North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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January 25, 2017

BOE selects Odom to serve as board chair

By Shawn Jarrard North Georgia News

When Cindy Odom won election to the Union County Board of Education in November of 2012, she became the first female Republican candidate to be elected to office in Union

This in turn made her the first Republican woman in the county to be elected to the board of education.

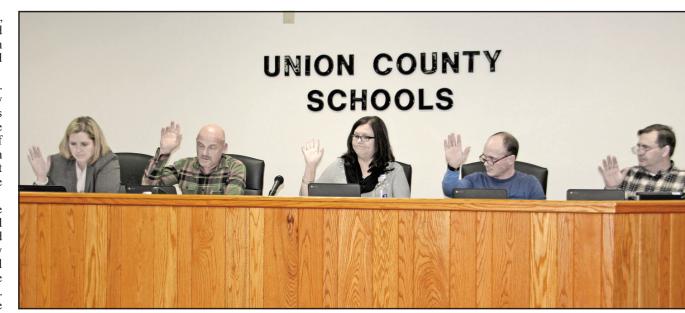
When she won reelection this past November, she was in line for another couple of firsts, as longtime Board Chair Gary Davenport, a lifelong Democrat, had decided last year not to run for another

position was up for grabs, and Odom knew she could apply what she'd learned in her first term to lead the board into the future.

And on Tuesday, Jan. 17, Odom was chosen by her fellow board members to be the next chair of the Union County Board of Education, making her both the first woman and the first Republican ever to chair the

"It's important to me to recognize women," said Odom. "What I have found is that women give a slightly different viewpoint, but all viewpoints from every single member of that board are vital. We're only as strong as the

As such, the chair See Board of Education, Page 2A



The Union County Board of Education in the Jan. 17 regular meeting, featuring new Board Chair Cindy Odom and new Board Member Janna Akins. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

Chamber looks to the future in town hall

By Lily Avery North Georgia News **Staff Writer**

Members of the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce gathered at the Union County Community Center on Wednesday, Jan. 18, to discuss the major upcoming events of the year and how to make these days more successful throughout the community.

Chamber Membership Coordinator Linda Lawrence directed the early morning meeting, allowing members to go through each chamber event and determine the success rate, the failures and what could be changed to make each event more prosperous.

Of the many occasions the chamber hosts throughout the year, members were most concerned with the Buy Local Program, something that the chamber has been doing for a few years now.

By Shawn Jarrard

and women.

Steven Martin.

North Georgia News

"The Buy Local Program was developed in 2012 here at

WASHINGTON -Union County has always been

And it's not every day

proud of its veterans, reservists

and active duty service men

that one of them is selected

to help usher in a new

commander-in-chief, which

is why Union County can be

especially proud of native son

old U.S. Navy Seaman of

Blairsville who served as

part of the 58th Presidential

Inauguration Joint Task Force

in the nation's capital on

Friday, Jan. 20.
"Coming from a small

town like Blairsville, I never

expected to be doing anything

like this," said Martin. "This is

Martin is a 21-year-



Chamber Membership Coordinator Linda Lawrence led an effort to outline the upcoming year for the membership during the Wednesday, Jan. 18, Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce Town Hall Meeting. Photo/Lily Avery

encourage just that, people to Local Program. buy locally," said Lawrence. "We've had three programs Business Extravaganza that

the Chamber of Commerce to that have come through the Buy

"The first was the

Not long after graduating

"My grandfather was in

The Navy considered

His performance in boot

from Union County High

School in 2014, Martin decided

to follow a family tradition and

join the United States Armed

the Marine Corps, I have a lot

of family members who were

in the Navy, and I just felt like

it was my part to serve my

Martin for the special detail

straight out of boot camp, at

which point he went through

an interview process to get the

camp, his height of greater

than 6 feet and his successful

interview process ensured that

he was one of a very few to

country," said Martin.

assignment.

was held in May 2016 at North Georgia Technical College. The next two were the Buy Local Weekend in July, and the Hometown Holiday Shopping, which was done in November.' According to many

members, the Buy Local Program had great potential but never quite hit the mark due to the lack of customers coming out to the stores to take part in the coupons and specials the stores had to offer. Many at the meeting

attributed the reoccurring low turnout to the calendar placement of the event, just before November. According to members present, holiday shopping does not truly pick up until after November.

