

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Record crowds meet 44th Annual Blairsville Sorghum Festival

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

The first weekend of the 44th Annual Blairsville Sorghum Festival is in the history books.

A simple way to sum up the festival is to view it as an example for the economic model of supply and demand, teaching a valuable, up close and personal lesson in capitalism and free market principles.

The demand for Union County's homemade sorghum syrup and other homemade treats, guaranteed to stimulate the taste buds, reached record highs.

And organizer Kim Bridges says to let folks know that sorghum syrup is in short supply.

"Just to let everyone know, sorghum syrup is in short supply this year due



The Annual Bisket Eatin' Contest is taken very seriously in Union County. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

"To Better get nature," she said.

"The perfect weather," she said.

"The parade was great."

"Next weekend will be even bigger if the weather holds out," Bridges said.

Volunteers worked around the clock for weeks to

"The perfect weather," she said.

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"Next weekend will be even bigger if the weather holds out," Bridges said.

Volunteers worked around the clock for weeks to

meet the needs of consumers. The turnout has been great and the weekend has been really good. On Saturday we almost sold out of syrup for

See Sorghum, 6A

Waffle House honored by Chamber of Commerce



Waffle House earned top business honors for the fourth quarter.

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Blairsville-Chamber of Commerce Business of the Month for the Fourth Quarter is none other than, Waffle House, Chamber President Cindy Williams announced

last week.

The Business of the Quarter Program was established to recognize outstanding businesses and organizations that go above and beyond to serve the local community, Williams said.

See Honored, 3A

Ivy Log Creek Bridge work begins

By Charles Duncan
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built in 1940, is about to be replaced, according to the Georgia Department of Transportation.

Work began this week to build a new bridge on the Murphy Highway over Ivy Log Creek north of Blairsville, GDOT spokesperson Teri Pope said.

Clearing the land of vegetation and utility relocation work is underway, Pope said.

"We want you to know that construction will not impact traffic," Pope said. "The new bridge will be built parallel to the existing bridge on the west side of the existing structure."

See Bridge Work 2A



Work is underway on the Ivy Log Creek Bridge Project.

Blairsville celebrates Big Country Breakfast

By Charles Duncan
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Saturday was a time for fellowship and big appetites at the annual Allegheny Lodge No. 114 Country Breakfast on Rogers Street.

More than 155 people broke bread at the Lodge as they enjoyed a feast of biscuits, gravy, some tenderloin, sausage, bacon, eggs, grits and pancakes.

It was an all-you-can-eat affair, and you couldn't beat the price, \$6.

The four-hour event is one of the Lodge's big fundraisers each year. It's a bit different from most breakfast fundraisers because it's all-you-can-eat, said Allegheny No. 114 Workshopful Master Doug Shea.

"It's definitely a bargain," Shea said. "We had



Would you like bacon with that? Brother Beau Ballard serves up some side dishes during Saturday's Masonic Big Country Breakfast.

a great turnout as usual. We want to thank the folks who came and broke bread with us today. We know that they didn't go home hungry. We don't just

serve pancakes and sausage. We break out the works. And that comes with coffee, juice

See Big Breakfast, 2A

Sheriff: 'deputies solve 8 burglaries in 10 days'

By Charles Duncan
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Union County Sheriff Mack Mason has nothing but good words to say about his hardworking deputies.

Deputies have recovered numerous stolen items recently and, more importantly, put the people who allegedly stole them behind bars, the sheriff said.

Two burglaries were reported last week on Oct. 3rd. Acting on a tip, investigators cashed in with an arrest, the sheriff said.

"We arrested 20-year-old Bradley Kelly, and charged him with burglary, and two counts of theft by receiving," Sheriff Mason said.

Following the Kelly arrest, detectives secured a search warrant on Oct. 9th, for a residence on Highway 180, the sheriff said.



Sheriff Mack Mason

"We recovered a large amount of the property that had been stolen from homes during two different burglaries," the sheriff said. "We charged Sean Bartholomew with burglary, and two counts of theft by receiving."

The stolen items recovered basically included household items, lawn mow-

ers, television, weed eaters, and yard tools, the sheriff said.

The alleged thieves had targeted second homes, the sheriff said.

"There are a lot of folks headed back to Florida this time of year," he said. "They need to make sure they don't make their homes look abandoned, and they need to ask their neighbors to keep an eye out for suspicious vehicles or persons in their neighborhoods."

In an unrelated incident, detectives were able to solve a series of burglaries involving the theft of alcohol from homes, the sheriff said.

Detectives solved five such burglaries, all of which involved juveniles, Sheriff Mason said.

"Of course we can't divulge anything about those cases other than to say they

See Burglaries, 3A

Early voting is underway

By Charles Duncan
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City voters and County voters both have a reason to go to the polls as early voting is now underway.

