

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Cannery officially open; Sweet Corn Day on Saturday

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

The Union County Canning Plant saw 60 visitors pass through as it was on display last weekend during its open house that included tours, demonstrations, and giveaways.

It was another bustling Saturday morning at the Union County Farmers Market but it was the canning plant that took center stage and unintentionally, perhaps, it stole the focus of the majority of visitors who were enjoying the beginning of their weekend at one of Blairsville's most popular gathering spots.

Despite opening twice a week earlier in the month, business is already booming,



The Farmers Market was booming on Saturday.

and according to the plant's Kristy Peney, things are about to pick up even more when folks start bringing their green beans in.

"Some people are already starting to do soups, squash, pickled cucumbers,

pickled beets, a lot of pickled products, and of course, green beans," Peney said.

Last month the plant featured a canning class and then the cannery's open house last weekend. Also, the Green Bean Festival will be

holding a canning contest at the plant on July 25th. Those are the only special events held at the plant, where a lot of hoopla isn't necessary as its reputation speaks for itself.

"Last year we processed more than 17,000 jars and I think we're going to do more this year," Peney said.

The canning plant is open through October on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6 a.m. to 12 p.m. The cost is .25 cents per pint and .35 cents per quart.

If you plan on taking advantage of the canning plant this summer or fall, you will need to bring jars, lids, bands, produce to be canned, your recipe and all ingredients. You are

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Blairsville City Council one step closer to an updated city charter

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

The newly revised Blairsville City Charter is one step closer to becoming the law of the city.

On Tuesday, July 7, the Blairsville City Council met and held a second reading of the revised charter.

After the hearing closed without council or public comment, the council voted unanimously to adopt a resolution adopting the proposed charter as written for submission to State Rep. Stephen Allison and State Sen. Steve Gooch, both of whom will review the charter before submitting



Mayor Jim Conley

it to the Georgia General Assembly's Office of Legislative Counsel, or OLC.

"Rep. Allison will present it to Legislative Council

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School system gets \$349,650 from state for Primary School

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

The Union County Board of Education approved a facility improvement application to accept state funds toward the addition of 10 classrooms at the Union County Primary School.

All told, the funds equal \$349,650 toward the \$1.9 million project, with the grant money coming from Facilities Services within the Georgia Department of Education.

The board of education unanimously approved the application to receive the funds in a called meeting on Thursday, July 9, and Union County Schools Superintendent Gary Steppe said that the school system is thankful for

the money.

"Over a period of time, there's money that builds up at the state," said Superintendent Steppe. "They have some money that they have for classroom additions, and all they'll do is just the classrooms. They won't pay for the hallways or the restrooms, they just pay the amount for that."

The grant is awarded based on student population, and the student headcount seems to be down at the primary school.

"They refigured the numbers based on last year's FTE count, and our numbers have decreased at the primary school," said Superintendent Steppe to the board. "So, we're

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Scam protection important for elderly

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Protecting the elderly from the clutches of scams, fraud, abuse, and hackers is something that Union County Sheriff Mack Mason and his Sheriff's Office take very seriously.

Last week Sheriff Mason, along with Detective Capt. Pat Williams, Detective SSgt. Daren Osborn, and Detective Pam Osborn held an open house at Branan Lodge to warn residents of potential cons and hustles.

Sheriff Mason provided examples of known ploys that have taken advantage of the elderly, beginning with one that happened locally. A caller contacted an elderly woman to



Sheriff Mack Mason

inform her that her grandson was in jail and needed \$1,200 sent via Western Union to post bail.

However, her grandson was never in jail, nor arrested

but she unknowingly wired the money to a scammer. And once sent, the money was lost.

"My advice to you is, if somebody calls you on the phone asking for money because your grandson is in jail somewhere, then just hang up on them," Sheriff Mason said.

Another example given by Sheriff Mason was a call from the Police Benevolent Associations (PBA) asking for donations to buy bulletproof vests and other equipment.

"Hang up on them," Sheriff Mason instructed everyone to do if the PBA calls you. "The reason is, they are run by a group of lawyers and the majority of the money goes to them. We have tax dollars to buy bulletproof vests."

Sheriff Mason used the Georgia Sheriff's Association

as an example of a legitimate organization that might send you a letter with his signature on it.

"That money goes to good children who have bad parents, but they will not contact you by phone," Sheriff Mason explained that the Georgia Sheriff's Association operates seven youth homes statewide.

Before handing the microphone to Capt. Williams, Sheriff Mason reiterated the purpose of the session.

"We're going to share various scenarios with you and hopefully give you some good advice to keep you from getting involved and having someone take your money. And anytime we can help you, we're here for you,

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Fireworks legislation in the works

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Many residents celebrated the Fourth of July weekend in light of the newly passed House Bill 110, which allows for the use of consumer fireworks during specific hours of Independence Day and New Year's Day celebrations.

Ahead of the July 1 effective date for Georgia's new laws regarding the sale and use of consumer fireworks, Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris passed a resolution in an attempt to maintain local autonomy over the recreational combustibles moving forward.

The resolution was adopted in the June county meeting, and reads: "Resolution in accordance with laws of the State of Georgia, for



Lamar Paris

Union County Sole Commissioner to propose and enact an ordinance to regulate the sale at retail or wholesale, the use, possession, hours, locations, transport or storage of consumer fireworks."

