

# Opinions

## Everybody has one...

### Insurance Services Office (ISO) Class

We live in a world of constant change, and the fire service is no exception. That is why we strive to stay informed and up to date. Recently Captain Justin Blanchard, Battalion Chief Richard Jones, and I attended a class provided by the Insurance Services Office (ISO). The objective of this 8-hour class was to better inform dispatch centers, fire departments, and water departments on the ISO survey process.

The class discussed the three major elements of the survey, which includes the E911 dispatch center (10% of the survey); the water departments (40% of the survey); and the fire department (50% of the survey). The E911 dispatch center is evaluated on the dispatch equipment, the operations, and training. The survey determines how well the center can take a 911 call and how fast they are able to dispatch out the fire department to that call. They also evaluate the hardware of the center and the training of the dispatchers.

The water departments are evaluated on the number of hydrants, water pipes, supply, and usage. The survey is estimating the amount of water that is available and how accessible that water may be to the fire department in the event of a fire. They are also evaluating the water reserves, pressures, and flow.

The fire department is evaluated on apparatus, equipment, training, station placement, response, and personnel on scene of structure fires. The survey is estimating the amount of fire apparatus and firefighters needed for a fire in our community. They then compare that to what we have on hand. They also evaluate the equipment carried by the apparatus, the pump capacities, and training of the firefighters. Last, they evaluate our response to previous structure fires.

This information is used by ISO to determine our Public Protection Class (PPC™) classification commonly referred to as the ISO rating. The PPC™ ranges from class 10 (worst) to class 1 (best). Union County was last surveyed by ISO in January of 2021 and was able to maintain a 4/4Y rating. Union County's PPC™ class was lowered from a 6/6X to a 4/4Y in August 2015.

The class concentrated on understanding what will be surveyed; what and how to document; and how to prepare for a

See Dyer, page 5A

**Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief**

David Dyer



### A Mother's Intuition

The mother rushed to scoop up her toddler who fell on the playground. "You're OK, I got you!" She brushed off his knees. "Everything will be OK; I promise."

A child wants protection from harmful things beyond his control. He wants a restoration of tranquility and order. In his crisis, here comes Mom with her assurance of just that. But she cannot guarantee everything will be OK beyond that moment. The child will continue to face danger and stress. Life happens. Yet there remains something true about her words. In God's time and in His way, everything WILL be OK. All of God's children yearn for that.

In his book, "Signals of Transcendence," Os Guinness writes about being born in China to missionary parents during World War II. It was a time when millions died in the Japanese invasion and the following communist revolution. His older and younger brothers died from hunger and disease. "My first ten years, to put it gently," he writes, "were years of chaos, disorder, terror, fear, death, suffering, war, revolution, and loss. Everything was not alright."

Yet in the midst of those trials, his parents' faith in God remained. The same parents who lost two sons offered their remaining son a calm assurance. "Their faith gave them rock-solid grounds for trusting in the ultimate goodness of life and existence, despite the horror and sorrow of the immediate situation," he writes. "The final reality behind the universe is God, who is love, and who has a great heart for humans who He has created in His own image."

A mother's intuition gives her reason to comfort her child saying, "Everything will be OK." A mother's faith offers her child the hope that tranquility and protection await those who believe, though we remain in the valley of the shadow for now. "The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want...He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul...Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me" (Psa. 23:1-4).

**All Things New**

Wayne Fowler



### Commissioner's Questions

Communication between the Union County Government and residents of Union County, Georgia is critical to the success of our community. It has always been my goal to reach out to my local neighbors and constituency on matters of importance and on matters that impact Union County as a whole. We also receive many phone calls each week from individuals who seek information or need services. This week's questions discuss ways that Union County residents can reach out to my office and to the various departments that operate under the Union County Government.

**Q. I have called your office on several occasions, and I have received excellent customer service. However, different people answer the phones. How does that work?**

A. It is true that calls to my office might be answered by different people. We do have one receptionist position whose primary duty is to answer phone calls and forward the inquiries to the appropriate person. If our receptionist is already on a phone call, others in the office may answer another call. The truth is, we can handle up to five calls at once - with each caller talking to a different person. Accepting a phone call and listening to the question or inquiry is a priority for me. Each office member is capable of listening, noting, and referring residents to an appropriate resource for the situation.

