

Fire...continued from Page 1A



Fortunately, no one was home.

Service was talking Tuesday about Wednesday, and they were pretty serious about it.”

Chief Dyer met with representatives of other county first responder agencies at the EMA command center at Fire Station No. 1 on Tuesday for weather briefings, and again on Wednesday for a special weather briefing.

Early indicators pointed to Wednesday’s storm system being worse than what had come through the previous Monday, though, again, Union County weathered the storms well.

“We were extremely lucky,” said Chief Dyer. “We got some rain, we got some lightning, we got some thunderstorms. We did have one structure fire from a lightning strike, way out on Smyrna Road.”

According to the chief, the home’s residents were out at the time of the fire, and some neighbors heard a loud popping sound during one of Wednesday’s storms.

“They were out looking around, investigating after the storm passed through, and saw that the house was burning,” said Chief Dyer.

Firefighters were able to salvage some items from the home, but for the most part, the structure was a loss,

according to the chief.

Of course, due to the forecasted potential of the storms, Chief Dyer, the fire department, and other first responders, such as the Union County Sheriff’s Office, Blairsville Police Department, Union County Road Department and Union General EMS, were all on standby should emergencies come to call.

“We were monitoring here (at Station No. 1) and everybody was put on alert,” said Chief Dyer. “Our Swift Water Team was even put on alert, just in case we got a lot of rain.”

“We were prepared to respond to anything we had here, or to go to another county to help out if they requested it.”

Fortunately, no mutual aid calls were necessary due to the storm system, which tended more to the south.

“It was very hard for (the weather service) to predict because it was an unusual situation,” said Chief Dyer.

“They had a front coming from the west, they had some Gulf moisture coming up from the south, and they had a front coming down from the north, and the fronts were converging in Alabama and pushing through Georgia.

“So, they were trying to determine where this warm front landed would be the worst weather. If it landed in the north, it would affect us, if it landed in the south, it would affect south of us.”

Wednesday’s storm moved through in three waves, the second of which hit Atlanta hard, causing air traffic to be delayed. Union County got hit with the third wave of storms that April 5.

“It worked pretty much the way they said it was going to work, it’s just that we didn’t have as severe weather as we thought we were going to have,” said Chief Dyer.

Jeremy Nelms, general manager of the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC, agreed with the chief’s assessment that the weather didn’t hit as hard as everyone was expecting, and reported that the EMC experienced 19 total outages for last Wednesday that resulted in 3,000 customers without power.

Six of those 19 outages occurred in Union County, affecting 2,700 customers. Most of those 2,700 customers lost power because of a tree that fell during the storms, which took out two power poles north of Blairsville on Ivy Log Road.

Students...continued from Page 1A



The event featured students from Union County Primary, Middle and High Schools, plus Woody Gap School

World War I began on July 28, 1914, and ended on Nov. 11, 1918, after the armistice signing between the Allied Forces and Germany, in Compiègne, France.

However, the United States did not formally enter the war until President Woodrow Wilson’s declaration on April 6, 1917.

Throughout the war’s four years of tumultuous battles, approximately 11 million soldiers were killed and more than 20 million, including civilians, lost their lives as a result. American soldiers alone accounted for 116,000 of the total wartime casualties.

Weeks before the 100th anniversary, the historical society approached history teachers from Union County Elementary School, Union County Middle School, Union County High School and Woody Gap School about conducting projects in the classroom that centered on the war.

As a result, each school selected two to three students with the best projects to present to the community last Thursday.

Each student focused on different aspects of the war to give a well-rounded view of the war that changed the world forever.

“We wanted to come up with a way to celebrate and honor the 100th anniversary of World War I,” said Libby Stevens, historical society president. “After much consideration, we thought, what better way to honor it than to learn about it and have the kids learn about it, so no one forgets.”

Charlie Nicholson, Will Woolwine and Daniel Fortenberry, all fifth-grade students from UCES, focused on different machinery used during the early 1900s.

From military tanks to firearms, each student gave a detailed history of a device of war, why it was important and how it was used during the war, even bringing handmade visual aids to share with their captive audience inside the Historic Union County Courthouse.

UCMS sixth-grade students Bailey Adams, Stein Harkins and Olivia Walker split the war into three segments: before the war, during the war and after the war.

Each student explained the causes of the war, how the war played out and the aftermath of the war, using slideshow presentations as visual guides.

Unlike UCES and UCMS students, Union County High School students Regan Hill, Summer Ribas and Faith Murphy approached the World War I project in a completely different manner by mimicking propaganda posters from the era.

While the students did not give a presentation on the posters, high school U.S. history teacher Wesley Garrett explained the project in-depth to the crowd, showing how the posters taught the students about the war.

“One of the most impressive things to me is, during wartimes, how we come together,” said Garrett. “That’s always impressed me, how we pick each other up.”

“During the time of



Bud Akins with the Union County Historical Society. The historical society hosted the event on Thursday, April 6

World War I, a lot of the information that was being delivered to the public was in print. So, I dug up an old project that we used to do.

“I invited everyone to participate and come up with a propaganda poster that would encourage citizens to enlist or support the war in some manner.”

Woody Gap School students Makena Hill and Jennifer Marsh also discussed the causes of the war, from the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria to America’s involvement in the war, as well as how horses were used during infantry fighting.

After the students had finished their presentations, Stevens gave each student a certificate and a medallion containing the historical society’s seal as thanks for participation in the ceremony.

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