

# Opinions

## Everybody has one...

### Emergency Preparedness Meeting

Last week, Union County Emergency Management Agency/Homeland Security (UCEMA) hosted an Emergency Preparedness meeting at the Union County Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The meeting was attended by some of the core departments and organizations that are active in emergency management for Union County and the City of Blairsville. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the various aspects of emergency management; discuss the exercise/training schedule; and discuss the agenda for future emergency preparedness meetings.

The meeting began with a review of the five areas of emergency management which are Prevention, Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery. Most of the information was a good review for the departments but it also included new information and latest updates. Each department was challenged to consider their role in each of the five areas.

The next part of the meeting involved discussing the training and exercises planned for the next two years leading up to a full scale exercise. Exercises are an opportunity for all departments and organizations to test and evaluate policies, procedures, training and equipment. Union County is required to conduct at least three exercises each year and a full scale every four years.

This meeting included a seminar on the full-scale exercise which included the potential scenario and the objectives that are to be covered. Over the next two years, we will conduct different types of exercises including workshops, functional exercises, and drills. Each new exercise will build on the last and eventually lead to the full-scale exercise which will test each aspect as a whole.

The meeting ended with a discussion on conducting an emergency preparedness meeting each quarter. The purpose of the meetings will be to continue and develop relationships; discuss roles and responsibilities during major emergencies; and conduct the exercise scheduled for that quarter. Each meeting will have a theme such as winter weather, flooding, community preparedness, active shooter, etc. The meeting will give everyone an opportunity to provide their point of view as well as learn the point of view of other departments. We are hoping to expand the meeting to other departments and organizations that may be involved in emergency management

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



### One Body

Apiculture offers intriguing metaphors for the human experience. A friend, familiar with my backyard hobby, delighted me with a copy of "The Life of the Bee." In it, I noticed a metaphor for Believers. (Yes, I've been unjustly stung, but that's not it!)

Belgian writer Maurice Maeterlinck published the essay in 1901. He kept and researched bees for decades. He does not present facts in the form of a scientific work, "But I shall relate them in a somewhat livelier fashion than such works would allow."

He writes, "The bee is above all, and even to a greater extent than the ant, a creature of the crowd. She can live only in the midst of a multitude. Isolate her, and however abundant the food or favorable the temperature, she will expire in a few days not of hunger or cold, but of loneliness. From the crowd she derives an invisible aliment that is as necessary to her as honey."

This is a metaphor for the body of Christ, a reminder of the vital need believers have for intentional Christian community. Paul lays it out in detail for a new and growing church (1 Cor. 12). Even though we humans can fall short of the ideal, here are four benefits of being a believer.

(1) Unity. People are divided today over political, social, and religious issues. The body of Christ is uniquely positioned to unify people of all backgrounds, races, and cultures. One third of the world's population identifies with Christ, and that number grows by 180,000 per day (mostly outside the West). "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body" (v.13).

(2) Belonging. It's true that sometimes you want to go where everybody knows your name (TV sitcom "Cheers" song). You want to belong, to be part of the family, to participate in something larger than yourself. "God has placed the members in the body, just as He desired" (v.18).

(3) Diversity. Popular culture has co-opted that word. To the church it means that people from diverse nations, tribes, peoples, and languages have a single identity. Each benefits the others as we apply our different God-given gifts. "There are many members, but one body" (v.20).

(4) Care. The church is meant to function like a close-knit,

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**All Things New**  
*Wayne Fowler*



### Commissioner's Questions

**Q. We live on a county-paved road that only a 1 mile portion was recently resurfaced. Why was the county not able to pave the entire four mile road?**

A. No county ever has enough funding to pave or resurface all the roads that are necessary, except in the few counties in the state where they passed an additional 1% sales tax for nothing but road construction and paving. We do not have that transportation tax in Union County and we must make our tax dollars go as far as possible. Based on funding, we must make a decision as to whether to spend all the money on, for example, 3 roads and pave 4 miles of each, or to pave 12 roads and pave 1 mile on each road. Then each subsequent year, pave another mile. It is not that simple, but if the condition of several roads are similar, the Road Department tries to spread the paving throughout the county as much as possible.

**Q. How does the county pay for county road paving projects?**

A. It comes from three sources. We apply to GDOT (Georgia Department of Transportation) every year for LMIG grant funds they have, usually in the \$700,000 range, for resurfacing of qualifying roads. The second is SPLOST funds and the county budgets approximately \$1 million a year on all types of road work, and finally the county budgets about \$1 million per year out of the general fund for the operation of the Road Department. This includes staff, equipment and some road paving.

