

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Summer Safety Considerations

The warm temperatures are here and it's the time of year that everyone wants to get out and enjoy some summer adventures. Unfortunately, some of those adventures can lead to accidents and injuries. At the beginning of each summer, we provide some safety tips and considerations for summer activities to promote safety.

Swimming is a favorite summer activity, and no matter if you are on the lake or sitting at the pool, it's a good idea to practice these swimming safety tips. Never leave young children alone when swimming; always have an adult present. Although we want to have fun, running and horse playing is dangerous around a pool, so no running or swimming stunts.

Swimmers should also be aware of water depth and not dive in shallow water. Have safety equipment and flotation devices near the pool or swimming area for emergencies. If there is an incident, you want to be prepared. A CPR class could provide lifesaving information and skills to help if an incident occurs.

Another activity of the summer that may cause accidents is riding motorcycles and ATVs. These activities can be fun, but they can also be dangerous. Always wear your safety gear. Helmets are a must. Head injuries are a leading cause of death from motorcycle accidents. Use caution on rough and steep terrain. Never operate a motorcycle or ATV under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Hiking is another summer activity, but you must be prepared. Plan your hiking route and take a map, if possible; do not rely on your cellphone. Water and snacks are a must. Hikers should dress for the terrain with good hiking boots and proper clothing. Take extra clothing and a flashlight just in case it gets dark before you get back to your vehicle. Probably the most important is to never hike alone and know your limitations.

The summer sun can be dangerous no matter what activity you prefer. Keep cool by staying out of the sun as much as possible. Stay hydrated with water and avoid other drinks that may cause more harm than good. Wear sunscreen, because skin cancer is real. Every moment that you expose your skin without sunscreen increases your risk. Even on partly cloudy days, sunburn is possible.

We all want to enjoy our summer. Keeping these few safety tips in mind may prevent summer accidents and allow us to have a

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer



It Was Providential

"Everything happens for a reason" is an inarticulate way to express the providence of God. God doesn't do evil, but He can take a sequence of events and weave something providential out of it. Here's an example.

This story begins with a noted anthropologist, James Frazer. In 1890, he published a book in which he posits that the legend of a dying and reviving god is central to many ancient mythologies. He scandalized his colleagues and readers by denigrating the history of Jesus as just another myth. His fallacy was to disallow the possibility that God had been preparing humanity for His incarnation, death, and resurrection since the beginning; hence, the anticipation became embedded in the historical human consciousness.

Oxford don T.D. Weldon pondered Frazer's work. Weldon was a confirmed atheist. But he had considered the evidence for the history of Jesus as recorded in the Bible. In 1926, Weldon visited a colleague's paneled office near the iconic Magdalen Tower. As they sat near the fire on that cold day, Weldon suggested the evidence for the historicity of the Gospels was strong. "All that stuff of Frazer's about the dying god. Rum thing. It almost looks as if it had really happened once."

That comment stunned Weldon's colleague, who had been struggling to maintain his own denial of God's existence. That colleague was C.S. Lewis. He wrote, "To understand the shattering impact of it, you would need to know the man. If he, the cynic of cynics, the toughest of the toughs, were not--as I would still have put it--"safe", where could I turn? Was there then no escape?" Lewis sensed the "hound of heaven" in Weldon's providential comment.

Lewis freely admitted that he didn't want God to exist, but he became overwhelmed by the evidence. "In the Trinity Term of 1929 I gave in, and admitted that God was God, and knelt and prayed." Two years later, he placed his faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. He described his conversion as like "when a man, after long sleep... becomes aware that he is now awake."

Three men. A sequence of events and conversations. An awakening to the joy of faith! That's how Divine Providence

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All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. What unique Union County Government facilities can be rented for kids' birthday parties or meetings?

A1. The Choestoe Schoolhouse is a great facility for small parties or events. Pronounced "choy stoy" by the locals, Choestoe is a Cherokee word for "land of the dancing rabbit." Many notable Georgians, including two state Supreme Court justices, began their education in this one-room schoolhouse located at 1034 Collins Road in Union County. The main room is surrounded by beautiful windows, letting in the perfect amount of light. The details of the wood trim, the chalkboard in the corner, the antique desks, and the incredible wood floors make this small event venue top of the list for small weddings, birthday parties and meetings. The back deck is spacious with an incredible view of the valley. There is no formal kitchen, but there is a sink and restroom. The facility includes 60 chairs and 14 rectangle tables. Rental of Choestoe Schoolhouse at \$150 also includes the day before the event and the day of the event. Contact the Union County Rec Dept at (706) 439-6074 to schedule or rent the facility.