City residents must decide between two-term Mayor Jim Conley, and political newcomer Tom Payton.

County residents must decide if they want to extend the current 1-cent Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax.

Mayor Conley is seeking his third term as Mayor of Blairsville.

The challenger, Payton, a political newcomer, is seeking his first term as mayor.

Payton is running on a platform of lowering city water and sewer bills, abolishing the Downtown Development Authority, asking city residents if they want an extension of the Blairsville Municipal Airport, which is currently underway, and extending the city's Streetscape to include all city streets, from striping, to repairs, to installing sidewalks, to lighted walkways.

Payton, 48, is a full-time



Mayor Jim Conley

student at Young Harris College, and has a 14-year-old son. Payton's wife is deceased.

He has served as a youth league coach.

Mayor Conley, the president of the Georgia Municipal Association's Second District, and the City Council during his tenure as mayor, has completed an unprecedented package of projects related to water and sewer.

Since 2008, more than \$9 million in upgrades have been completed using low



Tom Payton

interest loans, grant dollars and less than \$750,000 in city funds.

The city's sewer capacity, has been increased from 400,000 gallons of treatment capacity per day to 1 million gallons of sewer capacity per day.

Also, the city has used Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax shared with the county, to complete a total renovation project at City Hall.

See Early Voting, 2A

Union Grand Jury indicts Miller

By Charles Duncan
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A Union County Grand Jury has handed up a six-count indictment against an 80-year-old man accused of murdering his 59-year-old daughter on Sept. 1st.

Frank Raymond Miller has been indicted on charges of malice murder, felony murder, aggravated assault in violation of Georgia's Family Violence Act, aggravated assault, and two counts false imprisonment, according to the six-count indictment.

The murder of Colleen Grant was a gruesome scene, Union County Sheriff Mack Mason said.

Grant was shot while talking with Union County E-911, with County Sheriff Mason said.

That call came in about 1:23 a.m. on Sunday, Sept. 1st.

"While on the line, dispatchers heard Frank Miller shout out that 'everybody's going to hell tonight.' The next thing they heard was gunshots," Sheriff Mason said.

Some of those shots struck and killed Grant, Miller's daughter.

At least one gunshot struck Miller's 19-year-old great-grandson Dockery in the right leg, Sheriff Mason said.

Dockery was grazed



Frank Raymond Miller

in the right leg by a bullet, Sheriff Mason said.

The call and subsequent shooting began an intense five-hour standoff between Union County law enforcement and Miller. "We talked with him, and he opened the door three times and invited us in," Sheriff Mason said. "We had been to that residence about a week ago regarding a suspected burglary attempt. We knew that Mr. Miller was a retired Florida police officer, we knew he was heavily armed and we didn't know if he was inviting us in to shoot us or what. We didn't accept his invitation for obvious reasons."

Miller was taken into custody about 5:30 a.m. Sept. 1st following the standoff with authorities from Union and Fannin counties.

During the course of the investigation, which included five Georgia Bureau of Investigation agents, detectives found about 40 fully-loaded weapons, Union County sher-

iff's Staff Sgt. Darren Osborn said.

Dockery was able to escape his great-grandfather's home prior to the standoff with law enforcement, Sheriff Mason said.

"It's our understanding that the victim and the great-grandson came home and Mr. Miller was intoxicated," Sheriff Mason said. "As for the motive for the shooting, it's our belief that the victim hid Mr. Miller's liquor and that upset him."

Fannin County Sheriff Dane Kirby volunteered Sheriff Mason mutual aid from his department.

Sheriff Kirby sent his SWAT team to Union County to assist Sheriff Mason and his deputies.

About daybreak, Miller was spotted inside his home standing near a kitchen counter. Fannin's SWAT team broke down a door, rushed Miller and took him down with a tazer, Sheriff Mason said.

"That ended the ordeal," the sheriff said.

As deputies and Sheriff Mason entered the home, they found Grant dead, with six shell casings laying close to her lifeless body, Sheriff Mason said. "The casings looked like they were from a .357 Magnum. I didn't pick them up to see for obvious reasons. We also found a speed loader," the sheriff said. "He had an AK47, a SKS assault rifle, several

See Indict, 2A

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Municipal Airport

Good Neighbors Car Show
October 19th
United Community Bank
Blairsville, GA

Hoedown at VOGEL STATE PARK
October 19th
GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
STATE PARKS & HISTORIC SITES
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Varsity Football:
FRIDAY, Oct 18th 7:30 PM
@ Greene County HOMECOMING

Softball:
State Tournament at Lovett
Wed Oct 16th 5:30 & 7:30
Thurs Oct 17th "If necessary" TBA