

# Knights of Columbus...from Page 1A

is the local chapter of the larger Knights of Columbus international fraternal service organization.

"This is a significant step forward in our St. Francis of Assisi Council Knights of Columbus effort to defend and protect the sanctity of life," said Council 11746 Past Grand Knight Ronald Chmiel in the Dec. 20 dedication.

Chmiel said there is an organization-wide initiative to buy ultrasound machines for pregnancy centers to incentivize

young mothers to carry their babies to term.

If one of any local councils across North America can identify a pregnancy center in need of an ultrasound machine and can come up with half the cost, the national office will pay the other half, he said.

Council 11746 learned nearly two years ago that the Georgia Mountain Pregnancy Center needed a new machine, resulting in the local Knights raising about a third of what

they needed.

Fortunately, an anonymous donor came forward to write a check for the rest. Next, the council submitted an application and the requisite local match to Knights of Columbus' national headquarters in New Haven, Connecticut, and the machine was purchased.

"The machines cost about \$36,500, but this is about the sanctity life, protecting life, especially unborn life," Chmiel said. "I salute my

fellow council members, our anonymous donor, and all the men and women who made this possible."

Serving as both a Christian ministry and a medical facility, the Georgia Mountain Pregnancy Center is headed up by Medical Director Dr. Keith Matthews and a staff that includes a registered nurse.

"Our mission is to educate, encourage and empower young women who are thinking about an abortion to choose life," Center Director Davis said. "We want them to know that they have choices."

"We talk to them about better options, like adoption. If now is not the time for you to start a family or take care of a child, then adoption is a wonderful, loving mother choice. We try to present them with choices that they won't regret."

Davis said the Pregnancy Center is coming up on its third anniversary in March.

"We started out as a medical pregnancy center. That is our focus," Davis said. "We've recently added sexually transmitted infection screening. We also offer post-abortion counseling. We offer parenting and relationship counseling. And everything we do is free."

"We want to be a part of culture change, see what we can do to help this community to be better."

Georgia State Council of the Knights of Columbus Health Services Chairman Paul Zock attended the ceremony, noting that the service organization has donated well over 1,100 of

# GDOT...from Page 1A



GDOT representatives met with local officials to consider various roadway improvements around the county, including the potential addition of a turn lane for Town Mountain Road on Gainesville Highway. Photo by Mark Smith

representatives Emily Dunn and Jason Dykes.

Dunn is the 9th Congressional District member of the State Transportation Board, which governs GDOT, and Dykes is a GDOT district traffic engineer.

The group visited several sites under consideration for improvement that Monday.

Among them was an area in the vicinity of the Glenn Gooch Bypass and Georgia 515 where, among other things, the city of Blairsville will need to relocate water and sewer lines to tie in with GDOT's upcoming SR 515 widening and relocation project.

Sen. Gooch said the project will impact the city and that bids will be put out this fall, probably in November.

"Typically, when a municipality puts water and sewer lines in the state right of way, they have to agree to move (those lines) at their expense," Gooch said. "Technically, the state could say this is a city responsibility."

"But we're trying to get the state to pay for that relocation because (the entire project is) an economic impact for not only Union County, but for Towns and Fannin as well. It makes sense to go ahead and plan it now before that project gets put out for bid."

"So, if we want to change the design or put in an intersection or a traffic light somewhere, we need to go ahead and design it today, where it's already put into the bids for this fall."

Officials discussed safe ingress and egress for both sides of Georgia 515 in that same vicinity, incorporating the dual purpose of positive economic development and driver safety in their discussions.

Another potential project considered that day was the installation of a traffic light or roundabout at the other end of Glenn Gooch Bypass, at US 129 South. The senator observed that semitrucks are no longer allowed to pass through downtown, which impacts traffic on the bypass.

The group then traveled less than a mile south on US 129/Gainesville Highway to consider the possibility of widening the stretch of highway near Town Mountain Road for a turn lane.

Many accidents have occurred there over the years due to limited sight distance heading south from Blairsville, leaving cars and other vehicles less time to react to vehicles stopped in the roadway to turn left onto Town Mountain.

