

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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BOE hears about school safety, welcomes guests

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Assistant Editor

School safety is a hot national topic right now in the aftermath of the Valentine's Day school shooting in Parkland, Florida.

So, it came as no surprise that Union County Schools Superintendent Dr. Fred Rayfield addressed the issue of school safety in the Feb. 20 work session of the Union County Board of Education.

The schools have security guards, cameras, emergency panic buttons, buzz-in doors, a safety plan approved by the Georgia Emergency Management Agency and other security measures, according to Dr. Rayfield.

And as previously reported, the system regularly

partners with local first responders, from the sheriff's office to police and fire, to conduct walkthroughs to keep law enforcement officials apprised of school layouts.

The school board met for its regular monthly meeting later that evening, and board members welcomed several special guests.

"It's always a good night when you get to recognize students and their accomplishments," said Dr. Rayfield. "For the past two years in the primary school, we've been working with the art teacher there that has really done a good job of getting our students to put together some ideas for our system Christmas card."

Second-grader Emma Taylor's design was selected to grace the front of the school

system's 2017 Christmas card, and she attended the February board meeting with her mom, dad and siblings.

"This was sent out to our mailing list of everybody that gets Christmas cards from the board of education," said Dr. Rayfield, who then turned to Emma. "We're going to present you with a framed copy of it, and thank you for a beautiful piece of artwork."

Emma's particularly festive artwork featured an ornamental Christmas tree hanging on a real Christmas tree, and her art teacher was Jane Edison.

Also in the meeting, the board recognized another member of the community with a "Partner in Education Award."

"Let me just say that



Photo by Shawn Jarrard
Second-grader Emma Taylor, center, won the school system's 2017 Christmas card design contest. Pictured here: Union County Schools Superintendent Dr. Fred Rayfield and Primary School Principal Millie Owenby with Emma Taylor and her parents, Francesca and Jesse.

Woody Gap School honored at State Capitol

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Assistant Editor

Woody Gap School may be the smallest public school in the state, but it got some big attention recently at the Georgia State Capitol.

On an invitation from District 51 State Sen. Steve Gooch, Woody Gap's middle and high school aged kids - 34 of 59 total K-12 students - traveled to Atlanta on Valentine's Day to receive a resolution adopted by the Georgia Senate proclaiming Feb. 14, 2018, as Woody Gap School Day.

"Woody Gap School is the heart and soul of the Suches community, offers every student the personal attention that they need, and is a place where school feels like home, teachers and classmates feel like family, and alumni are proud to announce that they are a Falcon," per the resolution.

The idea to honor Woody



Woody Gap School at the State Capitol Building in Atlanta on Feb. 14, pictured here with Gov. Nathan Deal, State Sen. Steve Gooch, Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris and Union County Tax Commissioner Lee Knight.

Hooper, Krieger shine in 'Evening with the STARS'

By Lily Avery
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Union County's STAR Student and STAR Teacher were honored at the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce's "Evening with the STARS" event at the Union County Community Center on Thursday, Feb. 22.

Chamber members attended in order to recognize students McKenzie Hooper of Union County High School and her STAR Teacher, April Krieger.

Chamber member WoodmenLife sponsored the event, which featured a delicious catered dinner and dessert from The View Grill.

According to Chamber President Al Harper, the event is a way for the chamber, as well as the community, to show support for student achievement and make the recognition a night to be cherished for years to come.



Photo by Lily Avery
UCHS senior and STAR Student McKenzie Hooper and STAR Teacher April Krieger in the Feb. 22 "Evening with the STARS."

Veterans gather to remember the Battle of Iwo Jima



Iwo Jima Veterans USMC Jack Rhodes, USN Todd Kimsey and USMC Joseph Tedder.

beginning of the Battle of Iwo Jima on Feb. 19, 1945.

Six local Iwo Jima veterans were honored at the event: Todd Kimsey, U.S. Navy; Jack Rhodes, U.S. Marine Corps; Clarence "Bud" Johnson, U.S. Navy; Phil Gamache, U.S. Marine Corps; Mack Drake, U.S. Marine Corps; and Joseph Tedder, U.S. Marine Corps.

Members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7807 and Auxiliary, American Legion

School board qualifying begins on March 5

By News Special
North Georgia News

Qualifying for the Union County Board of Education begins next week.

The board posts up for election are Districts 2, 4 and 5, and the qualifying fees have been set at \$108.

Qualifying will begin on Monday, March 5, and will run from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. that

Monday through Thursday, and from 9 a.m. to noon on Friday, March 9.

Interested residents will need to turn in their qualifying paperwork to the Union County Election Superintendent, who will be located inside the Registrar's Office in the Union County Courthouse.

"The Republican Party and the Democratic Party

have left it up to me to qualify the candidates," said Election Superintendent Libby Stevens.

The General Primary Election will be held on May 22, and the General Election will be held on November 6.

For more information and for qualifying paperwork, residents can visit the Secretary of State's website at sos.ga.gov.

Georgia Law: Stop for stopped school buses

By Mark Novak
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

When it comes to school bus safety, the Union County Sheriff's Office wants people to know they should take the law seriously.

Most people are aware they have to stop for school buses, and the ones that don't should realize there's a price to pay for breaking the law.

"We would rather have an impact on stopping this dangerous behavior through education than writing citations," said UCSCO Chief Deputy John George.

Georgia law states that drivers meeting or overtaking



Photo by Mark Novak
Union County Schools Transportation Director Stanley Garrett and School SRO Lt. Darren Jones.

Al Harper selected as new chamber president

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

The Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors has hired Al Harper to serve as chamber president.

Harper has led the chamber in an interim capacity since the start of 2018, following the resignation of Regina Allison as chamber president in December.

The board asked Harper in December if he would help the chamber bridge the gap in leadership during the search for a new chamber president, and his interest in helping the chamber grow right alongside the board's

interest in bringing him on as a permanent replacement.

He learned on Tuesday, Feb. 20, that the board had decided to hire him out of all the candidates interviewed, and Harper has pledged to maintain the leadership style that won over the board.

"The chamber of commerce is a small business serving small businesses," said Harper. "There's no magic to running it if you run it like a small business. The members are our customers, and we either serve them properly or we don't. If we don't do it properly, we lose business."

With multiple business startups under his belt and corporate work experience with companies like IBM and



Photo by Scott Michael Anna
Al Harper
Windstream, Harper has hit the ground running with his business
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Mar 2 vs. East Hall 5 & 7 PM
BASEBALL
Mar 2 @ White Co. 4 PM (DH)
Mar 5 @ Murphy, NC 4 PM

Woody Gap Student Council Yard Sale
March 9th and March 10th
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U.C. Rec. Dept.
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