

Awake...from Page 1A

So far, Long's vision of Awake America, which is more inspired by the national movement than associated with it, has taken root in Blairsville on the first Thursday of every month, Blue Ridge on the second Thursday and most recently Murphy, NC, which started a few months ago and will take up the third Thursday of each month, all at noon.

"I would like to see more involvement of our city officials and county officials at these prayer meetings, because they hold the house of authority, the place of authority over the region and over the cities and the county," said Long. "And their prayers re-

ally mean a lot."

For this month's Blairsville meeting, Jim McKeral of the Salvation Celebration TV show prayed over the United States military, and Anniece Buckman prayed for the nation's leaders at the local, state and federal levels.

Pastor Dockery prayed for a revival in American churches and the nation, and Jim Buckman prayed for church leaders and "unity in the body of Christ."

Diane Shaffer led a prayer for youth revival and commitment to local churches, and Dale Shaffer prayed for persecuted Christians, which was also open for any there gathered to pray.

Long gave the benediction and closing remarks, and all joined in song to end the meeting.

Eighteen members of the community, including those who led prayer, attended Thursday's prayer meeting. Long is hopeful that more will come out to pray in the future, and shared her appreciation for the Christians of Union County.

"I want to thank them for praying at home, especially the elderly and those who are not able to come out and pray, that they can still pray at home," said Long. "They don't have to be here, but they can be here in spirit."

She also put out a call to local leaders, both in the

church and those involved with civic institutions.

"This is the greatest awakening this nation has ever seen, and we're a part of it, we're birthing it in," said Long. "We just can't lose heart - we've got to keep fighting as good soldiers of faith."

To Long, the goal of Awake America is clear.

"Make people aware of the need of prayer, not just make people pray more, because without the heart of prayer, really you're praying in vain," said Long. "So, that's my prayer, that people would catch the vision of prayer, because there's no higher calling than to intercede and talk to the Father."

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is built to current engineering standards improving safety for motorists.

The opening date is Thursday, October 16, if weather permits, Cook said.

The new bridge will improve safety along Georgia 11 because the new bridge is higher than the original bridge, taking out low places

and improving sight distance, Cook said.

The soon-to-be completed project was built as a new two-lane bridge over Ivy Log Creek, and is known as Georgia 11/U.S. 29/U.S. 129, or better known as Jack C. Lance Memorial Highway (formerly, Murphy Highway). Union County Sole Com-

missioner Lamar Paris was all smiles about the Ivy Log Creek Bridge project. He praised GDOT's leadership team.

"That project is a long time coming and we're excited to see it come to fruition," Paris said. "GDOT has always worked with us, and we now feel fortunate to have Todd Long as our Deputy Director

over GDOT. He was the area engineer here.

"We also have Russell McMurray as the chief engineer for GDOT and he was the engineer for our district," Paris said. "We know these guys, they know our roads and they know what and where we're talking about when we bring up a road name."

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affle items, Bradley said.

Vintage bikes must be 25 years or older, Bradley said.

The bikes enter in custom class, modern American, vintage American, modern Japanese, vintage Japanese, modern European, vintage European, competition (bikes for racing), or special interest. The event has been held at NGTC every year. It's a people's choice, event goers get a ballot and go around to each bike. Each bike has a number on it and event goers look at and vote for the bike they like best.

At the end of the event, the votes are tallied for each of the nine classes of bikes. All in attendance are allowed to vote on their favorites.



Saturday marks the 30th Classic Car Show that Good Neighbors Auto Club has put on in Union County. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

CASA volunteers sworn in



Enotah Judicial District's Juvenile Court Judge Gerald Bruce swore in four new Court Appointed Special Advocate volunteers Tuesday, Oct. 7, at the Towns County Courthouse. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Enotah Judicial District's Juvenile Court Judge Gerald Bruce swore in four new Court Appointed Special Advocate volunteers Tuesday, Oct. 7, at the Towns County Courthouse.

Two of the new CASA volunteers, Susie Horton and Kathy Malone, are from Union County, and two, J.A. Swartz and Mirja Murray, are from Towns County.

"Volunteers are trained to determine and speak for what is in the best interest of abused and neglected children that have been removed from their homes by the Department of Family and Children's Services," said Executive Director of Enotah CASA Linda D'Angelo. "CASA's goal is to get the child a safe and permanent home as quickly as possible - we don't want them languishing within the foster care system."

D'Angelo started as a CASA volunteer for the Appalachian Circuit a couple of years ago, and took on the role of executive director of the Enotah CASA, which is a non-profit organization, a couple of months back.

"I have a corporate America background," said D'Angelo. "I started my career working for IBM, and I've done an assortment of different things over my career. My last position, I was working with Raytheon Corporation, and what I ended up building was expertise in learning and training."

That expertise, mixed with a lifelong passion for helping children, is how D'Angelo came to be the executive director of the Enotah CASA, which serves Lumpkin, Towns, White and Union counties.

"For fiscal year 2014,

Enotah CASA served 211 children from 130 cases," said D'Angelo. "And our 44 CASAs performed 5,035 volunteer hours advocating for the best interest for each of these children."

And the need for volunteers in this area has never been more urgent.

For the first quarter of the last fiscal year, which ran from July 1, 2013, to June 30, 2014, the Enotah CASA served 16 children in Union County. So far, the first quarter of the current fiscal year, that number has risen to 24 children in need of advocates, which is an increase of 50 percent.

The numbers are nearly identical for Towns County, in which CASA volunteers helped 16 children in the first quarter of last year and 23 for the first quarter of this fiscal year, marking a 43.8 percent rise.

Of the remaining counties in the Enotah Circuit, Lumpkin County has seen a 47.5 percent decrease in children needing CASA support when comparing first quarters from last year and this year, and White County has only seen an increase of 15.1 percent.

"All of our volunteers go through a significant amount of training," said D'Angelo. "They go through 40 hours of training, and then they have to do 10 hours in court doing observations, so they're also familiar with what goes on in the court."

According to Enotah CASA literature, "When a CASA is appointed to a child's case, he or she is responsible for gathering as much information as possible about the child and the child's circumstances. CASA volunteers review records, get to know the parents, talk to teachers, relatives, and most importantly, the child. The CASA volunteers then ap-

pear in court to recommend to the judge what is best for the child's future."

CASA volunteers usually end up building relationships with families and foster parents, and are often the only steady link for a child shuffled through the system, as a CASA volunteer stays with a child for as long as it takes for the child to find a stable home.

"Kids will often say they want to go home, almost always," said D'Angelo. "We biologically, I think, want to be home. Sometimes that's in their best interest, and that's most often what we're trying to do - reunify the family and help everybody do whatever's necessary to try to reunify the family. But if that's not possible, then we'll try to advocate for adoption."

D'Angelo encourages others to take on the role of CASA, highlighting the good that's done for both the children and the volunteers.

"Having been a CASA, it is probably the most rewarding thing I've ever done," said D'Angelo. "Or as one of our other volunteers has said, if she had to give up every other one of her volunteer activities, she would, just to be a CASA, because she knows that you make a difference in someone's life. You feel like you're giving back."

Enotah CASA is offering a free class to train volunteers, which will start on Tuesday, Oct. 21, and last five weeks. The classes will be held Tuesdays and Thursdays at 1 p.m. at the Enotah CASA office at 56 Short Street in Dahlonega, on the terrace level of the Lumpkin County Elections Office.

For information about becoming a CASA volunteer, visit www.enotahcasa.org or call (706) 864-0300.