**Q. Sometimes I have a question over the weekend. Your office is typically not open on the weekends. What choices do I have for communicating with your office?**

A. If you call my office on the weekends, you will be given the option of leaving a message. Messages are collected from the machine each Monday morning, and they are addressed immediately. Sometimes callers ask for a call back; but sometimes they simply want their requests to be forwarded to the appropriate department. Either way, we try to address these types of inquiries as quickly as possible. Another option is to email your question or concern to commissioner@uniongov.com

**Q. At one of the Commissioner Meetings, I overheard someone talking about innovative ways to communicate with the Commissioner's Office. Can you talk more about**

See Paris, page 5A

**Q & A from Union County Commissioner**

Lamar Paris



### Debt Ceiling Deception

Biden's Debt Ceiling Deception - Last month, House Republicans successfully passed the only plan in Washington that addresses the debt ceiling and reins in government spending. Our sensible solution, the Limit, Save, Grow Act, limits federal spending, saves taxpayer dollars, and grows our economy. I proudly supported this legislation, as it protects hard-working Americans, strengthens our economy, and saves all of us \$4.5 trillion over the next decade - all while avoiding defaulting on our nation's debt.

House Republicans did our job - now it's time for the White House and Senate Democrats to do theirs before it's too late.

Yet instead of responsibly leading and constructively engaging with House Republicans, President Biden is determined

United States Congressman Representative Andrew Clyde



### Letters to the Editor

#### A Final Response

Dear Editor,

This will be my final response to "Misnamed," and I apologize for having a dispute like this in a public forum. Today's political situation is such that polite disagreement, discussion or debate is eschewed for shouting down the opposition, demanding that one's feelings be considered absolute truth, that the opposition is evil and similar tactics.

Now to the response. The last letter included the statement, "It is more efficient to have one person who is directly responsible." The implication here is that efficiency is the measure of goodness in government. If this is true, a couple of the best governments were headed by Mussolini, Hitler, Stalin and Mao. They were one person "directly responsible" for "efficient government," but I believe not "good government."

We need a better definition of the measurement of what good government means than simply efficient. (I am not comparing our commissioner to the above-named despots, merely using them as examples of why efficiency is not a good measure of good government.)

In my opinion, good government is one that is responsive to the needs and opinions of the governed. It is one that listens, discusses, debates, and comes to reasoned decisions. In my opinion a five-member board, with each member representing one of our five districts, will have each member closer to the constituency that they represent and can hence listen to and better discuss with their electorate before deciding how to act. This will, I believe, add more openness

See Peterson, page 5A

#### Standing Up for Freedom

Dear Editor,

I don't believe that most people realize that the United States of America is on a slippery slope toward socialism.

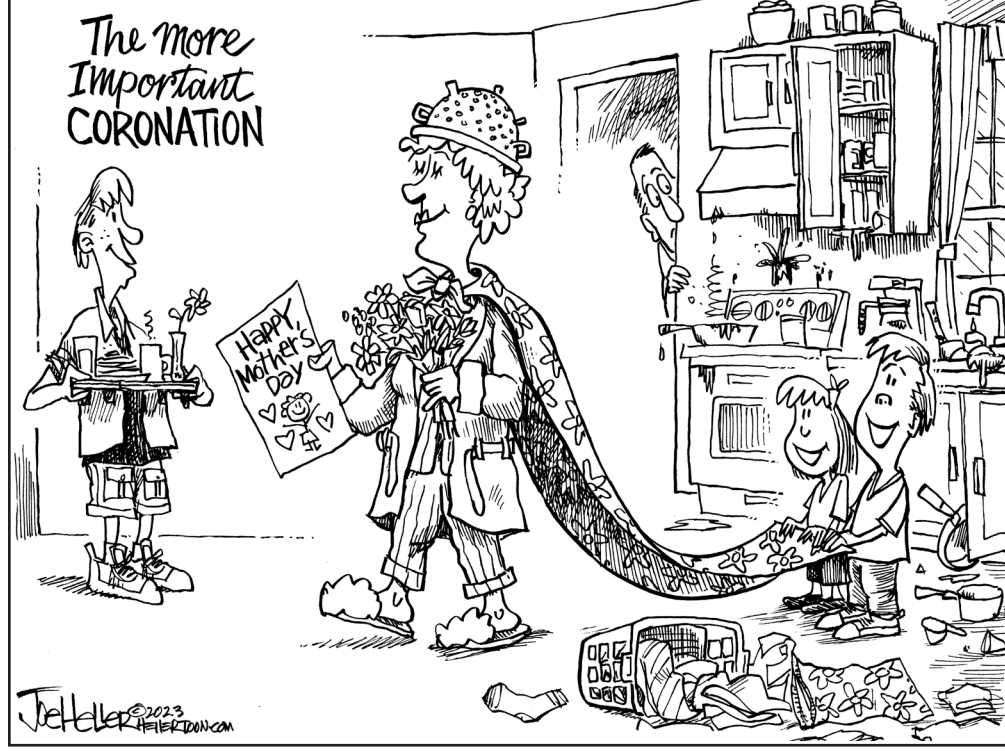
Our Leader in the White House has established abundant ties to communist China and is allowing "Chinese weather balloons" to travel freely in U.S. airspace photographing military bases housing nuclear weapons.

