

North Georgia News

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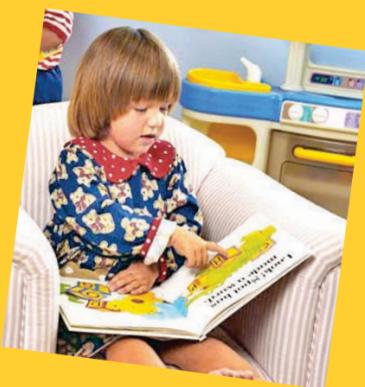
BOE adds two Pre-K classrooms

Increases number of 4-year-olds in the Pre-K program

Open the Door to Early Learning

Children must be 4 years old on or before Sept. 1st to attend.

Union County Schools Pre-K Registration Roundup
706-835-4321 or 706-745-2322



Follows UC Schools Calendar Located in the Primary School Transportation Available

By Charles Duncan
 North Georgia News
 editor@nganews.com

The Union County Board of Education has approved two additional classroom spaces for Union County Pre-K classes.

The move comes as the school system finds itself short of classroom space for the 4-year-olds entering the school system. Once com-

plete, the additional classroom space will allow the school system to accommodate more than 80 Pre-K students.

The board approved the additional Pre-K classrooms unanimously.

Currently, the state is supporting Union County with two classrooms for 4-year-olds. Seventy-five 4-year-olds were signed up for Union County Pre-K. Because of

space constraints, the school system can only accommodate between 40-44 children.

"Right now, we've got 30 or so children that cannot be served by our program," Superintendent Gary Steppe told the BOE during a called session last week. "To better serve the children coming into the school system, additional

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BOE extends school year to May 22

By Charles Duncan
 North Georgia News
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Recent inclement weather meaning to Union County Schools' students.

It means students will be going to classes until May 22.

The original date for the last day of school was May 19, said Union County Associate Superintendent Dr. Jeremy Williams.

In a called Board of Education meeting last week, the five-member board approved the change in the 2014-2015 School Calendar.

Dr. Williams said the School System received 1,788 responses to an online survey regarding ways to make up days due to inclement weather.

"One of the things that we wanted to do, was to see what the thought process was regarding this decision," Dr. Williams said. "We really wanted to make sure that the line of thinking in this regard was really what was best for the kids."

"Last year we had snow days and the state moved the state testing window," Dr. Williams said. "But because Atlanta didn't get hit with snow last week, the state isn't going to move the state testing window."

"We can forgive up to four student days," he said.



Union County Schools Superintendent Gary Steppe explains the changes to the School Calendar. Photo/Charles Duncan

"We build a 180-day school calendar and it gives us some flexibility."

The school year was to end on Tuesday, May 19, and Dr. Williams presented a School Calendar that moves that end date to Friday, May 22.

"The last day, May 22 will be in line with what we've done the last few years, making the last day, a half-day, and it gives us those three makeup days we're looking for," Dr. Williams said. "There will be four days that will be forgiven. Post planning will now be

May 25-May 27."

Adding minutes to each classroom day would have conflicted with after school programs and athletic programs, Superintendent Gary Steppe said.

Graduation Day will be determined in April, Steppe said.

"We'll have to see what kind of weather is in the forecast," Steppe said. "We'll make a decision in time to give students time to get their graduation invitations ready."

The board unanimously approved the revised 2014-

City will not provide water/sewer to RV Park

By Shawn Jarrard
 North Georgia News
 Staff Writer

Mayor Jim Conley and the Blairsville City Council met for its regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, March 3.

The Council discussed an update to some old business concerning the Twin Creeks RV park, formerly known as the Mountain View RV Resort, which is located near the Blairsville Municipal Airport on Blue Ridge Highway.

In the City Council meeting on Sept. 2, 2014, the council went to the go-ahead to start designing a water and sewer line project with the expectation of receiving Blairsville City water, contingent upon city approval of final plans.

The RV park is situated within the Coosa Water Au-



thority's district, but the park's attorney, Cary Cox, said in the Sept. 2 meeting that Coosa Water did not have the capacity or pressure to deliver the kind of water the park was going to need, which was about 95,000 gallons per day.

Cox sought a commit-

ment in the Sept. 2 meeting from the city of Blairsville that it would service water and sewer if the lines were built, at which point his client could start designing the lines based on that commitment.

Had the agreement continued, the lines would have

become city property down the road, valued at more than \$500,000.

Now, the RV park is still in the works, but it will no longer be utilizing city services in water and sewer.