**Q. Is it worth the trouble the county has to go through to apply for and win state funds?**

A. Yes it is. Paving is very expensive and that is the reason we get as much help as possible from the state. We have to apply for the grant at the minimum six months up to a year in advance. I sit down with the Road Department Superintendent, County Manager, Purchasing Manager and other essential personnel and go over a list of the roads in need of paving. We contracted for a road assessment study done by an outside firm a couple of years ago and use that along with the list of priorities we receive from the Road Department. So we compile a list of all of the needs of the county and submit our application. Then, when we receive

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**Q & A from Union County Commissioner**  
*Lamar Paris*



### Drug Free Mountain Life

#### Kratom

Kratom is a tropical tree native to Southeast Asia, with leaves that contain compounds that can have mind-altering effects. Kratom is not currently an illegal substance and has been easy to order on the internet. It is sometimes sold as a green powder in packets labeled "not for human consumption." It is also sometimes sold as an extract or gum. Kratom is also sold locally in convenience stores and tobacco shops, as well as other types of businesses.

Most people take kratom as a pill, capsule, or extract. Some people chew kratom leaves or brew the dried or powdered leaves as a tea. Sometimes the leaves are smoked or eaten in food.

Kratom can cause effects similar to both opioids and stimulants. When kratom is taken in small amounts, users report increased energy, so-

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The DRUG FREE MOUNTAIN LIFE campaign supports an overall safe community by providing information, education and support services to children, families, and community toward prevention of illegal substance abuse.

**"Why is the State worried about losing online sales tax revenue? As a shopper and a taxpayer, I lose either way!"**

### Chamber of Commerce

Isn't it great to live in Blairsville? This past week, I've been especially thankful for our region's refreshing weather patterns and ideal climate. I've noticed that Blairsville-Union County is normally 7 to 10 degrees cooler than anywhere else in the state of Georgia, and I'm confident that God had a special plan when he created our community like this. The cool, steady summer breeze makes it a pleasure to get outside, hike on the trails, explore our waterfalls, or enjoy an afternoon on the porch (with a glass of sweet tea, of course).

The Southern Highlands Employer Committee's Job Fair last week was a huge success. Thirty employers were able to network with multitudes of talented job candidates at North Georgia Tech, filling open positions and making valuable connections. It was a tremendous example of the continued growth and development happening in Blairsville-Union County. Our economy is improving every year, and this

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**Blairsville - Union County Chamber President**  
*Steve Rowe*



### Letters to the Editor

#### Shooting Range Bad Idea

Dear Editor,  
The proposal for a shooting range on public land is a very bad idea. If they want to set one up on private land, that's fine; but public land is for the public!

I was thinking on it the other day as I was hiking the Jacks Knob Trail up Bald Mountain and already hearing what sounded like a war going on, with continuous gunfire off in the distance somewhere -- don't know if they were trying out the proposed site or not. But I was thinking that to build a gun range on public land is to take that piece of land and many acres around it out of use for all other people.

Think about it, even hunters like myself

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#### Headlights On When Raining

Dear Editor,  
Georgia statute O.C.G.A. 40-8-20 plainly states that every vehicle upon a Georgia roadway at anytime that it is raining is required to have its headlights illuminated.

Last Monday, it rained for almost 10 miles from my house to town. I counted 39 cars and trucks without headlights on.

Not only is it against the law, people, but I have a 2005 Tundra with a setting allowing the headlights to come on as soon as I start my truck. The majority of car and trucks I see in Union County are newer than mine, so the majority of vehicles are equipped with the same features.

I talked to a lady who didn't know about the law and didn't know how to set it on her "new" car. The dealerships need to show their customers how to do this.

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#### Glenda Gooch House

Dear Editor,  
My name is James Barnes, I live in Dothan, Alabama. A few weeks ago, we made a trip to Blairsville to spend some time with my mother-in-law, Jeanette Poplin. She resides in the nursing home there and it was her 91st birthday. We were fortunate enough to stay in the Glenda Gooch House that is near the hospital and nursing home. It was so nice to be that close to the nursing home and made it easy on us when we were ready to relax. The Gooch House was clean and decorated very nicely, it was very comfortable and relaxing. I hope the residents of Blairsville realize what a treasure this city has for people to stay in to see their loved ones in the hospital and the nursing home. Thank you for making our stay so enjoyable.

While we were there, I spoke to the Relay

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### North GA Fire Council

Fire is the most cost effective, efficient and beneficial forest management tool available in a forest manager's toolbox, which is nature's way to reduce the risk of wildfires and the resulting smoke or air quality problems with well-timed prescribed fires. No other tool can so effectively remove the hazardous buildup of woodland fuels and help maintain our forests.

Since many of our North Georgia land management professionals are about six hours from the Georgia Prescribed Fire Council state meeting that occurs in Tifton, this year, we decided to bring the show to them and held the first annual North Georgia Prescribed Fire Council meeting at the Chattahoochee Technical College in Jasper, Georgia, on June 6, 2019. We had 215 folks registered, which for a first-time event was beyond our wildest expectations.

In September each year since 2007, the Georgia Prescribed Fire Council has held its annual meeting in Tifton where 300 or so foresters, landowners, consultants, and others who use prescribed fire to manage their forests gather to share experiences and learn about new techniques for managing fire in their woodlands. I will be the Chair next year so we can add one more thing for Chest-Chat to do.

