfacing project," Commissioner Paris said.

"GDOT agreed to pay for the resurfacing of these roads," Commissioner Paris said. "GDOT will pay the maximum amount for the resurfacing project - Beasley Circle and Beasley Street."

The paving project leads to the Union County Sheriff's Office and the Colwell State Prison.

## Union SkillsUSA heads to state

By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Dylan Tanner and Breanna Bain are headed to Georgia International Convention Center in College Park to compete in the state SkillsUSA competition March 21-23 after winning region titles in their respective events.

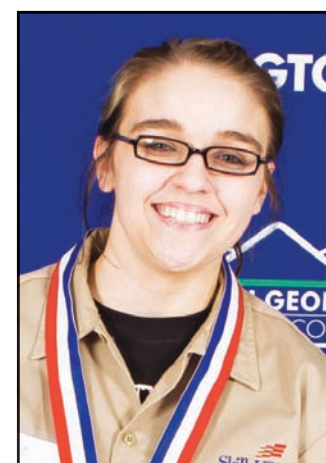
Tanner and Bain took the Region 2 SkillsUSA titles in Automotive Service Technology and Heating and Air respectively.

The two Union County High School students claimed title to their respective region categories during the Jan. 24th Skills competition at North Georgia Technical College in Blairsville.

More than 300 high



Dylan Tanner



Breanna Bain

school students from throughout Region 2 took part in the competition.

"This room is filled with champions because you have prepared yourself for success," said North Georgia Technical College President

Dr. Gail Baxton as she welcomed more than 300 participants and attending the competition.

Students from Union County included first place winners in Automotive Service Technology and Heating and Air conditioning. See *Skills*, Page 2A

## Arbor Day ceremony scheduled Wednesday

By Charles Duncan  
North Georgia News  
editor@nganews.com

The Blairsville Garden Club will kick off the 2013 Arbor Day celebration with a tree planting ceremony at the Mock House.

Of course, the ceremony will be held at the Mock House's location on Cleveland Street in Downtown.

The ceremony will be held Wednesday, Feb. 13th, at 3:30 p.m., said Blairsville Garden Club member Kathryn Litton.

See *Arbor Day*, Page 2A



Commissioner Lamar Paris and Mayor Jim Conley made it official, Friday is Arbor Day in Union County and Blairsville. Photo/Charles Duncan

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Fri: Sunny Hi 50 Lo 25

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**Union County EMA CERT Class**  
Beginning in March  
• Disaster Preparedness  
• Fire Safety  
• Team Organization & More  
See page 7A

**Kiwanis Club Yard Sale**  
Accepting Items All Year  
All Proceeds Benefit the Youth of Union County  
See page 16A

**Clyde Mauney Jr. Memorial Concert**  
Friday, February 15 • 7 PM  
Old Courthouse on the Square  
Hosted by the Union County Historical Society  
Come enjoy good finger-picking!  
See page 8A

**UCHS Basketball - All at Greene Co. Region Tournament**  
UC Boys vs. Washington Wilkes Wed., Feb. 13 • 5:30 p.m.  
UC Girls vs. Rabun/Washington Wilkes Fri., Feb. 15 • 7 p.m.  
Saturday Region Finals: Time TBA  
**UCHS Baseball Scrimmage @ Chestatee • 5:55 p.m.**