A2. The Union County Sports Center has a meeting/party room. Located at 519 Industrial Blvd, the Union County Sports Center offers a party/meeting room in-between the two basketball gyms. At a cost of \$50 per hour, the room holds about 40 people, and it comes with tables, chairs, whiteboard, and TV. Contact the Union County Rec Dept at (706) 439-6074 to schedule or rent the facility.

A3. For an open outdoors option, the Byron Herbert Reece Farm & Heritage Center offers the Bettie

Sellers Memorial Amphitheater. Situated on Wolf Creek, the amphitheater provides concrete seating - theater style for approximately 30 people. Further South on the property - close to the bridge - visitors will find multiple picnic benches that are available on a first come/first served basis. Contact the Byron Herbert Reece Farm & Heritage Center at (706) 745-2034 to schedule or rent the facility.

Q. What about facilities for larger events or parties? Does Union County have a facility large enough to accommo-

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Emotional Sandbox

We are all familiar with the standard sandbox. Most of us grew up with one in our backyard. In it we had our toys and what-nots, and they usually stayed in it... most of the time. After we finished playing for the day, we were supposed to return everything into our box so that it would be ready for the next day.

On a different level, the sandbox represents our personal space. Throughout the years we all have been in someone's space, accidentally or purposefully. And on the flip side of the coin, some folks have been in ours. We had that uncomfortable feeling when someone was in our space (or sandbox). We felt as if the air was being sucked out of us, mainly due to our not asking that person to be in it.

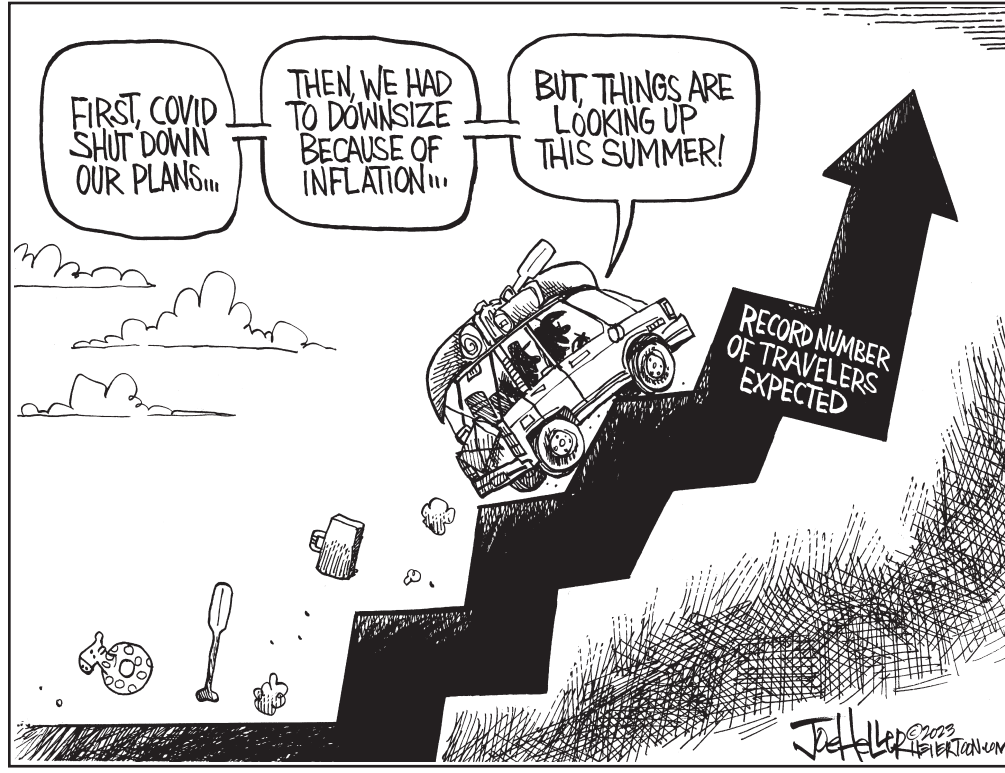
When anyone gets too close to us in our space, it is as though that individual has trespassed into our imaginary sandbox. We didn't ask the person to enter, but alas! The person is there. The individual may believe that we need our lives straightened out, and the guest has decided that it is his or her mission in life to enter uninvited into our sandbox to become our mentor.

