

# Plans...continued from Page 1A

Mayor Jim Conley and Union County Development Authority Director Mitch Griggs. Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce President Regina Allison and Chamber Tourism Director Tobie Chandler were also present at the meeting to hear concerns from area citizens.

A comprehensive plan is the product of a comprehensive planning process that determines goals and aspirations in terms of community development within a specific municipality or county. The plan typically covers a 10-year span, including a five-year earmark for amendments to be made to goals within the plan that have already been accomplished.

The Georgia Mountains Regional Commission is assisting Union County and Blairsville with revising their respective comprehensive plans, at no cost to the city or county. GMRC has helped many similar neighboring communities, such as White and Towns counties, with the comprehensive planning process.

"This is a way to learn what the elected officials and state officials have to be concerned with in terms of how to direct money to



**GMRC Planning Director Adam Hazell**

make sure it works for you, the citizens, and what you want for the community," said Adam Hazell, GMRC Planning Director. "This is all part of the public engagement process that lies at the heart of what the state and what your local governments are trying to do on behalf of your tax dollars.

"This is something that has evolved in the last 30 years in Georgia to try to make the best of what resources are available. The Georgia

Planning Act began in 1989, and it has evolved over time to make things more streamlined and where elected officials have a guide they can use to make sure they understand public opinion as opposed to acting on a whim."

The comprehensive plan itself is managed through a stakeholder committee of local citizens who gather information and go through the on-file comprehensive plan. These committees meet multiple times during a month, on behalf of the citizens, to make certain that public opinion is being upheld as concisely and unanimously as possible.

Surveys also play a role in managing and amending the comprehensive plan, allowing citizens to provide feedback on what they expect to be happening within the community, future goals for the community, as well as providing personal frustrations with the conditions and authority of the city and county.

Public input is imperative for the preciseness of the plan so that local government officials can better understand what the residents of the community anticipate. Through this input, authorities can strive to improve the community based on the goals established by the locals.

As it stands, roughly 180 surveys have been filled out



**Daniel Liberatore of Blairville Chick-fil-A sits with Blairville Mayor Jim Conley in Feb. 2 public meeting**

and returned to the stakeholder committee. Residents are encouraged to continue to fill out all surveys that personally apply. Surveys can be found at the Union County Community Center, Blairsville City Hall or can be taken online via [survey.monkey.com/r/ZHDRFQQ](http://survey.monkey.com/r/ZHDRFQQ).

Throughout the course of the meeting, many of the public interests voiced dealt with the need for high-speed internet accessibility throughout all the county, not just the heavily

populated areas. Currently, this issue does not lie in the hands of government officials and will require communication with the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC and Windstream.

Another point of conversation during the meeting, also reflected in the current survey results, was the desire to continue development of Blairsville while maintaining the rural aspect of the county outside of the city limits. For those present, maintaining the atmosphere

and integrity of the area while still promoting economic opportunities within the county is extremely imperative for future development.

Several more public hearings will be held for residents to share concerns and ideas for both the city and the county. Dates and times for those hearings will be publicized when determined, however, the plan will not be completed until June of this year.

# Homecoming...continued from Page 1A

Basketball Game, with two very closely matched teams.

Senior basketball players then received recognition, including Haley Grizzle, Ivy LeCroy, Kianna Martin, the daughter of Mary Skipper, and Gabe Mott, the son of Rose and Wynn Mott.

Each received a personalized Falcons hoodie sweatshirt.

A special recognition was also extended to longtime

teacher and coach Glenn Kough, who will retire at the end of the school year with 24 years of service to Woody Gap School. Many of his former students and athletes joined him on the court.

The Alumni Men then took the court, again with two very closely matched teams.

Afterward, the Homecoming Court was introduced, beginning with the class representatives.

Deana Stevenson's K-1 classroom was represented by Daisy Grier, the daughter of Emily Waldroup; J.T. Chapman, the son of Carol and Carlton Chapman; Julianna Johnson, the daughter of Johnna and Cody Payne; and Jaxson Parks, the grandson of Cynthia and Michael Stewart.

Ashley Pruitt's 2-3 classroom was represented by Ansley Gilreath, the daughter of Alisha and Adam Gilreath, and Gunner Mossinger, the son of Paige and Hans Mossinger.