Our Leader in the White House supports Merrick Garland, the U.S. Attorney General, who says that parents who don't go along with new procedures in their children's school will be considered domestic terrorists.

Our Leader in the White House is allowing groups such as Antifa and Black Lives Matter to divide our country.

Now is the time for us to stand up for our freedoms.

Respectfully,  
Stephanie Miller



### Local Grown

This is one I do every year at this time to remind you to support your local farmers, buy the crops that they have grown in the local area which supports the local economy, creates local jobs, and makes us eat healthier.

I saw a small cup of apple juice that had juice from US, Mexico, Poland, California, and several other foreign countries. Think about the transportation costs and time it takes to get the products from there to here on our table. Why not just use what we have here? Is that too simple or am I overlooking something, like supporting foreign shippers or overseas growers that do not add one cent to our local economy. I will buy American no matter what it costs because, it will help us one way or another. The only fruit that is really fresh is grown in our part of the country so look at the labels and buy local.

It is that time of year that we look forward to all winter when the farmer's markets open and local grown vegetables are ready for us to enjoy. Those who know me know that my favorite past-time is growing things here on my Grandfather's old farm down on the river in Towns County. Walter Brown was the first Towns County Agent in 1917 and eventually became the Director of the UGA Extension Service in Athens, so I get my Ag experience honestly having grown up on my family's farm in Taylor County where we grew hay, vegetables, and other things that contributed to the food supply of our area. We plant oats, corn, soybeans, in the fields and cut flowers & vegetables in our High Tunnels that grow (sometimes) into something we can eat or sell.

Of course, farming requires my other favorite things, tractors, and equipment to prepare the ground, plant the crops, and harvest what the bears and other critters do not eat before we do. I never was one to use a hoe or manual equipment like that when I can ride my 100 hp Kubota with AC, Stereo and air ride seat (we've come a long way since our A John Deere) or my 1964 Ford 4000, my 1958 Ford 871, my 1952 Ford 8N or my 1954 Ford 740 to prepare, plant, and harvest (I like old things). We always plant more crops than we can eat or give away so we sell all that we can at one of the local farmer's markets or on the roadside on our farm. Sweet corn will be ready in late July. If we figured how much the vegetables that we plant really cost we would just go to the farmer's market and buy our vegetables already picked and ready to prepare and save

See Riley, page 5A

**RC&D Executive Director**

Frank Riley



### A Chivaree

A "chivaree" was a big part of most marriages during my parents and grandparents' younger years. I think today we are all too busy for this type of activity. Don't get me wrong, I enjoy participating in the social media we find on the internet. However, the social media we use via our computers cannot really forge long-lasting friendships like we develop when we rub elbows with one another. To me the social networks are tools I can use to keep up with friends.

A chivaree was a custom during my grandfather's time. The event was held after a marriage ceremony. Remember, there was no such thing as a trip to the beach or mountains for one's honeymoon. After my grandparents married, they were allowed to live in "the weaning off house" until they could afford to get a place of their own. After their marriage ceremony, Papa and Granny knew that the "chivaree" was coming to their place.