Most recently, on Dec. 18, a semitruck dangerously lost its load of construction boards in the parking lot of General Supply when it had to swerve to avoid a stopped, turning vehicle.

Also discussed that day was the potential installation of a traffic light at US 129 North/Murphy Highway and Pat Colwell Road, though Paris said GDOT doesn't feel there is enough traffic at that intersection to warrant a traffic light at this time.

Moving right along, officials continued up Murphy Highway to talk about adding a northbound right-hand turn lane over at Gum Log Road to improve visibility for drivers exiting Gum Log turning south onto or cutting across US 129.

"This whole meeting was really to coordinate a lot of those projects to make sure that the state and the city and the county are all working together for the benefit of the taxpayer," Gooch said.

For her part, State Transportation Board Member Emily Dunn said she is always pleased to meet with local elected officials.

"Union County is very fortunate to have their leadership looking out for the safety of the public and also planning for the future of the county," Dunn said. "What looks like the smallest of situations can make the biggest impact, not only in lessening the public risk, but also the most efficient means of getting to where they need to go."

"I really hope they appreciate that. Not every county is that fortunate."

As far as next steps, the Department of Transportation has committed to conducting a traffic study at the intersection of Gainesville Highway and Glenn Gooch Bypass.

The state will also be looking at potential recommendations for US 129 at Gum Log Road and US 129 at Town Mountain Road, GDOT Communications Specialist Katie Strickland said following the meeting.

## Ladies Event & Luncheon: Wednesday, February 5th

It's a new year and a new decade, are you ready? The Tri-County Women's Connection is excited to start off 2020 with a ladies event and luncheon featuring three super program guests, great food and door prizes!

Sharing her musical talent with us will be Kristen Feathers, singer and guitarist. Kristen was born in Blairsville and, except for attending Berry College in Rome, has lived her entire life in Union County with Mom and Dad and twin brother, Logan. During her high school years, Kristen was part of the Ensemble Choir and Band and served on the Junior Board of Directors for UCBI. She has a double major in History and French from Berry and is currently studying for her Masters in Public Administration at University of North Georgia. Kristen sees herself establishing or working for a non-profit organization in her future.

Bring your notepad and pencil so you won't miss the "things your physician forgot to tell you", compliments of Tracy L. Edwards, MD, HDMC of Edwards Medical Practice in Hiwassee. Dr. Edwards has been in private practice for 21 years. He has Board Certifications from both the American



Kristen Feathers



Dr. Tracy L. Edwards

Board of Family Medicine and the Hospice Medical Director Certification Board. Born in Fort Valley, GA and relocated to Young Harris in 1999, he has been married to Jessica for 26 years and they have three children. In his spare time, Dr. Edwards' favorite things to do

are play guitar, write music, sing and spend time with his family.

Our Speaker Guest is Norma McMurry who lives in Fayetteville, GA. Her story, "The Fabric of Friendship", is both heartfelt and humorous as she compares friends to various fabrics. Are you silk or satin? Be ready to learn more about your friendships.

Our luncheon venue is the North Georgia Technical College, Building A, 121 Meeks Avenue (on Hwy. 515), Blairsville. The cost is \$15 (cash or check) and includes the program, door prizes, and a delicious lunch catered by Amazing Grace Catering & Events. Check-in begins at 11:30 a.m. with the program starting at 12 p.m. and ending at 1:30 p.m.

Reservations are required so please secure your seat by Wednesday, January 22: email jowabow@aol.com or call Jane at 706-838-5599. Cancellations accepted until Wednesday, January 29. Prepayment by check is requested and appreciated. Send your check payable to TCWC, attention Judy Teague, 3245 Mulkey Gap Road, Blairsville, GA 30512. If you are paying for other guests, please include their names.

For more than 35 years, the Tri-County Women's Connection in Blairsville has planned and hosted luncheons for women that provide a positive, upbeat time of fun, food and friendship. Our events encourage women to connect with each other and their community.

TCWC is not an association and membership is not required!