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selected new auditors to do the annual audit. The latest audit, presented at the October 2015 board meeting, was conducted by Henderson, Hutcherson, and McCullough of Chattanooga. This audit was clean with no problems noted. The audit report will be placed on the website at some point in the near future for you to review. Security deposits are now based on one's credit rating. If you are a new customer and have a good credit rating, you will not be required to make a security deposit. Those residential members who have paid security deposits and have a good payment history for 24 months are eligible for a refund of the security deposit. A written request must be received in the EMC office for a residential member to receive the refund. While it may seem like a small thing, another change is that bills going to one address are now mailed in one envelope saving on postage. Since the latest board election in September 2015, YOUR Board of Directors has hired a new attorney, Larry Ford of Hayesville to replace Larry Sorgen who resigned

after more than 20 years of service. YOUR Board of Directors has appointed Ray Cook to fill the vacant board seat from Cherokee County. YOUR board voted to change the policy which allowed board members to have interest free loans for heat pumps. Under the new policy a board member will pay the same interest rate as YOU the members for heat pumps purchased through the EMC heat pump program. YOUR Board of Directors is beginning the process of searching for a new General Manager for YOUR EMC. A search committee representing the membership, YOUR board, and the EMC staff has been appointed to select a recruiter and find suitable candidates for the General Manager position. Search committee members include: Bob Short, representing the membership; Mickey Cummings and Roy Perren, representing the board; Sheila Cook, representing EMC employees; and Larry Ford, the board attorney. While the annual audit was clean, YOUR board feels strongly that a forensic audit should take place before the new General

Manager is hired. YOUR board has appointed the finance committee to select an auditor to conduct the forensic audit. YOUR board is aware that there are other items YOU the members want to see addressed. We are in the process of working closely with the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC staff to come up with the final cost of the Headquarters building. The staff has done an excellent job of putting this together and we hope to have a final bottom line figure to YOU the members soon. YOUR board will be meeting soon to develop a procedure to open up meetings where YOU the members can address YOUR board directly. We hope to have this process settled in time for the new year. We are YOUR Board of Directors. Please feel free to contact us with your questions and concerns. YOUR board members are: Mickey Cummings, Charles Jenkins, and Greg Owenby from Union County; Ronnie Burch and Chris Logan from Clay County; Steven Phillips and Roy Perren from Towns County; Larry Williams from Fannin County; Ray Cook from Cherokee County.

Farmers market regular season comes to a close

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Vendors and patrons spent the last official day of the season at Union County Farmers Market carving pumpkins and handing out Halloween candy on Saturday, Oct. 31.

Seeing as how the season was essentially over, there wasn't much in the way of produce for the last day of the market, but Market Manager Mickey Cummings, who will miss the market until it reopens next season, said that there were still a few things for customers to get their hands on.

"We've got some greens left, and there are a few people who have some other things," said Cummings. "Ray Long of Long's Produce has some apples. We still have a few tomatoes in places in the county."

Union County youth participated in the Halloween festivities by coloring and decorating pumpkins, and several contenders took to carving their pumpkins with gusto and plenty of Halloween spirit.

Jordan Pandolph, 15, brought his award-winning massive 85-pound pumpkin to the market, and carved it to resemble a roasted pig. He named his creation Harold the Pumpkin-Pig.

Pandolph plans to grow an even bigger pumpkin next year, up to 300 pounds, and eventually he wants to grow a pumpkin that weighs 1,000 pounds.

Linda Denison of Blairsville drew her inspiration from a painting by Vincent van Gogh.

"This is called Starry, Starry Night," said Denison. "Van Gogh is the artist, but I'm the artist here. I chose this theme because I like Van Gogh's work, and I like stars. My inspiration was Starry, Starry Night, so I carved stars in the eyes, nose and mouth."

On the youth spectrum,



8-year-old Lathan Long, grandson of Ray Long, decided to make a zombie pumpkin.

"I colored it all kinds of stuff," said Long, dressed as Dale Earnhardt Jr., and he even added a neat hairdo in the front of his pumpkin using toothpicks. "I like Halloween for all the scary stuff."

Long's friend, 7-year-old Grayson Collins, also used toothpicks with his pumpkin, but he went all out with them in order to create a porcupine.

Even Ray Long, who owns Long's Produce and donated the pumpkins, got in on the pumpkin carving fun with his own pumpkin pig, albeit of a much smaller variety than Harold. Long used butternut squash as ears and a nose to give his pumpkin a unique personality.

Riley Post had a friendly pumpkin, one he called The Hand Shaker, which featured a carved pumpkin with blown up rubber gloves for hands.

Market Assistant Manager Kristy Peney dressed as a witch for Halloween, and she had her own special broom parking spot next to the door of the Market Office.

