

# North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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## Waymores to open Mountain Fair

By Charles Duncan  
North Georgia News  
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Tommy Townsend has spent more time at home in Union County over the past two weeks than he has in several years.

Townsend, the front man for Waymores' Outlaws, has spent that time picking with his idol during his stay in Blairsville.

He's also worked at the sawmill, and has spent time with the church band from Shady Grove Methodist Church.

Oh, by the way, his idol is Roy Townsend, the man whose musical influence on the lead singer and guitarist for Waymores' Outlaws equals



**Tommy Townsend**  
that of Tommy Townsend's other idol, Waylon Jennings.

"It's really been fun playing music with my Dad," Tommy Townsend said. "He's the one who taught me four chords and put me in this musical direction."

Tommy Townsend and Waymores' Outlaws will open the 2012 Georgia Mountain Fair on July 20. Townsend jokes that Lee Greenwood will close for the Outlaws.

"We'll open the Fair and Lee Greenwood follows," Tommy Townsend said. "It's opening night. I don't think people realize just how great an experience those music shows are at the Fairgrounds."

"I played there when I was a kid. I was on stage with Wayne Jennings at the Music Hall," he said. "Actually, that was the last time Wayne was at Anderson Music Hall."

"It's special for me to play at The Hall," Tommy Townsend said. "All the people I grew up with come out, See Fair, Page 2A

## Union 12-U girls play for state title

By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

The Union County 12-and-Under softball team punched their ticket into the Dizzy Dean State Championship Game in Chickamauga on Sunday.

The Championship game was held Sunday night. Due to an early holiday deadline for the newspaper, results were not available at press time.

The results will be posted on [nganews.com](http://nganews.com) and complete game wrap-ups will be available in the July 11 edition of the *North Georgia News*.

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UC 12-U Softball Team, back row: left to right, Coach Jeff Tanner, Skylar Ludlum, Maci Sebert, Coach Dean Everett, Channa Carroll, Logan Abbott, Coach Dean Everett, Braden Potecete, Aladriol Arnold. 2nd row, left to right, Karlee Payne, Jaylyn Milam, Madeline Tanner, Reagan Davis. Front: Allie Horinek.

## Union man charged with kidnapping his wife

By Charles Duncan  
North Georgia News  
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A 56-year-old Union County man remains in custody following his arrest for allegedly kidnapping his estranged wife from Union General Hospital on June 21, Union County Sheriff's authorities said.

Union County Sheriff's Office authorities say Ronnie Dale Brown faces five felony charges and one misdemeanor charge resulting from a June 21 incident involving his wife, Debra Brown.

Sheriff's authorities say Ronnie Brown and his estranged wife are going through a divorce.

On June 21, sheriff's reports showed that Ronnie



**Ronnie Dale Brown**  
wife's place of work at Union General Hospital, and at gunpoint, forced her to leave that location in his vehicle.

The incident occurred around 4:30 p.m. on June 21, Union County sheriff's authorities said.

Debra Brown was then taken to a location near Wolf Creek where she was held against her will, Union County arrest warrants and sheriff's

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## Early voting begins July 9 for all elections

By Charles Duncan  
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Early voting for the July 31 primary is just around the corner.

Registered voters can head to the Union County Courthouse on July 9 and begin the early voting process.

Voters only have two local issues to cast ballots on.

In the nonpartisan Probate Judge race, Incumbent Dwain Brackett goes head-to-head with political newcomer Barry Weinstein.

Also on the ballot for locals, whether to approve a 1 cent sales tax for regional transportation projects.

The 1 cent increase would make 8 cents collected on each dollar before you head out of the grocery, retail or any other store in Union County.

It also would be a tax on home heating fuel, the first \$5,000 on a vehicle purchase and on over the counter medications at any store or pharmacy. That's just to name a few pitfalls.

The tax would be for a period of 10 years. The Probate Judge's race and the TSPLOST question are on the nonpartisan, Republican and Democratic ballots.

The only contested race on the Democratic ballot is Brackett versus Weinstein.

Of course, the TSPLOST question is asked on the Democratic ballot.

No other contested races are on the Democratic ballot.

There are four straw poll questions on the Democratic ballot.

