

Klan ...continued from Page 1A

and Ohio.

The Klan had promised to talk from noon to 2 p.m. on issues that included unemployment, national and state elections, Obamacare and other issues of major importance.

They also had promised to bring a lot more Klansmen than made it to Blairsville. Georgia State Troopers alone outnumbered the Klansmen.

More than 30 Georgia State Troopers were out in force, the GSP Riot Team was in the Union County Courthouse waiting if needed, a sniper was on the roof of the courthouse, every Union County sheriff's deputy was on the scene, the Blairsville Police Department was out in full force, as were the Union County Fire Department, Road Department, and Union General Hospital Ambulance Service.

Union County Sheriff Scott Stephens oversaw the tactical operations.

"There were a few incidents, nothing major, nothing that resulted in arrests," Sheriff Stephens said. "We had it under control."

The Klansmen seemingly wilted under the pressure of a disapproving crowd.

To be honest, the Klan ran out of steam quickly, muttering their message on a bull-



horn with only a portion of their message being audible. Their rally ended after only 35 minutes of ranting and raving about this and that.

"It was really much adieu about nothing," Enotah Judicial Circuit District Attorney Jeff Langley said.

Likewise, Commissioner Paris felt the Klan performance was just a lot of ranting and raving.

"I have several people to thank for the superb job of planning and execution of the supervision of the rally," Paris said. "First, while we were told there would be 50 members, it seemed they barely managed 20. It was a non-news event as there were no state or national media coverage that I am aware of."

"The planning and execution by Sheriff Scott Stephens, and his department was flawless as they coordinated with the Mayor and Blairsville Police as well as the Georgia State Patrol keeping the event completely under control," Paris said. "They were also assisted by the Union County Road Department, Union County Fire and Rescue and the Union General Ambulance service."

"A special thanks to the Georgia State Patrol for unselfishly providing more than enough support in case there were any serious problems," Paris said. "A well thought out plan was obvious and again, a special thanks to all of those involved in public safety."

"To those from Union County who came out of curiosity or to express your opinions either verbally or silently, it was done with respect and that was also appreciated," Paris said.

When it was said and done, the Klan's message was drowned out by the voices of a community who didn't want them here in the first place.

In the end, Blairsville and Union County residents who attended witnessed something they probably thought they'd never see here.

The residents of Blairsville and Union County turned a deaf ear to racism and sent it back to Arkansas, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Tennessee, Ohio and Fannin County.

Whether the Klan will return remains to be seen. The Imperial Wizard told the crowd that when they see the Klan, it will be in small venues like the Union County Courthouse. A place where their message could be heard loud and clear.

What was clear on Saturday was the Klan's message was muddled, disorganized and came across as just a lot of propaganda.

It was clear that the Klan's objective was to be seen out in public. They're still worried that they can't draw a crowd. The crowd they drew was glad to see them leave.



The Ku Klux Klan rally at the Courthouse drew a large crowd in protest of the hate group. Above Commissioner Paris thanks those that helped; middle, Imperial Wizard Willis Frazier spews the Klan's message of hate; below, protesters picket the event with signs such as "shame on haters" and "one planet, one people, one future." Photos/Frank Uhle