After dark Papa heard the "chivaree" coming. About 15-20 of their friends and relatives walked down the lane to their house. The group of people was all singing a song. These friends of Papa and Granny built up a large fire in the front yard of "weaning off house." Some of the group kept up the singing while the rest of the group roasted some chickens and made coffee. Then about every 15-20 minutes the group would parade around the house beating on the walls with pots and pans. Every now and then someone from the group would knock on the door to ask about borrowing some sugar or salt. Papa said, "And you had better answer if they knock or things might get rowdy." The "chivaree" would last the entire evening and the group would not go home until dawn the next morning. Papa said his friends were up all night in his front yard and no amount of pleading could convince them to leave.

Papa also participated in some of these chivarees. He remembered one where the group of boys took things a little too far. He said, "We walked around the house beating on the sides with frying pans and singing. We even knocked on the door to ask for some salt. But we heard nary a peep from inside. So, one of the boys decided we should go in and steal the groom." The group of boys walked into the house and down the hall to the bedroom. They flung open the bedroom door and grabbed up the protesting groom and carried him outside.

The group of boys walked around the

**Around The Farm**

Mickey Cummings



### Hemlock Woolly Adelgid

Have you seen small white cottony balls on hemlock trees? If you have then that means those trees are infested with Hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA). Let's look at why it's important to preserve hemlocks, what is the pest that is killing them, and what you can do to save them.

We are getting to the time of year when they really start to come out.

Hemlocks are a native species that ranges from Maine to Northern Alabama. They are a keystone species that provides habitat for about 120 species of vertebrates and over 90 species of birds. Hemlocks are unique in their ability to thrive in shade. This attribute makes them common in ravines and along rivers and streams. Their proximity to streams and rivers means that they are crucial in reducing erosion and watershed protection. Hemlocks can be identified by their needles. They have short flat needles with two distinctive pale white stripes on the underside. The needles are wider at the base and taper to a rounded tip, unlike firs that have parallel sides the whole way down.

HWA is a very small insect. The white cottony sacks on the hemlock trees are what the HWA wraps itself with for protection. They are an invasive species from Asia that doesn't have a natural predator here. HWA feeds on the sap inside of hemlock trees. Wind, birds, deer, or humans can spread the HWA. Once a tree has become infested, it will die within four to 10 years. Therefore, it is important to treat trees as soon as possible after finding that they have been infested.

It is important to treat your own trees with cultural and chemical controls. Cultural controls include keeping hemlocks well mulched and watered. Hemlock trees don't have very deep roots and droughts can make them more susceptible to infection. Don't place any bird feeders or deer feeders near your trees. Birds and deer can carry the eggs for long distances. If you are hiking in an area that has HWA wash your clothes afterward because you may be carrying eggs. Be careful to not over-fertilize your trees as that could make them more enticing to HWA. Cultural controls may keep your trees healthy, but when they become infested, chemical controls are the only option. Chemical controls involves treating your tree with either Imidacloprid or Dinotefuran, and is the most common and effective method of control. An imidacloprid treatment will last four or five years. However, it may take one year before it is effective. Dinotefuran will last for two years in the tree and will take about four to six weeks to take effect. The ideal way

**Watching and Working**

Jacob Williams



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## Paris... continued from Page 4A

that?

A. This is a great question, and it is one that I'm excited to discuss. We have indeed been researching and investing in new technologies for receiving communication and for pushing out messages to Union County residents. First, have you seen the newspaper articles and the Facebook posts about CodeRED? The Union County Emergency Management Agency has instituted the CodeRED Emergency Notification System – an ultra-high-speed telephone communication service for emergency notifications.

The CodeRED system allows us to provide notifications for all or for targeted areas of the county in cases of emergency requiring immediate action (such as a boil-water notice, missing child, weather emergencies or evacuation notices). The CodeRED system is unique in that it provides a mobile APP that residents can use for receiving messages. The system also delivers text, emails and phone calls. Phone calls provide a recorded message to a live person or to an answering machine - mak-

ing three attempts to connect to any number. Residents do need to initially sign up for the notifications and can do so at: [public.coderedweb.com/CNE/en-US/BF829D7A84B0](http://public.coderedweb.com/CNE/en-US/BF829D7A84B0)

As a second option, the Union County Government website provides a direct inquiry page that allows residents to send a message directly to a specific department. Open the Union County Government website at: [www.unioncountga.gov](http://www.unioncountga.gov) In the top right-hand corner, simply click on the CONTACT US link. You will then see various departments listed, and by clicking on a hyperlink, you can complete a form that will automatically email that specific department.

