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system.

The project involves replacement of aging 2-inch PVC water lines with modern 6-inch lines that withstand the need for water pressure. Simultaneously, it also entails upgrading water meters with uber modern Automated Meter Reading technology, Mayor Conley said.

The largest part of the project will be water system improvements from Pat Haralson Drive to Deep South Farm Road, which entails larger water lines going under Pat Haralson Drive and to the end of Deep South Farm Road,

Mayor Conley said.

"The truth is, we don't know exactly how old those water lines really are out Haralson Drive and Deep South Farm Road," the Mayor said. "We've got the hospital out there and if there's a break on Haralson or Deep South roads, we're in a bind and their lacking water pressure. It's a must do project."

The Meter Replacement Project will upgrade Meter Reading, Automated Meter Reading, Mayor Conley said.

The new meter reading system would be more cost

effective, save on human error and be more efficient than the outdated meters resulting in a possible gain in revenue, he said.

The projects will be done in unison, and the City will save on support costs, Mayor Conley said.

GEFA Executive Director Kevin Clark said the current interest rate is 1.82 percent but the City gets a 1 percent reduction because it is combining the Meter Change Out program with the water improvement project.

"Blairsville will pay .50 percent interest on the 20-year

loan, which includes principal forgiveness of up to \$423,250 if all loan funds are drawn. The loan qualifies for a 1 percent interest rate reduction because it is a water conservation project," Clark said.

The total project cost is \$1,693,000 with GEFA providing the entire amount, Clark said.

In other business, the Council voted to move their monthly meeting nights from the first Tuesday of each month, to the first Thursday of each month. The meetings will be held at 6 p.m.

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who take lessons at the Union County Senior Center every Tuesday.

Dancer Arlene Gray said this was their very first flash mob, and hopefully not their last.

The Mountain Liners danced for several minutes to Christmas-themed music, surrounded by spectators taking pictures and videos.

That was a great way to start the Holly Jolly Christmas festival.

Traditionally, this event was held at the North Georgia Technical College under the name *Christmas at the College*.

For a while, the college was unable to, but because *Christmas at the College* was such a success, popular demand brought it back, under the sponsorship of the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce.

This was the first year the Chamber of Commerce has hosted Holly Jolly Christmas, and President Cindy Williams, considered it to be a success.

She thinks of it as a chance for the community to come out, enjoy the Community Center and take in all the beautiful decorations that local businesses have done with the Center and the Tour of Trees.

"Honestly, I think just seeing the families come out, and seeing how they catch the Christmas Spirit, it really makes it a lot of fun for me," Williams said.

The Holly Jolly Christmas this year had an array of diversions, from face painting artists, to storytellers, to a miniature gingerbread village that visitors could explore.

In addition to the Mountain Liners, a variety of musicians filled out the entertainment schedule.

The First Baptist Church Hand Bell Choir was one of the first, and was followed by the likes of Smokie Mountain Melodies, the House of Prayer Choir, and the Community Carol Sing with Brass Quintet.

Delicious Christmas cookies and other refreshments were provided to the spectators by the Chamber of Commerce.

Local businesses pro-



The Holly Jolly Christmas weekend had something for everyone. Above, the annual face painting; below, the Tour of Trees. Photos/Lowell Nicholson

vided the decorations for the Tour of Trees, a contest for best-decorated wreath or Christmas Tree.

The Tour of Trees contestants competed in three categories: large trees, tabletop trees, and wreaths.

Businesses such as The Wine Shoppe, American Military Veterans' Organizations, the Flower Garden, Waffle House, North Georgia Technical College, and The Copper Door, among others, all sponsored a wreath or a tree. Visitors had the opportunity to vote for the winner in each

category.

A first-time planner of this event, Williams should congratulate herself.

The Holly Jolly Christ-

mas was definitely a success and a great way to get everyone involved in the Christmas Spirit.