In our sandbox (space), we have our symbolic possessions: our dreams, future plans, our family, our friends, and much more. Our comfortable sandbox is filled with every single thing we treasure. It is our world, all contained in a tiny space... our sandbox. It includes every facet of

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Successful Mental Health

Dr. James Ray Ashurst PH.D.



Fire-Adapted Communities

Fire-Adapted Communities Pay Big Dividends

The Fire Adapted Communities Network (FACNET) originated in Boise Idaho in 2013 and Chestatee Chattahoochee RC&D Council (CCRCD) was invited to be one of the first 8 "FACNET Pilot Hubs" and we were the only network member east of the Mississippi. The others were all located in the west where the wildfire danger was intense. The Fire Adapted Network has now grown to 18 network members with 3 east of the Mississippi.

Besides CCRCD there is one in New Jersey (yes, they have wildfires in NJ) and one in Minnesota. From this beginning CCRCD has grown from one county (Towns) to 74 covering western North Carolina, Southwest Virginia, Northwest Georgia, and western South Carolina.

Our Towns County Firewise Coalition is a perfect example of a group doing something before a fire happens in our communities. Fire seasons have lengthened so much that we now use the term fire year, firefighting costs are breaking new records, and loss of life and property are part of an alarming new pattern. The ability to mitigate these impacts with community collaboration is critically important.

Several groups are taking a hard look at the rising costs of fighting wildfire versus the benefits of mitigation investments before the flames arrive. Studies like the Tale of Two Fires and True Cost of Wildfires illustrate a cost-benefit ratio as high as \$5 saved for every \$1 spent on fuels treatments.

In recent years, several examples of community mitigation efforts have emerged to demonstrate the trade-off values of doing work before the fire, across property boundaries and within communities. One of these examples is the Timber Crater 6 fire near Crater Lake, Oregon. A series of dry lightning storms passed through the Cascade Mountains in July 2018 and started the fire. The potential destructive path of this fire included over 20,000 acres of the Crater Lake recreation area, and several small, neighboring communities. But existing fuels treatments on federal and private lands helped fire managers prevent large-scale destruction and minimize the threat to the public. In the end, not a single structure was lost, and the fire was contained at 3,126 acres.

The key to community mitigation efforts is more than fuels treatments on federal lands. Collaborating with state cooperators, non-federal partners, and private citizens is where the true

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RC&D Executive Director

Frank Riley



The Tree

As a young man, one of my mentors was an American Literature teacher that didn't mind a young boy tagging along on his hiking and hunting trips. Mr. Gary was always ready to go on a hunting trip. We walked all over the Cohutta Mountains and the Blueridge Management Area.

One thing he always looked for was a gap in between ridges with White Oaks on them. We had found one place that fit this criteria over close to Little Rock Creek, and we hunted there year after year and always found and seen bucks in this spot. Early one morning we climbed up this ridge looking for our spot, and much to our surprise we found our favorite spot had been logged out. As we sat around the campfire later that evening my mentor came to a major decision. Each time we found a good spot with White Oak Trees he would place a sign on one of the trees. The sign read, "Cursed Be He that Cuts a White Oak Tree." He placed these signs on the following management areas: Cohutta, Blueridge, Pigeon Mountain and John's Mountain.

Over the years White Oak Trees became a favorite of mine, and each time I walked by one on my own property I would inspect it just as if it were an old long-lost friend. Then in 1997 my wife and I built the house where we now reside where we carefully marked all the trees we wanted to save and cut the ones we culled. One of these saved trees was the big White Oak on the west side of our house. The first October in our new home was interesting for our sons. Their bedrooms were directly beneath the old tree, and the acorns falling used to keep them up at night. The boys never complained though, and over time, falling acorns each fall became a way of marking another year. However, over the past few years the old tree became a danger to our house and roof. So, after much agonizing, we decided to take the tree down.