Fire is a natural phenomenon that has occurred in our forests since the beginning of time and maintains a natural balance in the environment. Some of our well-intentioned ancestors decided that they knew better how to maintain the environment than mother nature, so they created programs to extinguish all fires in the forest. Smokey Bear was the main culprit and used to say, "Only YOU can prevent Forest Fires!" and our firefighters worked hard to extinguish all fires in the forest which has led to build up of fuels that contributes to the out of control wildfires that we have today.

Only recently has Smokey Bear changed his moto to "Only YOU can prevent Wildfires!" and now promotes the use of intentionally set fire to get the forests back the way nature intended it to be. The Georgia Prescribed Fire Council members promote the wise use of planned and controlled fire to get our forests back in line with the way nature intended it to be.

The mission of the Georgia Prescribed Fire Council is: To protect the right, to encourage the use of, and to promote public understanding of prescribed fire. Prescribed fires were a common practice by a variety of individuals, agencies, and organizations throughout the state that the Southwest Georgia Prescribed Fire Council

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**RC&D Executive Director**  
*Frank Riley*



### Place Names in Union Co.

When settlers first came to this country many places in our county had names that meant something to the Cherokee and Creek peoples. Then one day all of a sudden these people were gone due to the Indian Removal and most of these place names were gone with the Cherokee. I find it very sad that over a period of a few years all these places lost their names and were replaced with names of the new settlers to the area. You can call me a little odd, but, something I enjoy is to read maps, especially old quadrangle maps. You can find interesting places by looking over these maps and you run across some pretty interesting place names.

Let's first talk about some of the hold-over names from the Cherokee for places in and around Union County. Arkaqua is a Cherokee word for long crooked creek and there was a Cherokee man so named that lived in the area of Arkaqua Creek. Many people know the names of both Blood and Slaughter Mountains were named as a result of an Indian story about a great running battle between the Creek and Cherokee which began on these mountains and followed the ridge lines into Tennessee.

Brasstown Bald was named due to a mis-interpretation of a Cherokee word. The word Itesy means fresh green place and white settlers thought the word meant "place of brass." Therefore, they named the mountain Brasstown Bald. Fish Gap is located on the west side of the county and was named for a Cherokee man called Fish which lived in the area. Na' du' li was a son of the Cherokee Chief, Enotah. He was said to have married a beautiful Cherokee Princess in the Hi-wasee area. The word means daring horseman in the Cherokee language. The Nottely River was named for this white interpretation of the word.

The next two names are also of Cherokee origin and form the crux of an ancient love story. Trahlyta was a Cherokee Princess which lived close to Porter Springs in Lumpkin County.

Wahsega was a young brave which lived here in Union County. Wahsega wanted this woman for his wife and proposed to this Cherokee Princess. The problem was that Trahlyta was a very old woman. However, she kept young looking by bathing daily in these springs. These are the same springs of which the Spanish explorer "Ponce de Leon" came looking for in the 1600s. This Cherokee Princess loved Wahsega and yet she knew that if she left the area around her springs she would die. Trahlyta gave in to the Cherokee Brave and they moved over to the area around Blood Mountain. She soon grew old

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**Around The Farm**  
*Mickey Cummings*



### Well Management

Most people in Georgia have well water in their homes. Here in the mountains, many people enjoy fresh mountain water as their primary drinking source. Therefore, it's very important that people be aware of potential issues with well water and things that they can do to mitigate issues. Let's talk about some well issues and things you can do to prevent those issues from occurring.

The U.S. Geological Survey keeps track of water aquifer levels. The nearest test site for us is in White County. Because of the high amounts of rainfall that we receive each year, our aquifers drying out is not a concern like it is in the Western US.

The aquifer we access is the Blue Ridge aquifer. It's a crystalline rock aquifer, which means that the gallons per minutes that you get from a well here is going to most likely be in the 5-10 range. Wells can be pretty variable in yield in North Georgia because of the variations in the fractures in the ground. Basically, for well drilling here, you put the well in and hope that you cross some of the fractures where water is present.

You want to make sure that your well is located at least 50 feet from the septic tank and 75 feet from the septic system's drainage lines. You also want to make sure that your well cap is at least 8 inches above the ground. This is going to keep surface water from getting inside of your well.

Surface water can carry bacteria and debris that you want to keep out. It's also a good idea to have a well cover to protect the well cap. A well cover makes your well more visible so that it's less likely to be backed into by a vehicle or run over by the lawn mower.

Always be on the lookout for changes in the water. If you see a difference in color, a new odor, new taste, or particles in your water that's a clue that your well has become compromised. There's a lot of water tests that the Extension Office can assist you with to find out what is going with your water.

By knowing the symptoms, when the issue started, where the septic system is, what kind of construction might have gone on nearby, among other factors can help narrow down the range of issues that we are dealing with.

Shock chlorination is a common treatment that is effective if bacteria are present. Shock chlorination won't be effective if the source of the contamination is not removed. Sources of contamination could include a septic system, absence of well cap, or a cracked well casing.

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**Watching and Working**  
*Jacob Williams*

