

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

www.nganews.com

Legal Organ of Union County

Your Hometown Newspaper Since 1909

Wednesday, June 5, 2019

Scottish Festival & Highland Games to get underway this weekend

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

This weekend's 16th Annual Blairsville Scottish Festival & Highland Games will present "A Wee Bit o' Scotland" at Meeks Park on Saturday, June 8, and Sunday, June 9.

The sound of drums and bagpipes will once more echo through the lochs and glens of Northeast Georgia, as Blairsville welcomes visitors and wearers of kilts and tartans for the two-day festival.

This year brings a record 40 clans to the event, with Clan Gregor serving as the weekend's featured Clan. Fifteen new vendors are

also making their first trip to the Blairsville games, bringing the grand total to 38 vendors.

And regarding the old Scottish proverb that "a heugirie man suin sniffs out meat," the festival will feature 11 food vendors guaranteed to be ripe for the sniffing.

Rain or shine, the weekend's festivities kick off bright and early Saturday morning with the Gaelic Gallop 5K Race and 1-mile Fun Run/Walk at 8 a.m. at the North Georgia Technical College pavilion.

Race registration can be completed online at blairsvillescottishfestival.com/gaelic-gallop or on race day until 7:30 a.m.

The Highland Games will take place on Saturday for levels Amateur A, B and Masters. Saturday will also feature falconry, Scottish livestock, and border collie and sheep herding demonstrations.

The Parade of Tartans will get underway at 11:30 a.m. Saturday with the Opening Ceremonies at noon.

Once again, the children's activities will begin as soon as the gates open at 9 a.m. Saturday and last all day, while the children's Highland Games will take place at 2 p.m. on Saturday only.

The backbone of any Scottish festival is live music, and Blairsville's version is no

See *Scottish Festival*, Page 2A



The 2019 Scottish Festival & Highland Games will take place this weekend on Saturday, June 8, and Sunday, June 9, at Meeks Park.

Relay For Life exceeds fundraising goal with 25th annual event



2019 Union County Relay For Life Honorary Grand Marshals Odetta Colwell and Carla Colwell Drake, right, with other cancer survivors during the May 31 Survivor Lap.

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

During its 25 years in Union County, Relay For Life has survived tornados, heat waves, torrential rains, venue changes and adversities of every size and shape.

So it's only fitting that Relay For Life is the American Cancer Society's preeminent fundraiser, dedicated to helping local communities like Blairsville provide hope to cancer victims and their loved ones, all while remembering those who have lost their battles with the deadly disease.

On Friday, May 31, the

Union County Farmers Market hosted the 25th Union County Relay For Life event.

And as of Sunday, June 2, the annual fundraiser had succeeded in raising more than \$75,000 for the fight against cancer, which exceeded the goal of \$71,000.

That tally is expected to rise in the coming days, according to event Chairperson Allyson McGraw, who has been a part of all 25 Relay For Life events in Union County.

As of Sunday, the top fundraising teams at this year's event were Coosa United Methodist Church at \$11,690, Union General

Hospital at \$10,512, and First United Methodist Church at \$10,086.

Times have changed since Blairsville hosted its first Relay For Life 25 years ago in Mike Colwell Memorial Stadium, McGraw said.

One of the biggest differences she has noticed is the major change in people's attitudes toward cancer, as 25 years ago, talk of cancer and its treatment was still only being had with inner circles of family and friends.

And for others, especially those with less severe diagnoses, it was an issue of guilt.

See *Relay*, Page 3A

Farmers Market open now through October for local produce, crafts and more



Julie, Dakota and Freddie Collins operate three booths of locally grown fresh produce at the Farmers Market. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

By Jarrett Whitener
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

The Union County Farmers Market opened for the 2019 season on Saturday,

June 1, heralding a season of fresh produce provided by local farmers.

The market is a community favorite when it comes to getting locally

grown fruits and vegetables, highlighting the farm-to-table lifestyle that people enjoy, as well as building connections between folks in the community. See *Market*, Page 2A

Byron Herbert Reece Society welcomes T.J. Smith in annual meeting

By Mark Smith
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Members of the Byron Herbert Reece Society welcomed T.J. Smith, Ph.D., as the keynote speaker during their 2019 annual meeting at the Reece Farm & Heritage Center on Saturday, June 1.