After the tree came down I examined the rings of the tree and realized the tree had much to say about history. One hundred nine rings revealed the tree had experienced many good years and bad years during its lifetime, and it basically watched my family grow and mature. This particular tree could be considered as a book on the history of my family as well as a history of our country.

This tree sprouted in 1914, just a couple of years after Arthur Woody became one of Georgia's first Forest Rangers. This man is considered a great in the annals of wildlife management and conservation. He watched his Daddy shoot the last deer in Union County, and he was the per-

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Chamber of Commerce

The sun is shining, the birds are singing, and the warm breeze is blowing through our town. You know what that means - summer is here! And what better way to start the season than with the Arts, Crafts & Music Festival that happened last weekend? From the live music to delicious food, it was an explosion of art, creativity, and joy.

With almost 9,000 people in attendance, the town was bustling with energy and excitement. These festivals not only bring in people from other towns, but they also help our local businesses. Events bring in vibrancy, economy, and vitality to our community, and we should not take them for granted.

This is just the beginning. Get ready for a summer full of fun and festivities with the Blairsville Scottish Festival, the Butternut Creek Art Festival, Mountain Music & Moonshine Festival, the Heritage Festival, and the Sorghum Festival. Be sure to visit our website for the most

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber President

Steve Rowe



Watering Plants

As you may have noticed, we had a dry May this year. All plants, but especially annuals (such as veggies) and freshly planted perennials, are affected by dry weather, because their root systems are not yet large enough to support the plant and do not yet efficiently collect water from surrounding soils. There is a fine balance to be observed when irrigating plants, though: Too much water will wash nutrients away from young roots and may cause rot, while too little or shallow watering will either allow the plant to dehydrate or bring the roots too close to the hot surface of the soil.

In general, vegetable plants would rather have more thorough and less frequent watering. When the entire topsoil layer is saturated at least twice a week, the roots of a vegetable plant will tend to grow downward, towards the damper and cooler soil beneath them. Not only will the root system collect water more efficiently, it will also draw the roots away from the drier and hotter surface of the soil. This promotes a healthier plant growth pattern, reducing the need for external watering when there is a rain and lowering the chances of the root system being attacked by unwanted fungi.

In the case of other young transplants, such as fruit trees, bushes and shrubs, flowering perennials and other ornamental plants, the amount of water will usually vary due to the soil it was planted in, the size of the original root ball and plant, and the type of plant being watered. For example, a young apple tree from a 3-gallon pot transplanted in clay-based soil will require less frequent watering than a group of raspberry starts in the same soil, due to the higher amount of water loss through the leaves (transpiration) in the raspberry starts. It is always best to check the sticker or plant tag that came with the plant for advice first, but as a general rule of thumb, water trees and ornamental shrubs enough to keep the soil 4 to 6" around the root ball (including below it) moist, but not soggy, every other day that it does not rain. Continue this until they are established. For starts such as blueberries, raspberry and blackberries, hellegrapes, and vining flowers and fruits (like clematis), water 4-6" around the root ball every day it does not rain until they are established in the soil.

Common sense applies in this process as well: if the soil around the plant is still about as moist as it should be at day 2, then hold off on watering until it begins to dry again. A good "quick-n-dirty" test for soil moisture is to grab a handful, squeeze it in your hand, and let go.

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UGA extension WATCHING and WORKING

Jacob Williams



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son most responsible for bringing the white-tailed deer back to Georgia. During his career Woody founded the Blueridge Management Area, which was the first management area in Georgia. He also secured and purchased thousands of acres of land which would one day become the Chattahoochee National Forest. The White Oak on my land sprouted 60 feet from this National Forest. The tree will not let us forget that Woody was also responsible for the restocking of Brook Trout in the streams of our area as well as Bear and Turkey.

The tree noticed the fact that the people of Union County placed a great emphasis on educating their children, because in 1918, the school system budget had increased to \$852.80. 1919 was a year of sadness for the nation because Theodore Roosevelt passed away. He was a former President of our nation, but maybe more importantly in our Tree's view, he was an early conservationist and spearheaded the movement to set aside lands for protection and the enjoyment of future generations of Americans through the creation of state and national parks. This paved the way for the Vogel Land Company to donate 300 acres of land to state government to create Vogel State Park in 1927.

