

# North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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## White, Woods, Wilson and Perdue claim Union

By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Patrick White claimed the fifth and final seat on the Union County Board of Education, edging Amber Deyton Pruitt by 101 votes in the Republican Primary Election's District 5 runoff race.

White, a Woody Gap graduate, collected precisely 1,000 votes (52.7 percent) to Pruitt's 899 (47.3 percent) and will represent his hometown of Suches when he fills the District 5 seat left vacant by incumbent Julie Barton, who did not seek reelection.

The U.S. Senate Republican Primary Runoff may have gone down to the wire statewide, but it was clear who the voters of Union County preferred. Political newcomer David Perdue soundly defeated Jack Kingdon by a two-tone margin of 1433 (66.9 percent) to 710 (33.1 percent). At press time, the statewide race



Patrick White

was too close to call.

In the Republican's State School Superintendent's race, Union County voters chose Richard Woods with 973 votes (55.2 percent) over Michael Buck, who collected 790 votes (44.8 percent). This statewide race was also neck-and-neck at press time on Tuesday night.

On the Democratic side of the State School Superin-

tendent runoff, Valerie Wilson tallied 81 votes (67.5 percent) to Alisha Thomas Morgan's 39 votes (32.5 percent). Statewide, Wilson was ahead with 53.4 percent of the vote.

Locally, the school board race went in a different direction than what took place back in the spring. In May, Pruitt had little trouble distancing herself from White, gaining 1,025 (44 percent) votes to White's 897 (39 percent). However, it was Wilburn Etheridge's 364 votes that forced a runoff. And with a slightly lower voter turnout this time around and 364 votes up for grabs, the pendulum swung in favor of White, who reached the 1,000 vote plateau, not Pruitt.

The voter turnout for Tuesday's runoff election was 2,170 Union County voters.

"I want to thank everyone who came out and voted for me," Pruitt said Tuesday night. "I appreciate all of the prayers and I'm very grateful. I want to wish the best of luck

to Patrick and I hope he does well."

Pruitt was able to take the Coosa Precinct 141-94 and the Ivy Log Precinct 107-91, but the other nine precincts belonged to White, with Pat Colwell and Choestoe precincts swinging heavily in his corner. In May, White grabbed 85 votes in Suches with Pruitt picking up 34 ballots. This time around, Pruitt garnered 68 votes in Suches, but was unable to overtake White's 91 votes.

White, the co-owner of Budget Propane, will join Keith Potts, who defeated John Strickland in May, as the two new faces on the board when they take their respective seats in January.

The Board of Education's Makeover began last year when Cindy Byers claimed Carlton Collins' seat, leaving Gary Davenport and Tony Hunter as the only board members with two-or-more years of experience.

## County audit comes up clean

By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Adam Fraley of Mauldin and Jenkens Certified Public Accountants LLC gave Union County government a clean bill of financial health as he presented the audit results of the 2013 financial statement ending Dec. 31, 2013.

Each year the county is required to publish and submit to the state Department of Audits an annual financial report that is audited by certified public accountants, in accordance with state law, within six months of the year's end.

"We issued our opinion on the annual financial report," Fraley said. "The county did issue such a report within the six month guideline, by state law, and had that delivered to the state department of audits to comply with that requirement."

The financial statements are the responsibility of the county and their finance department puts together the



Lamar Paris

financial statements and the auditor's job is to render an opinion on the statements.

"We conducted our audit and rendered an opinion on the financial statements," Fraley said. "We rendered what is often called a clean opinion in layman's terms. In technical terms it is called an unmodified opinion. Which means that we believe these financial statements for the year ending 2013 are fairly presented in all material respects."

According to Fraley, the general fund, which is the main operating fund of the county, had total revenues of \$10,380,000. See *Audit*, 3A

## Old Blairsville Cemetery project to involve city and county

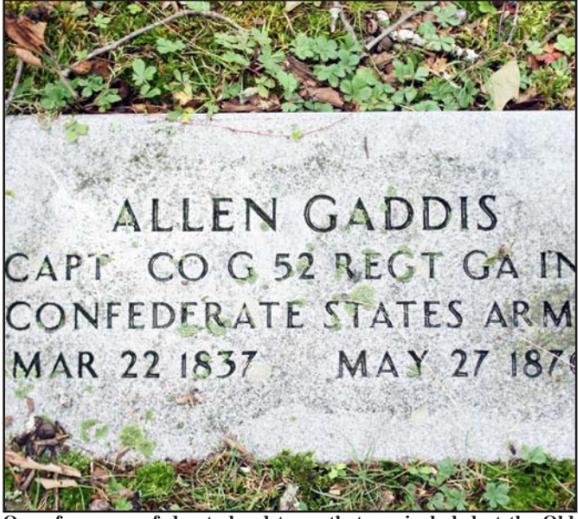
By Matthew Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

A project to restore a long forgotten cemetery located behind Union County Board of Education headquarters and near the old Union County Cannery is in the works.

The project to restore the Old Blairsville Cemetery is a joint venture between the City of Blairsville and Union County government, the Sons of Confederate Veterans and the Union County Historical Society, and some interested citizens.

The city and county have recently approved expenditures to maintain the history and upkeep of the site that date back pre-20th century.