Cheyenne Foster, the daughter of Julia Fry and Cecil Day; David Waldroup, the son of Edie Waldroup; Abby Pruitt, the daughter of Amber and Derrick Pruitt; and Griffin Disser, the son of Chris and Curt Disser; all represented the 4-5 classroom of Tara Walls.

Middle School representatives included Mollie Tritt, the daughter of Christopher Tritt and granddaughter of Carolyn Anderson; D.J. Harkins, the son of Cory Harkins; Bella Wilkins, the daughter of Robbie and Lowell Wilkins; Tripp Hill, the son of Renee and Robby Hill; and Rachel Alphin, the daughter of Lisa and John Alphin.

In addition to the Queen and Runners-Up, the High School Homecoming Court included Destiney Holloway, the daughter of Richard Smith and the late Kristal Holloway. Destiney was escorted by Matthew Woody.

Darrien Wilkins escorted his sister, junior Eliza Wilkins, the daughter of Robbie and Lowell Wilkins.

Junior Kirsten Woody was escorted by Chase Samples, and is the daughter of Crystal and Michael Head and Doyle and Tiffany Woody.

Woody Gap School wishes to thank everyone who contributed to the success of this event, including Carolyn Anderson, Althea Cantrell, Doug Roberts, parents, teachers, and the alumni who so bravely volunteered to play.

# GDOT...continued from Page 1A

upwards of 96 million dollars, according to the GDOT project page.

"This project proposes to widen and reconstruct SR 11/US 19 & 129/Murphy Hwy from two to four lanes in Union County," according to the GDOT project page. "The project begins north of Blairsville from Blue Ridge Street to SR 325/Nottely Dam Road.

"The total project length is approximately 9 miles. This project will also include the construction of a two-lane bridge on SR 11/US 129 over Ivy Log Creek to carry the southbound traffic."

According to documents available through GDOT's project website, the four-lane widening of those 9 miles of Murphy Highway is "primarily needed to relieve congestion on the project corridor," with a secondary need "to reduce the frequency and severity of crashes along the route."

The 9-mile targeted area, when completed, will alternately make use of a middle turn lane and center median along its length, according to GDOT documents.

In 2013, GDOT re-evaluated the need for three proposed connected projects

that had been on the planning agenda for several years, the current stretch of Murphy Highway included.

The main reason for this re-evaluation was North Carolina's construction authorization of the casino in Murphy, which occurred in April of 2013, prompting Union County officials to express their concerns over potentially increased traffic volumes along SR 11/US 129, according to GDOT documents.

Of the three projects that were evaluated at the time, only the current 9-mile stretch received a recommendation to proceed, while two of the projects were recommended not to move forward by GDOT's transportation planning administrator, according to GDOT documents.

One of those projects was a proposed widening of Gainesville Highway from Town Mountain Road north toward Blairsville, and the creation of a new southwest bypass of Downtown Blairsville to connect with SR 11/US 129 to cross over GA 515. That project was recommended for deletion based on the effectiveness of the Glenn Gooch Bypass for the same intended purpose, according

to GDOT documents.

The other project was a proposed widening of Murphy Highway from Gumlog Road to the North Carolina state line, though GDOT officials determined that traffic volumes significantly decreased at Gumlog toward North Carolina, and that plan was recommended for deletion as well, according to GDOT documents.

Acquisition of right of way was supposed to begin last year, and could continue into 2017, with a potential construction start date of 2018, according to GDOT documents, though an actual start date for the project was not available at press time Monday.

For more information about the project, residents can navigate to the GDOT Project Search page at <http://www.dot.ga.gov/BS/Projects/ProjectSearch>, then type in 122200, which is the project number for the Murphy Highway widening.

The North Georgia News was unable to reach GDOT for comment by press time Monday.

**Bell Ringing Union County Old Courthouse**

February 13, 2017  
In memory of  
**John and Virginia Meeks**  
Wedding Anniversary  
by Ginger and Terry Meeks  
Bell ringing information  
at 706-745-5493

# LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

**Olive Tree Art Centre**

Art Gallery \* Pottery Studio \* Art Classes

563 Gainesville Hwy...1 mile south of town  
Blairsville GA 30512  
(706) 835-1257  
[www.OliveTreeArtCentre.com](http://www.OliveTreeArtCentre.com)

**WAZOO! QUILTING**

Longarm Quilting  
Commission Quilts  
Quilt Restoration  
Quick Turn Around

Located in Blairsville, GA  
**706-781-1423**

**SHAWN'S HOME FURNISHINGS**

Mattresses, Porch Rockers & More!