I wonder if our tree heard the fall of Wall Street in the stock market crash of 1929? There is no indication in the growth ring of that year. In 1933, another Roosevelt created a group called the Civilian Conservation Corp, or the CCC boys. This idea provided much-needed jobs to not only the nation but to many families here in Union County. The CCC also planted trees and provided much-needed work for conservation projects all across the nation. I know my own family

benefitted from the money my grandfathers earned through working with the CCC during a time when there was no money because there were no jobs.

The late 1930s saw the whole world become embroiled in another war to end all wars. I am not sure if the tree was aware of this conflict. But, it had to be exposed, because close to the tree is the Old Bucksnot Road that was once used but was abandoned years ago. I wonder if the tree was aware of the countless lives which were lost or the grieving mothers who lost sons during the great conflict. We all know the war ended in 1945 and all those boomers came home and created a time of great growth in the United States. I am not sure the tree was concerned with this great growth because the tree rings reveal that this time for it was a slow growth. There must have been a drought during this period because there are a few years where the rings of the tree were very narrow during the mid 1940s.

Was the tree aware of the assassination of John Kennedy or of Armstrong walking on the moon in the 1960s? Did the tree have knowledge of Nixon's resignation in 1974 or the Bicentennial of this great nation in 1976? Did the tree know or even care that we purchased the property on which it sits in the 1990s? Did the tree hear my family cry and then become angry when we saw what a group of terrorists did to our country in 2001?

I know that our White Oak Tree was not aware of all these events during its lifetime. But, it was here during all these events, and watching it fall saddened me. Because my family grew up under the shade of this great tree. I hope that my friend Gary did not put a curse on me because I cut it down.

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who we are, who we used to be, and what we would like to become. Thus, we are very protective of our sandbox and who is allowed in it.

The conflict arises when people enter into our space (sandbox) who were never invited. They intrude brazenly in our space—our personal, valuable sandbox. They proceed to instruct us on how we should manage our adult lives and our relationships. It is amazing how others believe they know how to manage our lives much better than we do.

It should not come as a big shock that some individuals firmly believe that they know how we should best conduct our life, with whom, and where. The ideals, hopes, and dreams in our sandbox get tossed out—the very things that made us who we are today.

There are those who will challenge and question God about how He is actually working in our personal life. If it differs from what they think is best for us, then God takes second place to them.

While in our sandbox, some individuals will attempt to wreak havoc in it. This is how it works: the uninvited person

wanders into our sandbox and figuratively tosses out every single thing that individual finds unacceptable. We may have certain spiritual beliefs and values in which the uninvited person may not agree. Then according to that person, we need to change our value system. The individual doesn't stop there. One's values, belief system, and spiritual convictions all will be severely questioned, examined and evaluated.

Everything in one's sandbox will be judged. After creating havoc in the sandbox, the individual will depart with a satisfied look of victory. When we then have the time to examine what is left in our sandbox, very little is there that we once treasured and revered. Our sandbox looks as if a hurricane has ripped it apart. Our sandbox is a disaster.

As soon as we believe that we have our sandbox in some order again, knocking at our door is another person, wandering into our sandbox... uninvited. Keeping our sanity seems impossible. But there is hope! Protecting the privacy of one's sandbox is a daily task.

Next Time: Protecting One's Sandbox.

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success of fire-adapted communities begins. Many states provide homeowners with matching funds for defensible space projects and other fuel reduction efforts. The Forest Service, National Fire Protection Association, and the Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety provide a handy homeowner tip sheet to prepare residents for the wind-blown embers responsible for destroying most homes regardless of surrounding fuels work.

In response to the 2015 wildfire season, the Forest Service created a Community Mitigation Assessment Team program to work with communities and partners who are motivated to address both the immediate home ignition zone and forested lands in surrounding areas.

CMAT teams help communities build sustainable local capacity for wildfire mitigation during high-risk times before, during or after a wildfire when awareness of the need for risk reduction and the likelihood of action is highest. CMAT works collaboratively with communities to build cross-boundary mitigation partnerships that focus on reducing risk strategically. The team integrates community fire adaptation best practices and resilient landscapes concepts outlined in the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy.