Finally, we have invested in a mobile-based solution called TextMyGov – giving you immediate access to county contact information by simply texting to a specific number. As you can see, we continue to implement new and innovative ways to communicate with Union County residents.

It's a great season to live in Union County.

## Williams... continued from Page 4A

to apply either of these insecticides is by soil drench. Putting the insecticide in the soil will mean quicker uptake by the plant and reduce the chance of off target drift. A soil drench does not require any special equipment. Soil injection can also be used, however, I only recommend using an injector if you are treating a large number of trees. Soil injection and soil drench are equally effective. You can also purchase imidacloprid in tablet form, so you don't have to mix with water. If the trees are near open water, a trunk injection of insecticide is necessary, which will require a professional. Whenever applying a pesticide follow the label.

The Union County Extension Office has a soil injector that is available to be checked out. Checking it out requires a \$250 dollar deposit that will be returned when the injector is brought back.

If you would like instructions on how to treat hemlock trees contact your County Extension Office or email me at [Jacob.Williams@uga.edu](mailto:Jacob.Williams@uga.edu). The organization Save Georgia's Hemlocks have a website that also has lots of information.

Contact your local Extension Office or send me an email at [Jacob.Williams@uga.edu](mailto:Jacob.Williams@uga.edu) if you have any questions about HWA.

## Peterson... continued from Page 4A

and transparency to our county government.

There is no reason that having a five-member board will result in "time delays, inefficiency, and waste." Each member of a five-member board comes to their own decision in their own time. It is a not a question of the five members sequentially reaching decisions, but the five members all deciding at the same time on an issue. The time to reach a decision is based on the complexity of the issue under consideration and whether one person is making the decision or five are making the decision, and I would hope the necessary amount of time to understand and discuss the issue would be taken. I have already discussed the concern with efficiency, and with respect to waste, I believe the biggest worry with waste is the possibility of making decisions without fully understanding and debating or discussing the decision, resulting in a possible poor decision that results in waste of time, money, etc.

Referring to the funding of the petition drive is, I assume, an attempt to infer that some nefarious "group" is providing the funding. I can assure you that this petition drive is being funded by citizens of Union County that sincerely believe that a five-member board would be beneficial to the government of our county. The volunteers who are collecting the signatures are put-

ting many hours of their own time and a lot of their own money for what they truly believe will benefit our county.

Finally, the letter I am responding to closes with "If the petition is successful, I hope that we have the name and picture of the group..." There are several things wrong here. First, it implies that if the petition is successful, that we will have a five-member board. As I pointed out in my last letter, if the petition is successful, there will be a proposition on the ballot for the county to vote on a five-member board. If the proposition would be passed in an election, the five-member board would become a reality. At such a time, since the majority of the voting public of the county would have expressed their opinion that a five-member board is preferred, it seems that instead of going after the original petitioners as "bad" people, they should be thanked for initiating an effort that the county decided, at the ballot box, was preferred.

The last comment states that after the election has taken place and the five-member board is a reality, "we can talk to you in a reasonable debate about your actions." After the election is not the time for reasonable debate, but before the election would seem the time to hold reasonable debate on such an important issue.

Sincerely,  
**Vince Peterson**

## Clyde... continued from Page 4A

to push blatant falsehoods about our debt ceiling plan. One of the most widespread and sinister lies coming from the White House claims our legislation cuts veterans' benefits.

Let me be clear: There are zero cuts to the Department of Veterans Affairs or to veterans' benefits in the Limit, Save, Grow Act.

As a veteran, I believe it is egregious that the Biden Administration continues to shamelessly spread this lie in an attempt to fearmonger the American people. Our plan simply cuts woke,

weaponized, and wasteful spending in order to reduce our out-of-control debt and deficit. Yet Democrats are desperate to deceive and distract Americans, while also covering up for President Biden's weakness and failed leadership.

But the clock is ticking — and we can't pause our efforts to fix America's dire fiscal future while the White House and Congressional Democrats play politics by advancing this deplorable smear campaign.

Despite stubbornly refusing to negotiate with

House Republicans for months, President Biden has finally caved and invited Speaker McCarthy to meet at the White House.