"There's a lot of excitement about doing this and not only because of seven con-



One of seven confederate headstones that are included at the Old Blairsville Cemetery near the Old Union County Cannery. Photo/Matthew Jarrard

federate graves there," said Pete White, a member of the

Sons of Confederate Veterans. "There could be Union graves

there that we don't know about. It's our job to put Confederate Flags on Union graves. There could be graves on other service people that served in subsequent wars. The oldest grave is 1844. The most recent is dated 1963.

Each April, the Sons of Confederate Veterans host a gathering. This year, when the service was over, a small group of people, Young Harris College President Cathy Cox and her husband Mark Dehler, were present to voice their opinion, pay respects and lay their concerns. The group thought so much of the site that they decided it ought to be maintained and claimed by the city and county.

According to White, it was remarkable how much excitement existed to restore

See *Restore*, 3A

## Patrons brave elements to attend Butternut Festival



By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Saturday's rain showers were no match for the 16th

Annual Butternut Creek Festival at Meeks Park as the High Country Artisan's two-day art and music extravaganza saw one of its largest turnouts in

See *Festival*, 2A

## Green Bean Festival on tap Saturday

By Charles Duncan  
North Georgia News  
editor@nganews.com

If the Union County Farmers Market seems a little more crowded on Saturday, it's because it's that time of year again.

The Fifth Annual Green Bean Festival is on tap again at the Market with the action starting on Saturday morning at 7 a.m.

The annual event opens with a Canning Contest. Entries will be accepted until 9 a.m. Judging occurs between 9:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m., Market Manager Mickey Cummings said.



"We will have live entertainment from 10 a.m. until 10:50 a.m. Canning contest winners will be announced at 10:55 a.m. There will be sack races at 11 a.m.," Cummings said. "The Bonnet and Hat Pa-

rade will begin at 11:45 a.m. More live music will be held at 12:05 p.m. A Wash Board Band will play for us at 1 p.m. The Green Bean Pizza Eating Contest will be held at 1:30 p.m. Our annual endeavor into the antics of our Kazoo Band will begin at 2 p.m. and a water balloon toss will be held at 2 p.m. Hope to see you at the Farmers Market.

The festival has something for everyone, not just those who come into the Market for some farm fresh fruit or produce. The 2014 edition feature live music, crafts, arti-

See *Green Bean*, 3A

## County sees projects come to fruition



Union County government played a role in a new guard rail on Skeenah Gap Road in memory of 16-year-old Cody Dwayne Morgan. Photo/Todd Forrest

By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

There is more to running a county than passing budgets and signing proclamations.

On two separate occasions last week, Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris took off his commissioner's hat and put county business aside to simply do the right thing for two local families.

On Thursday, Paris and the Cody Morgan family were joined by Fannin County Commission Chairman Bill Simonds at the site that claimed the life of the 16-year-old Morgan in 2012.

Cody's parents Joe and Myra Morgan, Pastor Terry Stuart, and other members of the Morgan family each said a few words about Cody, while pausing every few minutes as a vehicle went by, so their words weren't muffled by passing traffic.

According to Paris and Simonds, both counties

agreed that a guardrail was needed along the dangerous curve at Friendship Baptist Church No. 1.

"I have driven over Skeenah Gap hundreds of times and never noticed this curve," Paris said. "I never noticed the steepness of it and the drop off beside it. I was at the accident site that day and remember thinking, 'we need to do something about this, so in the future we don't have the same kind of things happen.'"

At the conclusion of the dedication, a small sticker was placed on the guardrail that reads, "in memory of Cody Dwayne Morgan, May 2, 1996 - Dec. 26, 2012."

"I'm certainly not a pastor and feel unworthy to make the following statement, but God had a plan for Cody that was different from ours," Paris said. "Maybe he was needed up there to help people hunt and fish. Maybe He needed someone that knew about horses. Or maybe they

See *Tributes*, 2A

## Expect record-breaking numbers at Cannery



Patrick Fix, left, and Mickey Cummings talk canning inside the Union County Cannery. Photo/Todd Forrest

By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Atlanta Magazine has called Union County's new cannery a 'thing of beauty.'

"Powered by a state-of-the-art boiler (price tag: about

\$190,000, installed) the open room is packed with stainless steel work tables, huge steamers, cauldrons and retorts (giant pressure cookers)," Atlanta Magazine wrote in February 2013. "In a morning an individual could easily prepare and process 50 quarts

of food; it would take several days of hard sweaty work to accomplish the same feat at home."

After garnering tons of praise and churning out a record-breaking year in 2013, the cannery is primed for bigger and better things in 2014.

After a light opening day on Tuesday, July 8, business picked up on Thursday July 10 and the cannery has already processed nearly 600 quarts of green beans, more than half of the 1,000 quarts processed all of last year.

"Business was a little light last week but the green beans are just now coming in and things picked up a little bit on Thursday so I expect this week to be busier than last week," County Extension Agent Mickey Cummings said. "This year is going to be better than last year because gardens are better than because last year we only processed maybe 1,000 quarts of green beans because they were just bad last year because of all of the early rains that we had and so far this year, we've already done about 500 or 600 quarts of green beans."

According to Cummings

See *Cannery*, 3A

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Changes for the  
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Year are being put into  
place. Don't miss this!

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