

Head...from Page 1A

accurate and sincere. Bob has helped people in this area for many years. He's always very humble, very willing to help, and he's just a great person."

The dedication, put together by Blairsville City Hall and the Blairsville Downtown

Development Authority, featured several prominent speakers from around the community.

Mayor Conley acted as Master of Ceremonies for the event, and Pastor Mark Burgess of First United Methodist Church led the invocation.

Union County Sole

Commissioner Lamar Paris said that he was pleased to have been invited to speak at the dedication, and thanked Head and his family for their contributions to the community over the years. He also remarked that the occasion stood as an example of just how well the county and city worked together.

Andy Williams, president of United Community Bank, said he learned a lot working with Head.

"Bob has served as chairman of United Community Bank for 26 years, and he's been on the board for 42 years," said Williams, adding that Head was elected Director Emeritus last year. "Bob, it is a pleasure to be here this morning. I want to thank you for everything that you've done for me and my family in the 17 years we've been here. And more importantly, thank you for everything that you've done for our community."

Regina Allison, who started her job as president and CEO of the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce two days prior to the dedication, introduced her staff and organized everyone for the cutting of the ribbon.

For the ribbon cutting, Head was joined by his wife, Carol, his daughter, LuAnn, and his two grandsons, Josh and Matthew Faris; by Nelson and his wife Patricia; and by Mayor



Bob Head surrounded by his family immediately following the ribbon cutting for Bob Head Street on Friday, March 18

Conley and Blairsville City Council members Martha Cone, Tony Dyer and Betty Easter.

After Head cut the ribbon, Mayor Conley declared the street officially opened, and once the crowd dispersed, motorists began using the new street, just as if it had always been there.

Head has been a business leader in the community for decades, and among his many activities around the City of Blairsville and Union County,

he was a charter member of the Union County Lions Club in 1966, and more recently has served as a DDA board member.

In observance of the historic road opening, Mayor Conley extended a special "thank you" to State Sen. Steve Gooch for helping the City of Blairsville in acquiring hundreds of thousands of dollars in GDOT grant funds to aid in the construction of Bob Head

Street.

"We could not have gotten this road completed without Sen. Steve Gooch," said Mayor Conley.

Also in attendance that day were several Downtown Blairsville business owners, DDA board members, UCDA Director Mitch Griggs, Union County Sheriff Mack Mason, House District 8 State Rep. Stephen Allison, Union County Tax Commissioner Lee Knight, and many of the Colwell Construction Company crew who built the new road.

The old ramp has been closed, with plans of utilizing the space for additional parking.

"The next phase of this is getting these lots sold so that we can do improvements on here, with sidewalks and streetlights and paved parking," said DDA Program Manager Darren Harper following the dedication, speaking of the land surrounding Bob Head Street.

Harper said that he plans to frame a picture with part of the ribbon from the ceremony and present it to Head on behalf of the city and DDA.

Lions...from Page 1A

Dahlonega.

"Today is a milestone for us, for the club," said Gene Little, who is the 2015-2016 president of the Union County Lions Club. "I'm just proud to be president of the club at this particular time."

Many are familiar with the little white canes handed out by Lions each October, and the long history behind the Lions Club tradition of aiding those without sight, dating to when Helen Keller in 1925 challenged Lions to become "knights of the blind in the crusade against darkness."

And with more than 46,000 clubs and greater than 1.4 million members, Lions Clubs International is the largest service club organization in the world.

"Our members do whatever is needed to help their local communities," according to lionsclubs.org. "Everywhere we work, we make friends. With children who need eyeglasses, with seniors who don't have enough to eat and with people we may never meet."

Blairsville's own Michael Thompson, for example, has given back to the community as a Lion for decades, and has benefited as well from his interaction with the Lions Club, having received two corneal transplants in his youth.

Myers Banister of Young Harris was the keynote speaker for the afternoon luncheon and anniversary bash, and he brought with him 46 years of experience as a Lion. He is a past international director for the organization, and has held many positions in the association, including president, zone chairman, council chairman and district governor.

Banister spoke on the history of the organization, both abroad and in Union County, and touched on the importance of getting people involved, both from a civic aspect to local leaders and residents within the county.

"Teamwork always makes things go better when you're working one with another to accomplish the things that you want to accomplish within your own life, number one, and number two, within your community, and working with people within your community," said Banister.

Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris and Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley were special guests for the event, along with current Lions Club District 18-I Governor Anne Mundy and Past District Governor Ed Hashbarger. History was on display that Saturday, as scrapbooks of years gone by were made available alongside the program and pictures of the first meeting of the Union County Lions Club.

The founding of Union County's Lions Club dates to a fortuitous evening in March of 1966, when influential members of the community gathered to charter a service organization to tackle the needs of the county.

On March 5, 1966, at the Milton Inn in Blairsville, the 35 charter members of the Union County Lions Club met with key members of their sponsoring club, the Towns County Lions Club, as well as Lions with various leadership roles within the district.

That first meeting started out with a call to order by then president of the Towns County club Ray Taylor, followed by Howard Cunningham

with a version of "America." Towns County Lions Secretary Jimmy Taff led the Pledge of Allegiance, before Rev. David Robb offered the invocation.

Zell Miller, also a member of the Towns County Lions, was the Master of Ceremonies for that evening 50 years ago.

After an installation of officers by District Cabinet Advisor Sam Wilson and the presentation of the charter by District Governor Edgar Faulkner, the first president of the Union County Lions Club, Charles W. Conley (Mayor Conley's brother), accepted the charter, signaling the start of decades of good work and volunteerism by Lions in Union County.

Charter members and officers from that night in 1966 include: Lion Tamer J. Larry Akins, Milton Akins, John F. Arrowood, W.C. Bowling, Clayton Brown, Randall B. Collins, Secretary W. Clyde Collins, President Charles W. Conley, Ronny L. Davenport, Dr. B.J. Davis, Second Vice President Olin J. Dean, E.S. Dockery, C.E. Foster, Tail Twister Leonard A. George, Charlie Gregory, Third Vice President M.H. Hamby, Neil V. Hamby, Robert L. Head Jr., Charles E. Hill, Kenneth F. Jenkins, Cecil Lance Jr., Jack Lance, John L. Ledford, Frank Merritt, Treasurer W.J. Nichols, Troy Phillips, Jake Plott, Karl Rowan, Carlton Shaw, Dr. Gary L. Smith, J.J. Turner Sr., Harold West,

First Vice President Brannon Wilkinson, Bill Parker and Phillip Preiss.

Looking back nearly 100 years to the beginning of Lions Clubs International, members of Lions Clubs the world over have acted as ambassadors of volunteerism, taking their message of "We Serve" into their communities and to the people who need it most.

But membership has been down in recent years, and the Lions of Union and Towns counties would like to invite any and all residents to join their respective clubs, in order that potential Lions might do more within their communities, and become even greater stakeholders for a brighter tomorrow.

Current Union County Lions Club officers for 2015-2016 are: President Gene Little, First Vice President Mary Arnold, Second Vice President Louise Little, Secretary Jim Wentworth, Assistant Secretary Carol Neil, Treasurer Gerry Bailey, Assistant Treasurer Gene Little, Lion Tamer Roy McKee, Tail Twister Jack Gross, Assistant Tail Twister and Chaplain Paul Clark, Assistant Chaplain Karen Clark, First Year Directors Sam Weissberg and Arthur Gurr, Second Year Director Lisa Little, Third Year Directors Roy McKee, Carl Buser and Gray Williams, Membership Chairman Gray Williams, and Membership Assistants Louise Little and Carol Neil.