

Halloween...from Page 1A

to play.

Ghosts and ghouls, zombies, vampires, escaped inmates, and three-year-old serial killers stalked the roundabout, hunting for treats.

It seemed as though the entire community was there in some form or fashion, in makeup and masks.

Churches and medical professionals such as Blairsville Animal Hospital were there to participate, and so were a vast array of businesses.

The businesses doling out candy included Ace Hardware, Home PC Services, Coldwell Bankers, Alpha Drug testing services, and Blairsville Cinema.

Three years ago, Blairsville Cinema came under new management. Since then, the Cinema has been attending the Hometown Halloween event.

Its setup was colorful

and varied, with pumpkins painted as characters from the movies *Monsters Inc.* and *Despicable Me*.

"Since most of the audience is younger, they don't really ask about the movies," said Blairsville Cinema employee Josh Kamber. "We just give them candy, and we give them popcorn bags. They can come by Blairsville Cinema and get free popcorn in the bag up until Oct. 31."

Another business giving away candy was Ace Hardware, who has been participating in Hometown Halloween on and off for the past five years.

Brenda Bryant, who has been with Ace Hardware for 16 years, noted that Hometown Halloween is less a business opportunity and more of a chance to express humble gratitude for the business the community has given them.

"It's just a way to give back to the community and everything, and we enjoy it," she said. "We have a lot of people that like to volunteer."

She also enjoys seeing the assortment of masks and disguises and noticing the creativity and work that goes into each costume.

"We had a headless guy, it was a little boy, he comes walking up and at first we thought it was just a veil over his face, and then we noticed the bloody stump," she laughed. "It was really neat."

Professor Amanda Lawrence, who teaches at Young Harris College, enjoys the opportunity to take her two sons trick-or-treating, but also enjoys seeing the assortment of costumes, ranging from scary to funny.

"I saw a really scary bride and groom," she said. "It was adults."

But she said that her award for best costume goes to a much younger trick-or-treater.

"We saw this little sumo wrestler waddling up the hill," she said. "It was hilarious."

Lawrence's favorite thing about Hometown Halloween was seeing everyone gather and enjoy him- or herself. She likes "seeing the whole community come out and have such a great time together."

Mayor Conley was pleased with the turnout and the entire evening's events.

"Hometown Halloween was a great success," Mayor

Conley said. "I would venture to say that we had between 2,000 to 2,500 children and grown ups enjoying the games and candy being given away by the businesses, banks, and everyone who participated in handing out candy and other treats."

"This year's Costume Contest was a big success," he said. "We had to limit the contest to 55 participants because we didn't anticipate the turn out of contestants we had for this year."

"I don't think it will happen next year," he said. "We only had prizes for 55 people. It was a fun-filled night, with a very orderly crowd dressed in very lovely, scary, and ghoulish costumes."

"I dare to say a good time was had by all," Mayor Conley said.

The Downtown Development Authority, Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce and those who helped set up and manage the event should be proud.

The broad range of trick-or-treaters, hard-working volunteers, and community involvement made this year's Hometown Halloween a truly spooktacular occasion.



Photos by Lowell Nicholson