Lastly, since wildfire does not recognize property boundaries, the Forest Service has worked to create resilience within communities by pro-

viding training, information, and opportunities. Promoting Ecosystem Resilience and Fire Adapted Communities Together, or PERFACT, is addressing the country's wildfire problems head on by supporting the people who are creating change on the ground. This work empowers local people to navigate their own pathway toward a better relationship with fire. The intent is to connect them with other people, programs, tools, and ideas that they can adapt and use to help their communities live better with fire. This program works with people over a period of several years, making small, sustained investments as they tackle their challenges.

Fire Adapted Communities is not a program, but a way of life for people living in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). They must adapt their lifestyles to recognize the risks where they live and do something about them in their everyday life. It is not drastic changes, but now that they live in the WUI and not the city they must conform to the WUI life or one day face the fact that "I should have done something to reduce the risks before the wildfire was sweeping up the ridge toward their homes and it is too late. Many people face this situation every year and some even live to talk about it. The investments we make today are paying large dividends on the landscapes of tomorrow.

For more information go to www.fireadaptednetwork.org or www.chestchattred.org.

Paris... continued from Page 4A

date large meetings or community events?

A1. Located at 165 Wellborn Street in Blairsville, the Pat Haralson Memorial Civic Center has an auditorium, kitchen and conference room that are available to rent. It is a great venue for hosting a wide variety of occasions. The auditorium is 4176 sq. ft. with a stage on one end. This large facility has held arts & craft shows, dances, large meetings, and fund-raisers for local charities. It rents for \$25 per hour or \$175 per day with a non-refundable \$25 reservation fee. The auditorium does have access to the adjoining kitchen. The conference room location is a smaller room that holds up to 20 people. The conference room is rented for \$10 per hour with a non-refundable \$10 reservation fee. Facilities at the Pat Haralson Memorial Civic Center can be rented by calling (706) 439-6030.

A2. The Union County Community Center at Butternut creek is a great upscale facility that will accommodate everything from weddings to birthday parties. The building has 4 rentable spaces including a Grand ballroom, which is over 3500 sq ft and rents for 300 to 2800 dollars a day depending on the type of event. The ballroom can also split in half for 150 to 1400 dollars. In another part of the building, the 201 executive boardroom overlooks the golf course and is great for executive meetings,

Fowler...

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works, weaving the circumstances of life into something vital for your soul. He knows all about you. He loves you and reveals Himself to you. Whether you are seeking or not, your providential encounter awaits. He's not far.

"He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us" (Acts 17:26-27).

Williams...

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Optimal moisture content is when most of the soil is still in a ball in your hand, but when you touch it, it begins to break apart again.

In vegetables, it usually takes until the first fruit is set and ripening on the plant for the roots to be fully developed. This typically (of course, depending on the kind of plant) takes anywhere between 3 and 6 weeks from the date of transplant.

For trees and shrubs (and blue, black and raspberries, etc.) usually takes most of a growing season to accomplish. For example, if a blueberry bush were set out in early May, it would need this kind of watering until the end of August, and maybe longer depending on the timing of rain or heat.

If you have any questions about watering, contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Dyer...

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great time enjoying the summer adventures with our friends and family.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Chamber...

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up to date info on the festivals and other events. Mark your calendar so you don't miss out on the fun!

Thank you to all of our merchants and restaurants during the busiest season for making everything Better in Blairsville!

American Red Cross Volunteers

Make a difference in your community!

As a volunteer with the American Red Cross, you can help families recover after a home fire, train individuals in first aid and CPR, support America's military families, or take on any number of other roles that make our communities safer, stronger and more resilient.

Get started at <https://www.redcross.org/local/georgia/volunteer.html> or call your NWGA chapter office to ask about volunteer opportunities 844-536-6226.

depositions, or informal group meetings. The 201 executive boardroom rents for 175 dollars plus tax per day and features a smart TV for presentations. The downstairs 101 Community Room is 700 plus sq. ft. of open airy space that rents for 75 dollars plus tax. The 101 Community Room has seen all sorts of events such as church services, showers of all types and birthday parties. Facilities at the Community Center can be rented by emailing eventplanner@uniongov.com.