First, should the Constitution be amended to allow the state to override locally-elected school boards' decisions when it comes to creation of charter schools in the county or the city.

The second question, should Georgia end the practice of permitting unlimited gifts from lobbyists to Georgia lawmakers.

The third question asks if Georgia should adopt an income tax credit for home

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## Tourists flock to Sixth Mountain Fling

By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Crafters and artists from four states brought their best work to Blairsville for the two-day Sixth Annual Mountain Fling at North Georgia Technical College in Blairsville.

The event, sponsored by the Mountain Regional Arts & Crafts Guild, features paintings, wood crafts, pottery, jewelry, and other crafts

and arts to benefit the NGTC children's summer programs.

"So many people came out and we've got some really wonderful artists and crafts people here," said Carolyn Barton, a member of the Board of Directors of the Mountain Regional Arts and Crafts Guild.

"So far we've got a good crowd coming in and

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Dulcimers for sale at Mountain Fling. Photo/Todd Forrest

## Mayor chosen to GMA Board

By Charles Duncan  
North Georgia News  
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Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley was elected to the Georgia Municipal Association Board of Directors on Monday in Savannah, according to the Association's Executive Director Lamar Norton.

Mayor Conley will serve as first vice president of the Association's Second District, Norton said.

That district includes cities in Union, Towns, Rabun, Lumpkin, White, Habersham, Stephens, Franklin, Banks, Hart, Dawson, Hall and Forsyth counties.

"We are pleased to have Mayor Conley taking on this leadership position," Norton said. "He's well respected by his colleagues, and I'm sure he'll provide great leadership to the cities in the district."

Mayor Conley, reached by telephone in Savannah on Monday, said the whole experience was rather humbling.



**Mayor Jim Conley**

"Being selected to serve by your peers is always a very humbling experience," Mayor Conley said. "It's an honor, a privilege and I'm looking forward to representing the Second District."

"I'm just proud of the Association, the relationship that the city of Blairsville has with the Georgia Municipal Association, and to be a part of all that and represent our town and our community,"

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## Union County hosts Clerks training

By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

The Union County Courthouse and Judge Dwain Brackett, hosted a training session for Probate Judge Clerks last week.

Judge Brackett has served on the Probate Judge Training Council since 2005 and is the representative from the 10-county district, that includes Union County.

"Those of us on the training council determine the training clerks training and certification program and I've been an active part of that," Judge Brackett said.

"The training council decided five years ago that training the clerks is very im-

portant because every year guardianship laws, so they need updated training like the judges do. You've got to stay on top of those updates and those changes or you'll end up behind the curve."

The training sessions are held regionally since it's difficult for smaller counties, like Union, who only have three employees, to send them outside of Northeast Georgia.

"The problem is with a lot of small counties, we don't have many employees. I only have three while Gwinnett County has 15," Judge Brackett said.

"It's hard to turn my people loose off to Savannah

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Dwain Brackett talks during Thursday's training session at the Union County Courthouse. Photo/Todd Forrest

## School calendar set

By Charles Duncan  
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Union County classrooms will return to the classroom Aug. 3, after the school's 2012-2013 calendar was revised during last week's Board of Education meeting.

The calendar includes five furlough days, and that's down from eight. It also includes five pre-planning days for educators.

"Those pre-planning days are vitally important for the entire school year," Superintendent Gary Steppe told board members. "The good news is, we've cut back on



**Gary Steppe**  
some furlough days. We've only got five now. That's better than it has been."

Days have also been included for professional development. The graduation dates for Woody Gap and Union Coun-

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## Friends, family, UCB tell Jirik 'bye'

By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Linda Jirik's fall was aglow on Thursday.

It wasn't a surprise party, there was a quarter-page advertisement in the North Georgia News' June 27 edition summoning friends, family and coworkers to United Community Bank's Junior Brackett Community Room for the three-hour event paying tribute to Jirik's career at UCB.

Nevertheless, it was emotional, heart-warming and

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D.L. Martin wishes UCB's Linda Jirik the best in her retirement. Photo/Todd Forrest

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**Cruisers' Block Party**  
Friday July 6th

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**Best of Blairsville Scavenger Hunt**

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