After much discussion. it was determined that the date of the event would be better suited for the spring. Several in the membership also suggested extending the length of the

See Chamber, Page 3A

people in any given year.

is "charged with coordinating

all military ceremonial support

and Defense Support of Civil

Authorities for the inaugural

period. As a joint task force,

it includes members from all

branches of the armed forces

of the United States, including

Reserve and National Guard

has trained in preparation

for the big day that comes

every four years on Jan. 20,

preparation that required loads

of drills, tons of practice and

the other armed forces honor

See Martin, Page 6A

plenty of rehearsals.

For the past year, Martin

"We get together with

components.'

Per a statement from the Joint Task Force, the task force

and experience serious **Lamar Paris** psychological distress and lost productivity at a "Many stalking victims

"Many stalking

Commissioner

In his first regular

Stalking is a crime

commission meeting of the

new year, Union County Sole

Commission Lamar Paris

proclaimed that January 2017

was to be known as National

everywhere in the U.S. and

at all levels of government,

according to the proclamation

signed by Commissioner Paris,

which also noted that three

out of four women killed by

an intimate partner had been

victims lose time from work

stalked by that same partner.

Stalking Awareness Month.

By Shawn Jarrard

Staff Writer

North Georgia News

signs proclamation,

contracts in meeting

much higher rate than the are forced to protect themselves general population," read by relocating, changing their Commissioner Paris from the identities, changing jobs and See Commissioner, Page 3A

Union County

Sole Commissioner

Blairsville man part of Inaugural Task Force proclamation. and vital processes in American get the job, as around 100 society, the presidential candidates are selected from

Sheriff Mason a pool of more than 300,000 seeks local support

By Shawn Jarrard North Georgia News **Staff Writer**

Union County Sheriff Mack Mason sees a big problem looming on the edge of tomorrow – a potential loss of local law enforcement personnel beyond what it takes to keep the county maximally

Just last year, the Union County Sheriff's Office lost five veteran deputies to higher paying positions elsewhere and even outside law enforcement. a trend that can be seen in sheriffs' offices around the

Mason is one of a growing number of voices in law enforcement who has given his full support to the



Union County Sheriff Mack Mason

establishment of a statewide penny sales tax to be used strictly for the salaries of sheriffs' deputies and city police officers, or mandating

See Sheriff, Page 1B

National Weather Service teaches residents about storms

By Lily Avery North Georgia News

Staff Writer

The Union County Fire Department hosted an introduction to basic storm spotting class at Fire Station No. 1, provided by the National Weather Service, on Wednesday, Jan. 18.

Warning Coordination Meteorologist David J. Nadler with the weather service visited Union County from Atlanta to administer the class, telling all in attendance, both civilians and first responders, how to spot a storm and report it to the weather service. Nadler and his fellow

warning coordination meteorologists offer these storm-spotting classes to 96 other counties in the state, allowing for a class every

three years. Typically, the classes have been limited to first responders, but last week's class was the first in the area to be available to the public, for free, in many years.

U.S. Navy Seaman

Steven Martin

of Union County

up playing such an active role

in one of the most important

So, how did Martin end

very much an honor."

"This is one of our first public classes that we've done around here in a while," said Nadler. "I think when we can reach out to people and spread the word, it's very important. I'm excited to be here tonight and be able to share this information with all of you here. Those in attendance sat

attentively as Nadler explained the importance of civilian input in the case of any inclement weather, whether it is tornado, hail, flooding or a winter "We can never emphasize

the importance enough of having See Weather, Page 6A Vol. 108 No. 4



David Nadler drove up from Peachtree City to teach Union County residents about spotting different kinds of storms. Nadler is a warning coordination meteorologist with the National Weather Service. Photo/Lily Avery

See page 3B

Sheriff singlehandedly nabs burglary suspect By Shawn Jarrard

North Georgia News Staff Writer When the Union County

Sheriff's Office got a complaint about a burglary in a situation where it looked like the burglar would return, Sheriff Mack Mason knew just what to do. He called his investigators

to set up cameras around the property with perfect line of sight to items removed from and stacked outside the scene of the crime, a vacant house See Burglary, Page 3B

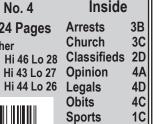
Kevin Johnson



4 Sections 24 Pages

Thurs:Sunny Fri: Sunny

Hi 43 Lo 27 Opinion Hi 44 Lo 26









Sweethearts Valentine's Special! 🎔

706-745-6343

See page 1D

Tue. Jan. 24 @ North Hall 6 & 7:30 PM Fri. Jan 27 vs. East Hall 7 & 8:30 PM Sat. Jan 28 @ Lumpkin Co. 5 & 6:30 PM

BASKETBALL