

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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State approves Chief Dyer as EMA director

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

There's a new EMA director in town, and his name is David Dyer.

This latest title makes Dyer a triple threat to any emergency, because alongside his position as EMA director, he's also the Union County Fire Chief and 911 Director.

"Being all under one umbrella, you can coordinate everything better – you know what's going on," said Chief Dyer. "It's a lot of work, but I like being busy."

"It's a big responsibility, and there's no way I could do it without this crew that we have here in Union County. Everybody's got a part, and I'm just trying to be the coordinator."

Homer Bryson approved

Dyer's appointment as Union County EMA director effective Feb. 24, after receiving a recommendation on Dyer's behalf from Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris.

Bryson is the director for the Georgia Emergency Management Agency, known as GEMA Homeland Security.

"The day-to-day emergency management operational responsibilities are extremely important, since it reflects the organization's capability to effectively respond to an emergency or disaster," wrote Bryson in a letter to Dyer. "As director of emergency management, it is your responsibility to ensure Union County's readiness to meet any emergency or disaster."

Chief Dyer is a Union County native who attended Union County Schools before becoming both EMT and paramedic certified at Lanier Technical College in the early 1990s. He also has degrees in fire administration and business administration.

He worked with Union General EMS for 25 years, working his way up from EMT to paramedic, then to EMS captain and finally EMS director.

Chief Dyer has also taught a variety of medical courses for Union General and North Georgia Technical College, and was a flight medic for Rescue Air and Omni Flight for five years.

Through it all, Chief Dyer has been involved with the Union County Fire Department, serving as a

firefighter, a lieutenant, a captain, a battalion and ultimately as fire chief.

He assumed the role of fire chief when Charles Worden retired from that position in 2014. At the same time, Dyer became an EMA deputy director under Worden, who continued to work as EMA and 911 director until his retirement last month.

When Worden retired, Chief Dyer took over as 911 director and began to serve as interim EMA director pending approval from the state, which came last month.

For the past few years, the chief has been hard at work training in the EMA arena, and he has already completed his Advanced Georgia Emergency Manager certification.

Other certifications
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David Dyer, Union County Fire Chief, EMA & 911 Director

Georgia DOT to hold meeting April 6 on four-lane expansion

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
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The Georgia Department of Transportation is aiming for the year 2020 to start construction on a project to widen Georgia 515/US 76 to four lanes between Blairsville and Young Harris, according to GDOT documents.

GDOT officials will hold a "Location and Design Public Hearing Open House" at the Haralson Memorial Civic Center on Thursday, April 6, from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. The civic center is located at 165 Wellborn Street in Blairsville.

Residents are invited to attend the open house to



A recent GDOT Public Information Open House in Blairville on Feb. 21.

view the current plans and leave comments that could potentially affect the outcome of the project. All told, the state See GDOT, Page 3A

Hiawassee man dies in one vehicle accident on GA 515

By Charles Duncan
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A 28-year-old Hiawassee man died Saturday as a result of injuries sustained during a one-vehicle accident on Georgia 515 in Union County, according to the Georgia State Patrol.

Trooper First Class Joshua Hedden was dispatched at approximately 11 a.m. on March 25 to a reported crash on GA 515 near BW Ranch Road, TFC Hedden said.

"The driver of the vehicle, a 2002 Chevrolet Suburban, was traveling west on SR 515," Hedden said. "The driver, Mr. James Drow, for an See Accident, Page 8A



James Drow's vehicle flipped several times, ending up over the guardrail on Georgia 515. Photo/Frank Uhle

Nelms and EMC board talk fiber optic internet, open board meetings

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Debt is down, open board meetings are coming, and fiber-optic internet is a work in progress.

Those are just a few of the messages communicated to the membership of the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC during a town hall meeting at North Georgia Technical College on Thursday, March 23.

Another town hall meeting is coming up in Towns County on Thursday, April 13, at 6 p.m. in the Towns County Recreation and Conference Center at 150 Foster Park Rd. in Young Harris.

The EMC Board of Directors, General Manager Jeremy Nelms and other EMC employees met with a small gathering of members last Thursday to take questions



Blue Ridge Mountain EMC Board President Mickey Cummings, right, addresses town hall attendees at North Georgia Tech on Thursday, March 23. Also pictured, Board Treasurer Chris Logan, far left, and EMC General Manager Jeremy Nelms.

and deliver updates on the corporation. Newly elected Board Member Cory Payne opened the meeting with an invocation, followed by a recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance led by See EMC, Page 3A

Dr. Rayfield says 'thank you' to UC board of education

By Shawn Jarrard
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Statewide every year, local school board members are celebrated with a special stretch of calendar known as School Board Appreciation Week.

This year's celebration took place March 13 through March 17, and gave the community a week of chances to show some love for members of the Union County Board of Education.

The five members of the Union County Board of Education are: Jenna Akins, Tony Hunter, Cindy Odom, Keith Potts and Patrick White.

In the Tuesday, March 21, board meeting, Superintendent Dr. Fred Rayfield took some



Union County Schools Superintendent Dr. Fred Rayfield presenting Board Chair Cindy Odom with a certificate of appreciation for Board Appreciation Week on Tuesday, March 21.

time to present certificates of appreciation to each of the board members. "School Board Appreciation Week takes place in See Rayfield, Page 2A

Spring Hammer-In a success at Trackrock Campground

By Todd Forrest
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Trackrock Campground & Cabins held its 30th Hammer-In last weekend with more than 15 vendors, artists and metalworkers putting their talents on display, free of charge, for the community.

Held twice a year, the Hammer-In has become a staple of Union County since its conception back in 2002, and it continues to grow in popularity each time the sparks fly and the grinding ensues.

Year after year, as North Georgia says hello to spring, the campground welcomes the public to witness the art of metalworking, scrimshaw, knifemaking and more.

Here's the scene: Once visitors arrive at the campground, nestled at See Trackrock, Page 8A



The Spring 2017 Hammer-In at Trackrock Campground & Cabins

Woman arrested for father's home invasion

By Shawn Jarrard
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A North Carolina woman is behind bars for playing a role in her own father's home invasion, according to the Union County Sheriff's Office.

The home invasion is still under investigation, though UCSO Lt. Daren Osborn said that the crime is an isolated incident, and that Union County residents should not worry about further occurrences.

Deborah Hill, 39, of China Grove, NC, has been charged with home invasion in the second degree, robbery, burglary, false imprisonment, aggravated assault and two counts of cruelty to children in the third degree, according



Deborah Hill

to the sheriff's office. Charges stem from a Feb. 21 incident following a visit from Hill to the home of her father, a Union County resident, according to Lt. Osborn. See Hill, Page 2A

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