"We cannot adopt an ordinance for the new law, because the new law in Georgia does not take effect until July 1 of this year," said Commissioner Paris.

Paris. "There are many reservations we have about parts of this law passed in Georgia Legislature.

"This resolution will give us an opportunity for public notice that we are going to be making revisions, so that once the law is passed, somebody doesn't come in here next week and set up a building somewhere and do things that we don't think are the best for our community."

Some of the commissioner's concerns stem from how newly formed fireworks businesses are to be handled within the community - how and where fireworks will be sold and how businesses will be staffed, and how safety issues will be implemented.

"The general idea is that you want to promote business and freedom to do that, but there's also a cost for that," said Commissioner Paris.

"We've just got to make sure that we're protecting - our goal is to protect the citizens."

Union County is looking into a law firm out of Gainesville that is in the process of developing an ordinance for use by all the counties in the state of Georgia, in an attempt to hammer out some of the finer details of HB 110 on the local level.

As of now, consumer fireworks can be used Jan. 1, July 3 and July 4 between the hours of 10 a.m. and midnight, and on Dec. 31 of each year, fireworks can be shot off between the hours of midnight and 2 a.m.

As defined in HB 110, examples of fireworks are blank cartridges, firecrackers, torpedoes, skyrockets, bombs, sparklers "and other combustibles and explosives

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Union authorities arrest Dr. Gowder on six felony arrest warrants

By Charles Duncan
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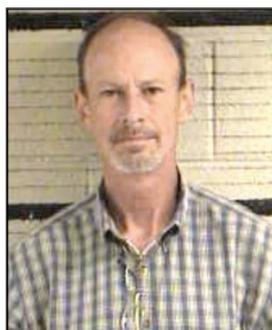
The Union County Sheriff's Office arrested Dr. David Gowder Monday afternoon on six felony arrest warrants, Union County Sheriff Mack Mason said.

Gowder faces six felony counts that include three counts of prescription fraud, arrest warrants show.

Gowder allegedly obtained prescriptions for the painkiller Oxycodone, a Schedule II controlled substance, arrest warrants show.

Gowder also was charged with three counts felony omission of a practitioner, which are related to prescription fraud, according to arrest warrants.

In sum, Gowder is alleged to have obtained a prescription from different doctors, and forging prescriptions using the name of other



Dr. David Gowder

doctors.

Gowder's arrest follows an extensive investigation and review of local pharmacy records, Sheriff Mason said.

The sheriff added that the investigation is not over.

"We're still working this case, it is an active investigation," Sheriff Mason said.

Gowder was arrested

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Deputies learn how to save lives

By Charles Duncan
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The Union County Sheriff's Office is taking advantage of some of the most sophisticated law enforcement training in the country.

The good news is there's no cost to the taxpayer.

Recently, Sheriff's Office deputies Detective Sgt. Tyler Miller, SSgt. Shawn Dyer, Deputy Chad Berry and Deputy Logan Daniel attended classes at the Regional Counterdrug Training Academy in Meridian, Miss.

The training consisted of weeklong class instruction for law enforcement officers serving high-risk warrants. The class focused on the ins and outs and line of duty dangers that officers face when serving high-risk



Deputies Shawn Dyer, Tyler Miller, Logan Daniel, and Chad Berry have returned from Meridian, Miss., where they completed classes on serving high-risk warrants.

The biggest obstacle officers face when serving high-risk warrants - having to use their service weapon in the line of duty on an unwilling recipient.

Most line-of-duty shootings start similarly. The

academy and other training organizations play an important role in educating officers in what to expect should they be faced with a life and death situation.

Officers learn that it's usually a normal day until something unexpected hap-

pens. It's never just a search warrant. It's never a routine traffic stop - anything can happen on any given day.

They learned about line-of-duty situations that officers may face. Those

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Union County Grand Jury Indictments for January

The following persons were indicted during the January Term of the Union County Grand Jury:

Bruce Ashlee Blackburn, possession of methamphetamine; failure to maintain lane.

Clinton Derrick Brown, possession of methamphetamine; two counts possession of a controlled substance.

Kayla Lynn Chambers, theft by taking; entering an automobile; second-degree criminal damage to property.

Thomas Irvin Corbin, carrying a concealed weapon without a license; DUI alcohol; possession of marijuana, less than one ounce; failure to maintain lane; two counts possession of a firearm by a convicted felon; recidivist.

Issac Joseph Ingram, attempt to violate Georgia's Controlled Substance Act.

Jose Garcia Jacinto, interference with government

marijuana.

Aubree Ann Dupois, possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute; possession of marijuana with intent to distribute.

Michael Damon Edwards, aggravated assault in violation of Georgia's Family Violence Act; aggravated assault; two counts terroristic threats; simple battery in violation of Georgia's Family Violence Act.

Julian Lewis Grant IV, possession of methamphetamine with intent to distribute; possession of marijuana, less than one ounce; failure to wear seat belt; possession of a firearm by a convicted felon; recidivist.

Jose Garcia Jacinto, interference with government

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July 17th-25th

(706) 896-4191

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