

North Georgia News

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Commissioner Paris lowers proposed millage rate increase

By Shawn Jarrard
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After two public hearings, much deliberation and continued number crunching behind the scenes, Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris has decided to lower his recently proposed tax increase by more than half.

"The reason for the decrease is that the county has decided to continue to look for more and more ways to cut expenses over 2018, while also concentrating on increasing revenue," said Paris. "Union County has one of the very lowest property tax rates in the State of Georgia, and the new rate will still keep us as one of the lowest five in the state based

on last year's tax rates."

As a result, the commissioner's millage rate proposal will be lowered from 6.626 mills to 6.153 mills, a reduction of 0.473 mills over the previously proposed increase.

This effectively reduces the 2018 county property tax increase to 6.69 percent over the rollback rate of 5.767 mills, instead of the formerly advertised 14.9 percent increase.

And while property taxes are still going up, it does not mean people's tax bills are increasing by 6.69 percent, which is why taking a closer look at the total tax bill brings proper perspective to the tax increase.

Every property owner's tax bill is composed of a county portion and a school portion, where the county portion makes up only a third of the bill.

The Union County Schools portion of property taxes accounts for the other two-thirds of property tax bills, meaning the school portion is weighted more heavily on tax bills.

And the school's millage rate went down this year, further helping to offset the county increase.

Together, the 2018 county/school combined millage rate is 17.893 mills. This is a total increase of 0.327 mills over the 2017 combined county/school millage rate of 17.566 mills, which works out

to a 1.86 percent increase in property taxes from 2017 to 2018, provided property values remain the same.

For example, a non-homestead property with a fair market value of \$200,000 in 2017 had a property tax levy of \$1,405.28.

In 2018, that same property worth the same amount would have a \$1,431.44 property tax.

This is a total increase of \$26.16, or about 1.86 percent, between 2017 and 2018 tax levies when accounting for the entire property tax bill of a non-homestead property worth \$200,000.

And there's a simple way for many folks to calculate this

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Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris in a tax increase public hearing on Tuesday, Aug. 28. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

Enotah Judicial Circuit Superior Court Judge Joy Parks takes the bench

By Mark Smith
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Standing across from Gov. Nathan Deal at the Georgia State Capitol with her husband and daughter at her side, Joy Parks swore in as the new Superior Court Judge of the Enotah Judicial Circuit on Tuesday, Aug. 14.

Formerly the chief judge on the White County Magistrate Court, Parks is now serving alongside Chief Judge N. Stanley Gunter and Judge Raymond George on the Enotah Judicial Circuit Superior Court.

Parks heard her first case as a Superior Court judge on

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Judge Joy Parks swearing in as a Superior Court judge of the Enotah Judicial Circuit. Pictured here with daughter Annabelle, husband Robert Head and Gov. Nathan Deal at the Georgia State Capitol on Aug. 14.

Farmers Market hosts tractor show, agriculture hall-of-famers

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The family of Marion Todd, who was inducted into the Union County Agriculture Hall of Fame on Sept. 1. Photo by Lowell Nicholson



Terry Queen, standing next to Libby Stevens on the right, is a 2018 inductee into the Union County Ag Hall of Fame. He's pictured here with his family. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

Olivia Walker demonstrates courage through adversity

By Shawn Jarrard
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In many ways, Olivia Walker has enjoyed a very normal childhood, having participated in basketball, softball, cheerleading, musical theater and other activities with her friends.

But what makes Olivia's normal childhood so remarkable is that she was born with a very rare and potentially debilitating condition called clubfoot.

"Her foot was completely backwards," said Rebecca Walker, Olivia's mother. "For her to do as much as she does with how bad her foot was, it's basically a miracle."

At just 5 days old, Olivia and her parents traveled from Blairsville to Children's Healthcare of Atlanta to take what would be their first steps in an incredible journey toward recovery for Olivia.

Clubfoot is a deformity of the foot resulting from abnormal development of the muscles, tendons and bones while a fetus is forming during pregnancy, according to Children's.

And in Olivia's case, she essentially suffered from a club leg, since the condition affected not only her foot, but her leg from the knee down.

Fortunately, Olivia received world-class medical care at Children's, where she met health care professionals like Dr. Tim Schrader, an orthopedic surgeon, as she



Olivia Walker, 13, standing tall and wearing her award for finishing Second Place with her 4-H project on clubfoot.

began the treatments that would eventually help her to walk normally.

Her treatments included multiple cast changes and surgeries during the first year of her life, and for several years after, she had to wear a number of devices to hold her leg in

place as she slept.

By the time Olivia started kindergarten, Dr. Schrader determined that more surgery was needed, so at 5 years old, she underwent her last surgery to correct her clubfoot.

The surgery resulted

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Local woman injures self, three others in DUI accident

By Shawn Jarrard
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A Union County woman is facing charges of failure to maintain lane and DUI Drugs after causing an accident on Murphy Highway in front of Rick's Rental on Saturday, Sept. 1, according to the Georgia State Patrol.

Angela Telenko, 56, of Blairsville, was traveling north on Murphy Highway in her 2014 Chevrolet Camaro when she crossed the centerline into the southbound lane, according to GSP.

Just then, a 2007 Ford Explorer driven by Rebecca Gibson of Young Harris was traveling south on Murphy Highway and entering a left-hand curve, according to GSP.

With just enough time to react, Gibson swerved to



A bad accident occurred just in front of Rick's Rental on Saturday, Sept. 1, during a busy Labor Day weekend. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

the left in an attempt to avoid impact with Telenko's vehicle, according to GSP.


Gibson was able to avoid a head-on collision, and the right

front of each vehicle connected, sending the Camaro spinning clockwise before coming to a

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SOFTBALL
Sept 4 @ Dawson Co 5:55 PM
Sept 5 vs. Lumpkin Co. 5:55 PM
Cancer Awareness Game

Station 1
Open House
Sept. 8



BRMEMC
Annual Meeting
September 8th

High Heels & HARDHATS
CASINO NIGHT GALA
North Georgia Technical College Conference Center 8:30pm
September 8th
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