

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Downtown Development Authority purchases Haralson property

By Charles Duncan
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The Blairsville Downtown Development Authority has purchased 7.8 acres of downtown property known to locals as the Haralson Property.

The property, which includes the Kings' 5 & 10 building, and the old Ben Carr law office just off the square, runs behind City Hall and all the way to Georgia 515.

It could soon be the window to downtown.

The property connects to Georgia 515 on both sides of the traffic median.

"It's a significant acquisition by the Downtown Development Authority," Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley said.

"It will be interesting to see what the next step is for the authority."

DDA Program Director Janet Hartman said that there would be no rush to judgment on exactly what to do with the property.

Obviously, it's the most attractive piece of business property in the city.

In a release following the property's purchase, Hartman said much work would have to be done during the evaluation process before the DDA decides how to proceed with determining the best land use for the property.

"Be assured that future development will be specific and to the very best interest of Blairsville's character, heritage and history," Hartman



Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley and DDA Program Director Janet Hartman on the Haralson Property after it was cleared. Photo/Charles Duncan

said in a release to the North Georgia News. "Determining the most advantageous utilization of this property will involve thorough research

and preparation as we work closely with Mayor Jim Conley and the City Council."

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The Downtown Development Authority will evaluate the existing structures on the Haralson property before making a decision on how to move forward with the property. Photo/Charles Duncan

Fire Station 1 to see needed improvements

By Charles Duncan
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In 1990 when Union County was clearing land of homes to make room for the Union County Industrial Park, a small 1,200 square foot home was moved to property just beyond the old Georgia Boot Plant.

The building would become the headquarters for the county's ever growing Fire Department.

Today, it still houses fire operations and also serves as Union's Emergency Management Agency operations headquarters.

It's where you'll find Union County Fire, EMA and 911 Chief Charles Worden and his fire and EMA staff.

The only thing that has changed since 1990 is a mold situation in the basement of the building, where firefighters used to sleep during their 24-hour work shift.

That problem forced the county to purchase a trailer to house its rotating shifts of on duty firefighters.

"The trailer is their

home-away-from-home," Chief Worden said. "They work 24-hour shifts. They eat here, they sleep here, they wait for an emergency call here."

Obviously, the firefighters couldn't keep living in mold conditions. However, in the trailer accommodations, the four on duty fighters are living in somewhat cramped quarters.

With the help of Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax dollars, 6,000 square feet of firefighter living quarters, a day room, a kitchen and a training room/disaster planning room will soon be under construction, Chief Worden said.

Also, the building will serve as the fire department's new headquarters and headquarters for Union's Emergency Management Agency.

A decision will be made on the future of the existing facility when that time comes. It's all happening at Fire Station 1, the chief said.

"We just ran out of room," Chief Worden said. "We're elbow-to-elbow; we need more space as soon as we can get it.



Union County officials and Fire Department personnel are excited about moving forward with additional facilities at Fire Station 1. Photo/Charles Duncan

"It's a real important project for us, especially where the living and sleeping quarters are concerned," Chief Worden said. "These people come in at 8 in the morning, they go home at 8 in the morning the next day. They're here 24 hours straight. It's kind of like a home-away-from-home."

Union County firefighters are all highly trained, they help with approximately 75

percent of all ambulance accidents, and respond to car accidents, and of course, fire calls.

The department has 85 volunteers who make a huge difference in the public safety equation in Union County.

"As far as the current building is concerned, we've outgrown what we have," Chief Worden said. "The

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War Memorial in the works

By Charles Duncan
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The moment of excitement is just weeks away from coming to fruition.

Artist/Sculptor Gregory Joranson, of Cumming, has a clay model of the Iraq War pedestal for the Union County War Memorial.

Chuck Honaker, co-chair of the Iraq War Memorial Committee, was in the Metro Atlanta area last week and visited with Joranson.

The progress is amazing as the sculpture evolves from a photograph into a physical element, capable of capturing the hearts of many at the Union County War Memorial in future years.

Last week, the Iraq War Memorial Committee announced that no more donations were needed to erect the pedestal.