While this standoff dragged on for far too long due to Biden's inaction, I remain confident that the Speaker will continue to effectively lead on this matter. Please know that I will hold the line with my colleagues to ensure the debt ceiling crisis is handled in a responsible manner that prioritizes fiscal sanity and protects your hard-earned tax dollars.

If you have questions or concerns about the debt ceiling or House Republicans' Limit, Save, Grow Act, please do not hesitate to contact my office (<https://clyde.house.gov/contact/>).

## Dyer...

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survey. The class was informative and will help Union County Fire Department to continuously evaluate and improve our ISO rating.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

## Riley... continued from Page 4A

a lot of money, but that is not as much fun as growing it ourselves and playing with my tractors.

Local farmers need a place to sell their crops, and this is where our local farmer's markets provide the place to sell what they grow so they can try to recoup some of their investment. Farmers Markets are a throwback to earlier days when our ancestors had to grow their own food and then they would bring what they did not use to town to sell to the community. Today Farmers Markets are gaining popularity across the country from the metro cities to the most rural of our towns. Local Farmers Markets have become popular community events that are drawing people together on Saturday mornings, and other days of the week, all over the country. These markets give us a place to meet and greet our neighbors and take-home local grown produce that is much better for us and a lot tastier than those products that are grown somewhere far away. Buying local also keeps our money in the community and helps turn us back toward at least a partial self-sustaining lifestyle. It is a lot more rewarding to plant and harvest our own gardens or buy the local grown vegetables than it is to drive to the grocery store to buy stuff that we have no clue as to where it came from, how it was grown, what it has been treated with, how long it has been since it was harvested or what dread disease we might get by eating it.

Each generation that passes moves further away from the days when our ancestors had to grow their food or go hungry and now most of our children have no clue as to where their food comes from except the grocery store. The State of Georgia is blessed to have many thriving community farmer's markets scattered all over the state.

The Georgia Department of Agriculture oversees these community farmer's markets and administers nine State Farmers Markets which form the network for sales of fruits and vegetables through-

## Chamber...

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that grace is still said over our meals.

We have a school system that not only helps train our children for the workforce, but they truly care about their Success.

We have a recreation department that teaches our kids how to work and play together in order to prepare them for real life and to give them that competitive spirit that helps them to want to be better and to be successful.

I am thankful for our young professionals that are our current and future leaders.

We are blessed to have our health care system and its staff that helped bring our community through the pandemic and helped the economy and our businesses to remain strong. I'm thankful for our businesses that continue to give back and believe in giving to others.

I hope that we can be like-minded towards one another, and despite our differing views on issues, to pursue Loving, Spiritual harmony in regards to our day to day business dealings.

Thank you, Lord, for the opportunity to live and work in Union County, Georgia.

## Cummings...

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house carrying the groom above their heads while they all sang "Oh Susanna." When the group reached the west corner of the house, the leader kept walking all the way down to Little Bear Creek. Upon reaching the creek bank they heaved their load of groom into the cold waters of the creek. All of this happened after midnight in the winter.

They felt sorry for the boy and retrieved him from the waters of the creek, then took him home and built up a nice warm fire to dry his clothes, and all went home to leave the young couple to their honeymoon. What a group of friends. Do you think you could ever experience anything like this as a result of social media?

## Mountain Shelter Board Meeting

The Humane Society's Mountain Shelter Board of Directors will meet in Room 201 of the Community Center on May 17 at 5 PM.

out Georgia and the Southeast. These state facilities maintain a viable market for Georgia farmers and farm products in the communities where they are located. The large State Farmers Markets are responsible for over one billion dollars in sales each year.

Most local farmer's markets are often operated by non-profits or local governments and serve their local communities and surrounding areas. In our area, Union County has a state-of-the-art farmers market with a new canning plant that is growing rapidly, Hayesville has a market on the square, and Towns County has its Farmers Market located next to the county beach north of Hiawassee. Come out on Saturday mornings and see what the local farmers have to offer or grow your own and come out and sell it.

Visit your local farmer's markets and support your local farmers, it is good for us and good for the community. For more information on Farmers Markets, contact us at: [info.ccrcc@gmail.com](mailto:info.ccrcc@gmail.com).