"From the Front Porch to the Back Door We've Got You Covered!"

568 Blue Ridge St. • Blairsville, GA  
FREE DELIVERY! 706-835-1209  
Mon-Fri 9am-6pm • Sat 9am-4pm • Closed Sun

Declare your financial independence. Call today.

**Flip Varney**  
Financial Advisor

178 Brackets Way Suite 2  
Blairsville, GA 30512  
706-835-1385  
[www.edwardjones.com](http://www.edwardjones.com)

**Edward Jones**  
MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING Member SIPC

**TOTAL RECOVERY**

PAINT & BODY  
(706) 745-9703  
391 BLUE RIDGE HWY  
ALL INSURANCE ACCEPTED

**AS PAVING DIVISION INC.**

706-400-2988

DRIVEWAYS  
PARKING LOTS  
SUB DIVISIONS  
TAR/GRAVEL

Commercial • Residential

Southeast Geothermal & Spray Foam

706-745-8685

1442 Blue Ridge Hwy.  
[www.segeothermal.com](http://www.segeothermal.com)  
[www.sesprayfoam.com](http://www.sesprayfoam.com)

**COPELAND'S**  
BURGERS & SOUTHERN EATS

Winter Hours:  
Monday - Saturday 11AM-9PM  
Sunday 11AM-3PM

Downtown Blairsville, One Block from the Square, across from City Hall

**Valentine Trail Ride**

February 11 & 12

90 min guided horseback trail ride for 2 ~ \$90

706-745-5252

Private ride, professional photographer, smores and hot cocoa by camp fire. Add'l riders \$45. Advance reservations required

**TRACKROCK STABLES**  
BLAIRSVILLE, GEORGIA  
[www.Trackrock.com](http://www.Trackrock.com)

Michelin BFG Uniroyal

Specializing In:  
Alignment • Computer Balancing  
Brakes • Auto Repair  
Industrial Foam Fill  
Oil Changes

**Thomas Tire, Inc.**  
Auto & Big Truck Service

Oscar Thomas - Owner 76 Shoe Factory Road  
(706) 745-0264 Blairsville, Georgia 30512

**Budget Blinds**

The best in custom blinds and window coverings

Free In-Home Consultation!

Shutters • Wood Blinds • Honeycomb  
Roller/Solar Shades • Roman Shades • Vertical Blinds  
Woven Woods and Much More!

[www.budgetblinds.com](http://www.budgetblinds.com)  
Call Today! 706-745-0009

**We Make Loans.**

Personal Loans • Starter Loans • Consolidation Loans and more

[www.lffc.com](http://www.lffc.com)

417 Blue Ridge Street, Suite 1  
BLAIRSVILLE  
**706-745-6111**

**1st Franklin Financial**  
\* All loans subject to our liberal credit policy and limitations, if any. 1st Franklin Financial Corporation, NMLS#141654, Georgia Residential Mortgage License #5656.

**HEARING SOLUTIONS**  
of North Georgia

Hearing Tests - Evaluations - Consults

Let us service your hearing devices in our state of the art hearing lab!

Call us today 706-835-9213

Hearing Solutions of North Georgia  
63 Plott Street, Unit D, Blairsville, GA  
(Located next to Chick-fil-A on Hwy. 515)  
Proudly serving the community and tri-state area since 2000

**Impact Design, Inc.**

Owner, LuAnn Head  
307C Cleveland Street • Blairsville, GA 30512  
706-400-5674

Laser Engraving • Custom Apparel • Promotional Products  
Website: [impactdesigninc.co](http://impactdesigninc.co)

**BRASSTOWN PHARMACY DRUG AND GUN**

A shot... above the rest

706-745-2303  
LOCATED AT 23B MURPHY HWY BLAIRSVILLE GA

**PLACE YOUR AD HERE!**

Advertise with other Local Business here in the Blairsville area!

Contact Derek  
706-994-8973  
or 706-745-6343