A community melded together and completed one of the most significant accomplishments a tight-fisted economy has ever experienced.

Bob Spaulding, director of Veterans Affairs in Union



Iraq War Memorial

County, said he was amazed at the quick response by the community to raise the necessary funds for the memorial.

The committee that began raising funds in July to make a Iraq War Memorial a reality is on the verge of an exciting moment.

Spaulding said that the committee had received enough money to do the pedestal for the Iraq War Memorial and the Afghanistan War Memorial.

The Veterans Committee hopes to dedicate the Iraq

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Heritage Festival opens Saturday

By Charles Duncan
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The 11th Annual Mountain Heritage Festival is expected to be one of the best events of 2012 in Union County.

The event, scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 1, and Sunday, Sept. 2, is all about the traditions of the North Georgia Mountains.

The event is held at the Mountain Life Museum, in Blairsville, one block South of the Historic Union County Courthouse.

The event, part of the Union County Historical Society, features life like it used



The 11th Annual Mountain Heritage Festival is Saturday and Sunday at the Mountain Life Museum, one block from the Courthouse Square.

Crash kills one

By Charles Duncan
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SUCHES – The Georgia State Patrol is investigating a two-vehicle crash on Georgia 180 near Wolf Pen Gap that killed a 58-year-old Martin, Ga. man.

Georgia State Patrol spokesman Gordy Wright said that the crash happened about 4:20 p.m. when John Robert Sewell lost control of his 2009 Harley Davidson and struck a 2005 Chevrolet van driven by Penny Dawn Spiva, 46, of Blairsville.

The crash happened on Georgia 180 near Duncan Ridge Road, Wright said.

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Driver's Ed changes at UCHS

Special to NGN
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The Driver's Education program got caught up in the budget cuts at Union County High School.

The absence of the driver's education class provides students more opportunities to participate in additional academic or career and technical classes.

However, there's still a chance to complete a Driver's Ed course outside the school day.

Union County Schools will offer a driver's education program outside the regular curriculum and school day.

King Ford will continue

to support the school system by providing a vehicle for the program.

The course will consist of 30 hours of classroom instruction and six hours of supervised driving time.

The cost of the class will be \$275 for students living in Union County and \$350 for students living outside the county.

Tuition for the class will be used to cover the costs related to class administration, fuel, instructor fees, and other miscellaneous expenses.

The course will be filled in a priority manner based on the age of the students in the age range of 15 -17 years old

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First Foodie Night at The Market

By Charles Duncan
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It could easily be called a Taste of Blairsville.

Instead, it's "Foodie Night" at the Union County Farmers Market.

It's a celebration of Labor Day foods.

It all begins at 4:30 p.m. on Thursday at The Market.

As summer fades, The Market is celebrating good food from local restaurants.

It all can be had, or better yet, tasted for \$5.

"The Market will be celebrating great foods including barbecue, salads, grill specialties and luscious desserts,"



Michael Clark eats a pie said JoAnne Leone, a member of The Market Committee. "The local restaurants and food purveyors will be gathering along with our regular produce and food vendors to bring you a taste testing of all

that is luscious from the garden to the table."

The Market's regular produce and market-related vendors also will be on hand with fresh produce and fresh food, Leone said.

"This is a project that we've been wanting to do for some time," Leone said. "The Market will be selling tickets five for \$5. Then you can go to the different booths serving prepared food and for either one or two tickets, get a taste testing of their prepared food."

"It's a great way to get the local restaurants and food preparers a chance to get their

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Collins wins 9th District runoff

By Charles Duncan
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The 9th Congressional District's "conservative firebrand" conceded to the GOP's November candidate.

Gainesville Republican Doug Collins cruised to victory in last week's runoff election in the 9th District Congressional race.

Collins' runoff opponent was North Georgia radio personality Martha Zoller.

Zoller conceded the race to Collins early on runoff night. The math was simple, Collins was leading by 6,290

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Doug Collins is now the GOP nominee for the 9th District Congressional seat. He faces Gainesville Democrat Jody Cooley in November. Photo courtesy/ Collins for Congress

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