Smith is the president and executive director of Foxfire, which is a nationally-recognized heritage preservation organization headquartered in Mountain City, Georgia, with a focus on Southern Appalachia.

He attained his undergraduate degree at Young Harris College, and later, Smith earned his doctorate in folklore from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, writing one of only two known doctoral

dissertations on Union County's own farmer and poet/novelist Byron Herbert Reece.

"I think that Reece and his legacy is something this area should be very proud of," said Smith. "His placement, his time period, very much represented the people, the landscape and the worldview of this region of Southern Appalachia. And he was a great advocate and a great representative of the region."

"It's a wonderful thing that this gentleman, this farmer-poet from this part of the country, from Choestoe Valley, had such a tremendous impact not only on the literary world but also on readers across the globe. He was very profound."

And just as Reece has influenced untold numbers of people both locally and



Academic T.J. Smith spoke at during the annual meeting of the poet/novelist's namesake society on June 1.

Photo by Mark Smith

Firefighters knock down roaster fire at Cabin Coffee on the Blairsville Square



Union County Firefighter Austin Denton, Cabin Coffee owner Wayne Jolley and Fire Chief David Dyer examining a blackened exhaust port at the shop. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Editor @nganews.com

When emergency situations arise, Union County first responders are ready to spring into action at a moment's notice.

Cabin Coffee in downtown Blairsville required just such emergency assistance when the business' coffee

roaster caught fire the afternoon of Monday, May 27.

A protective screen inside the roasting unit had gotten out of alignment, causing a flame-up inside the machine that entered the roaster's ventilation hood and exited the exhaust port out the front of the building.

When employees realized something was wrong, they immediately turned off the

machine, evacuated the store and dialed 911.

The Fire Department arrived on-scene within minutes to knock down the fire and set up fans inside the building to ventilate the smoky shop.

Fire Chief David Dyer is thankful that, all things considered, everything went so well with that fire.

See *Cabin Coffee*, Page 7A

Stakeholders celebrate Farmers Market Way; Paris unveils new rec project

By Mark Smith
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Farmers Market Way became a reality on Wednesday, May 29, at a ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by several local and state officials.

The ceremony, which was held near the new intersection at Georgia 515 and the Glenn Gooch Bypass, was sponsored by the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce.

From the traffic light at Georgia 515, Farmers Market Way meanders along Butternut Creek, ending at the Union County Farmers Market and eliminating the need to use Weaver Road and Old Smokey Road for access.

And the new road opened just in time for the Farmers

Market season opening day on June 1.

State Sen. Steve Gooch attended the ceremony along with several Georgia Department of Transportation officials, including Northeast Region Preconstruction Engineer Sue Anne Decker, who was instrumental in making the project viable.

"At the heart of the Georgia Department of Transportation, we are public servants," said Decker. "Having strong partnerships like we have with Union County and the city of Blairsville allows us to accomplish so much more than we could accomplish by ourselves."

"We are honored to be part of this project and to



GDOT's Northeast Region Preconstruction Engineer Sue Anne Decker at the May 29 ribbon cutting for Farmers Market Way. Photo by Mark Smith

Vol. 110 No. 23
4 Sections 32 Pages
Weather
Thurs: T-Storm Hi 81 Lo 63
Fri: T-Storm Hi 76 Lo 62
Sat: T-Storm Hi 77 Lo 61

Inside
Arrests 2B
Churches 3B
Classifieds 3D
Opinion 4A
Legals 5D
Obits 4B
Sports 2C

**Gaelic Gallop
5K Race
& 1 Mile
Fun Run
Sat. June 8th**

See page 3C

**Blairsville
Pro RODEO**
www.BlairsvilleProRodeo.com

**June 21
& June 22
Saddle Club Arena**

See page 6B

**National Garden
Week**

June 2nd-8th

See page 2B

**Seniors and Kids
Fishing Rodeo
June 7th & 8th**

See page 2D