"I hate when the market ends. I love the market - I miss everybody," said Peney. "But we've had a great turnout for the last day. It's been a fun day, and I love seeing the kids in their costumes."

Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris made sure to stop by, as he usually does on Saturdays,

to visit with friends at the market.

"It's been a great season," said Commissioner Paris. "The last three or four weeks with the rain has made it a little bit slower probably than it would have normally been, but we forget that it always slows up at the end of the year anyway just because there obviously aren't as many crops available, as your crop changes as winter goes."

"Somebody was just mentioning to me this last week about farmers. They said that our farmers are getting old, and who's going to be our next generation farmers? I said, well, if you come to the Farmers Market, there are some kids involved, young people, but the thing that excites me so much is that our school system is now concentrating on FFA and farming and getting ready to build a new facility out at the Gainesville Highway."

"That will only serve to enhance farming in the county as we go forward, because if you see all these beautiful farms with cattle in them that help make our community look as beautiful as it does and continue to be looking as beautiful - we've got to have people farming long term to keep those up, or they'll turn into all subdivisions. We don't want that."

The Farmers Market will maintain a limited opening on Saturday, Nov. 7, during the Union County FFA Blue & Gold Auction.

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then we'll jump on to the market hogs," said Union County High School agriculture teacher and FFA advisor John Clark Pettit. "We'll have between eight and 12 market hogs that will be slaughter-ready, ready to go to the market."

"The buyers can take them anywhere they'd like, but we have a date and appointments made for Waldrep's in Ellijay, which is a USDA-certified slaughterhouse, and we'll haul there for the buyers, provide transportation to the market on those."

"We'll also have 10 to 15 show pigs, which our 4-H and FFA members may be interested in as they're rearing up for the next show season. And after we get done with the pigs, we'll finish up any small animals that we have."

Check-in for Friday's animal sale will begin at 5 p.m., and the animals will sell on a first come, first served basis.

Then on Saturday, the farm equipment auction will begin at 10 a.m. at the Union County Farmers Market, where anyone can buy or sell equipment accepted for consignment.

"We've got some bulldozers and excavators that are supposed to be there," said Pettit. "There will be several farm tractors, miscellaneous farm equipment, hay equipment. I know there will be at least a couple of ATVs there, equipment trailers - just a various sundry of things."

The best time to preview what equipment will be on sale is to swing by the Farmers Market on Friday afternoon, which is when Pettit believes most of the equipment will have been delivered by, or early



Saturday morning before the auction.

Equipment check-in began Monday, Nov. 2, and will continue through the week at the Farmers Market, during the hours of 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

"In addition to the equipment that will be there on the auction block, the Farmers Market will be open with over 30 vendors that have signed up to be there," said Pettit. "It'll be a pretty good opening of the Farmers Market, not a full opening, but 30 plus vendors are signed up to be there."

Those looking to make purchases during the two-day Blue & Gold event will need to pay cash or check only, and if patrons are paying by check they will need a bank letter of guarantee.

The Union County FFA will take a 10 percent commission across the board. Commissions will be figured for each individual item, with a maximum commission of \$750 per item, and all purchases must be settled prior to loadout.

Concessions will be available on Friday and Saturday, and Pettit invites the entire community to visit the two-day auction even if people don't plan on buying any of the consignments or animals.

"There's usually a lot of lively conversations," said Pettit. "You've got your interested buyers, and you've got everybody else just standing around to see what things bring, and then talk about, 'Can you believe that chicken brought that much,' or, 'Do you believe that pig brought \$1.70 a pound.' So, there's a certain social atmosphere to the auctions as well."

The Blue & Gold Auction is a student-run nonprofit, and the proceeds of the auction go directly back to the FFA. More than 40 students are expected to help run this year's auction, and the event will serve as an experience for the youth to apply what they've learned in a practical manner.

Ten FFA students from the high school and middle school programs recently returned from a weeklong trip to the National FFA Convention in Louisville, KY.

"There were about 60,000 FFA members up there from all over the country," said Pettit. "It was quite an experience. We had a good time, and it was eye-opening. We did some farm tours while we were up there, and got to see farming on a larger scale."

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teaches theater arts at Union County Middle School.

With a cast comprised entirely of middle schoolers, some of whom had never been onstage before rehearsals, Massey knew she had her work cut out for her, though it turned out the students were up to the challenge.

"The big challenge for us was that most of our students had never been onstage before. So this was brand new for most of our actors. Maybe a couple of church shows, but for the most part to do a big production like this, this was their first time. It was challenging. We needed to teach them everything," she said.

The play's fun-filled atmosphere presented an excellent introduction to theater for the young cast.