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Two charged in heroin bust

By Charles Duncan
 North Georgia News
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Two Union County residents have been charged with multiple drug offenses, including charges related to heroin, Union County Sheriff Mack Mason said.

Summer Noel Cress, 21, and Tyler Hester, 19, both face heroin-related charges, Union County Jail records show.

"Both have been charged with distribution of a controlled substance - heroin," Union County Sheriff's Narcotics Division Detective Lt. Chad Deyton said. "It's one of the meanest drugs on the street right now. It's made a comeback from the 1960s. It will knock you down."

Lt. Deyton said Cress and Hester were selling the drug to high school students. "It's bad to see young kids get mixed up in something as dangerous as heroin," Lt. Deyton said.

Cress is charged with two counts distribution of a controlled substance - heroin, and possession of a controlled substance - dolophine, possession of a controlled substance - Xanax, and possession of a controlled substance - Ambien, Union County Jail records show.

Hester is charged with two counts distribution of a controlled substance - heroin, and a probation violation, Union County Jail records show.

According to A Drug Free World website, the initial effects of heroin include a surge of sensation—a "rush."



Summer Cress



Tyler Hester

This is often accompanied by a warm feeling of the skin and a dry mouth. Sometimes, the initial reaction can include vomiting or severe itching.

After these initial effects fade, the user becomes drowsy for several hours. The basic body functions such as breathing and heartbeat slow down, according to the website.

Within hours after the drug effects have decreased, the addict's body begins to

See Heroin Bust, 3A

Greenhouses offer job opportunities

7M Farms could expand to 20 employees in the future

By Todd Forrest
 North Georgia News
 Staff Writer

The idea of growing plants and vegetables indoors, in controlled environment has been around since the days of the Roman Empire and the emperor Tiberius ate a cucumber-like vegetable on a daily basis.

In the 2,000 years since the concept originated, greenhouses have become commonplace throughout the world, with 8,425 acres of greenhouse vegetable production here in the United States.

Locally, 7M Farms, a family-run greenhouse vegetable-farming business has laid its roots in Union County and expects to expand from one acre to 11 acres over the next three years.

Dick Mills of 7M Farms is a fourth generation farmer and is using the land that's belonged to his family since 1978 when they used it for cattle.

Mills is the grandson of Charlie and Margaret Flescher and his family has been farming for more than 100 years, starting with a



7M Farms, left to right, John Marletter, Sandy Marletter, Debbie Kinnett, Latrece Mills, and Dick Mills. Photo/Todd Forrest

dairy farm in Ohio and a citrus farm in Florida.

"My grandfather passed a few years ago but my grandmother is still alive and she's 90 years old," Mills said. "She is actively involved with the farm by going to the Farmers Market every Tuesday and Saturday whenever it is open. The Farmers Market has been very successful for us and a lot of locals come just to shop with us."

The farm, located off

of Crump Creek is also open seven days a week. Monday through Friday they're open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. From 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday and noon to 4 p.m. on Sunday.

Vegetables currently in production at the farm are a variety of lettuces, tomatoes, jalapeno peppers, cucumbers, and olives. 7M Farms will be producing vegetables 365 days a year with tomatoes and lettuce going year-round.

"We're actually a little late this year," Mills said. "We're going to be a year-round farm that produces vegetables and will be the only farm in the area that's (going year-round)."

The food service industry has been the largest consumer of their vegetables and locally, Sawmill Restaurant and El Manzanillo, on a weekly basis. 7M Farms is hoping to get involved with Union County Schools in

See Greenhouses, Page 2A

Chamber seeks your opinion

By Charles Duncan
 North Georgia News
 editor@nganews.com

In her column inside today's edition, Blairsville Union County Chamber President Cindy Williams asks for the community's help.

"Do you love Blairsville-Union County? Do you want to have input in the future of our County? If so, I have a favor to ask of you this week," she asks.

The Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce and other local partners would like to get your thoughts and feelings on Blairsville-Union



Cindy Williams

County as we undergo a community branding initiative.

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Kindergarten Registration Begins!!

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AARP Smart Driver Course
 April 9th

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American Cancer Society Memorial Service
 Sunday March 22nd

UCHS Baseball

Mar 10 @ Riverside 5 PM
 Mar 12 vs. Murphy
 Mar 16 vs Pickens 5 PM
 Mar 16 UCHS Soccer
 Mar 10 vs. Pickens 4:30 PM
 Mar 13 vs. Greene Co 5:30 & 8:30
 Mar 14 @ Pickens County