"That and the combination of a really solid script made our show. That was the choice. Everybody loves chocolate," said Massey.

"Out of all the scripts we read, this was the one that had the most interesting ending. Most of them had, I don't know about terrible endings, but they just wrapped up really fast, and this one had a really good, suspenseful ending, and that's what we were looking for," she added.

Although this was their first show, Massey knows that it won't be the last. She and Assistant Director Mark Rheault are focused on building a culture and a tradition.

"We're building this program and building a community culture of theater and performance. It's just seeing the kids go from where they know very little to being able to give the show that they gave tonight is extremely rewarding for me as a teacher. I'm sure the assistant director would see the same thing. And



I know that they probably got more out of it than we did," said Massey.

The secret to such a successful set of first-time performances?

"Lots of practice. Lots of exposure. My philosophy is the more prepared you are, the better you will perform. So the more you can practice, the better off you're going to be when you hit the stage, because you'll be ready," she said.

Rheault, who is a fifth-grade teacher at Union County Elementary School, stressed that the performing arts are not only about the talent, but also about the work ethic and the sense of community they

inspire in young kids.

"One of the goals of theater or any sort of education is to build participation and positive citizenship, and with theater we're trying to give you the real-life applications, the inter- and intrapersonal skills to be able to work in a group and at the same time be able to pull out their own individual strength. We're really trying to build that work ethic, and a lot of that comes down to line work, working in a group, and overcoming your frustrations," he said.

He used the analogy that a theater cast is like a basketball team. The cohesion of the group matters as much as the strengths of the individuals.

"You're learning how to be accountable, so we hope that's what they learn in theater, regardless. Most people realistically aren't doing theater after high school or after college, but you transfer the skillset that you learn in theater into your job or into your family. And in a small town I think the community can really appreciate something like that," he said.

Annual Lake Chatuge shoreline cleanup November 14

On Saturday, November 14, 2015, the Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition will host its 5th Annual Lake Chatuge Shoreline Cleanup. The effort will be in coordination with Rivers Alive - Georgia's Annual Waterway Cleanup event.

The Lake Chatuge Shoreline Cleanup will kick off at 9 a.m. at The Towns County Swim Beach Pavilion with breakfast and coffee. The first 100 volunteers will receive a free Rivers Alive t-shirt. Volunteer coordinators will lead teams to designated trash sites along the shores of Lake Chatuge and we'll meet back at the Swim Beach Pavilion at 12 p.m. for prizes and pizza donated by Papas Pizza To-Go in Hiwassee.

Prizes will be awarded to volunteers that collect the most trash, find the most unique items, and find the hidden trash treasure. This year's prizes include a four-hour ski boat rental and equipment from Young Harris Water Sports, a two-hour pontoon boat rental from The Ridges Resort & Marina, buffet and drink gift certificates to Downtown Pizza, and concert tickets from the Georgia Mountain Fair.

Individuals, families and groups are encouraged to participate and register for the event to clean up sites in both North



Trash collected from one Young Harris College team site during the 2014 Chatuge Clean-up included a discarded paddle boat

Carolina and Georgia. During the 2014 Lake Chatuge Clean-up, 102 volunteers removed over 3,000 pounds of trash from the shoreline in only three hours. In the last three years 3.25 tons of trash has been removed during this cleanup event from the Lake Chatuge shoreline!

The 2015 Lake Chatuge Cleanup is made possible by our partners and sponsors including: Tennessee Valley Authority, Boundary Waters Resort & Marina, Young Harris Water Sports, The Ridges Resort & Marina, USFS Blue Ridge Ranger District, Towns County Government, Papas Pizza To-Go, Georgia Mountain Fair, Georgia Mountain Restaurant, Hiwassee Ingles, Downtown Pizza, Georgia DNR, and Towns County Chamber of Commerce.

The Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition is a 20-year-old local non-profit organization dedicated to sustaining good water quality in rivers, lakes and streams in north Georgia and western North Carolina. To register for the Lake Chatuge cleanup, contact Amanda Kanack at 828-837-5414 or admin@hrwc.net. For more information about the Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition visit the website at www.hrwc.net.

Enrichment Center Primary "Lights On" Performance



Union County Learning Enrichment Center Primary students

The Primary students who attend UCLEC after school program experienced their first Parent Involvement Night on Thursday, October 29th, where they had the pleasure of performing for parents, teachers, and fellow Union County School students.

After much practice in Enrichment class, students were confident and excited to sing and dance in front of friends and family!

Kindergarten started the performance with "All The Leaves", followed by First Grade singing and dancing

to "The Scarecrow Song". The Second Graders ended the performance with a very fitting song, "Halloween Is Near". The night was an absolute success and the students had so much fun showing off their musical accomplishments!

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