

North Georgia News

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Board of Education approves purchase of 10 new buses

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Come Christmastime, the Union County School System will be getting 10 brand new Blue Bird school buses to replace the oldest buses in its fleet.

And no, it's not Santa providing the buses – it's E-SPLOST dollars.

The Union County Board of Education approved the purchase of the buses in the Tuesday, Sept. 19, regular board meeting, and the buses are expected to be ready for use by the end of December.

All told, the buses will cost \$1,016,891, and will be funded with current E-SPLOST

money originally approved by voters back in 2013.

Longtime Union County Schools Transportation Director Stanlett Garrett, who has been with the schools for more than four decades, presented the bids in the board's work session that same Tuesday.

Garrett told the board that the two companies that bid on the bus contract were the only ones around that still build snub-nosed buses, which is the kind of bus Garrett prefers due to their heavier build and impressive durability.

The new Blue Bird buses – nine 72-passenger buses and one 54-passenger handicap accessible bus – will join the

system's predominately Blue Bird fleet by replacing 10 older buses.

Currently, the system runs 38 buses, picking up 954 kids in the morning and dropping off 1,341 kids in the afternoon.

That's a total of about 1,435 miles driven every day on regular routes for students, not including field trips and sporting events.

The other company that bid on the E-SPLOST bus contract was Thomas Built Buses, though their price came in a couple thousand dollars higher than Blue Bird.

Each of the 10 buses will be outfitted with REI cameras

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Union County Schools will soon be acquiring 10 new school buses to replace older models. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

BRMEMC Attorney Ford resigns; search for new lawyer begins

By Charles Duncan
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Blue Ridge Mountain EMC's Board of Directors is looking for a new attorney.

EMC Attorney Larry Ford has resigned effective immediately, Board President Mickey Cummings said.

"We received an email from him tendering his resignation, effective immediately," Cummings said. "He offered to help until we find someone else. We're already looking for another attorney."

At the Board's Sept. 18 monthly meeting, the Board appointed a three-member search committee to find a new

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Larry Ford, former attorney for the Board of Directors of the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

Palomo crowned UCHS Homecoming Queen

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Everything changed for Jessica Palomo the moment her name was announced over the Mike Colwell Memorial Stadium public address system on Friday night.

"It still hasn't sunk in what just happened, maybe it will by tomorrow," Palomo said, still in a bit of shock just moments after being crowned.

Palomo was crowned the 2017-2018 Union County High School Homecoming Queen after being selected by her peers as one of the five representatives of the senior class heading into the school's annual Spirit Week.

The weeklong celebration culminated in the Friday night football game against top-ranked Greater Atlanta Christian.

And following an hour

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Last year's UCHS Homecoming Queen Joanna Irvin crowns the 2017 Homecoming Queen Jessica Palomo as her father looks on. Photo/Todd Forrest

McGregor honored for 50 years in law enforcement at county meeting

By Lily Avery
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

It was a time for recognition on Thursday, Sept. 21 at the Union County Commission Meeting as Union County Sheriff's Deputy David McGregor was honored and recognized for his countless years of public service.

During the first portion of the meeting, Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris held a special dedication for McGregor, signing a proclamation declaring Sept. 21 as David McGregor Appreciation Day, an honor he

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Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris with Union County Sheriff's Deputy David McGregor in the Thursday, Sept. 21, county commission meeting. Photo/Lily Avery

Humane Society celebrates 17 years of Puttin' on the Dog

By Lily Avery
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Countless community members gathered together in celebration for the 17th Annual Puttin' on the Dog, held at the North Georgia Technical College on Saturday, Sept. 23, all in the name of helping four-legged furry companions.

Hosted by the Mountain Shelter Humane Society, which serves both Union and Towns counties, the event is the shelter's biggest fundraiser of the year, bringing in more than \$20,000 annually.

Aside from the gala

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Mountain Shelter Humane Society Director Lisa McConnell at the 2017 Puttin' on the Dog fundraiser gala. Photo/Lily Avery

Tribal nations receive warm welcome in Meeks Park

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

North Georgia Mountains community members filled Meeks Park on Thursday, Sept. 21, to join the *We Are Still Here* Native American Initiative in welcoming home descendants of native peoples forced from their homelands during the tragic period of the Trail of Tears.

Those gathered for the occasion shared a variety of positive feelings throughout the historic event that Thursday, perhaps best embodied by the Native Praise Choir's performance of the Cherokee hymn "I'm Building a Bridge," which the group sang among other Christian hymns in both English and Native American languages.

Honored guests included Second Chief (Creek) Hicks of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Chief Joe Bunch of the United

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Representatives of four tribal nations unveiling the statue called "Transcendent" in Meeks Park on Thursday, Sept. 21. Pictured here, L-R: Richard French, Victoria Vazquez, Muscogee (Creek) Second Chief Louis Hicks, and United Keetoowah Band Chief Joe Bunch. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

Land swap creates opportunity for four-way traffic at 515 and Gooch Bypass

By Charles Duncan
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Union County government has swapped 1.02 acres and \$35,000 cash to the Jenkins family for 1.13 acres adjacent to the Union County Farmers Market.

The swapped properties are adjacent to one

another, Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris said.

The deal allows the county to work with the Georgia Department of Transportation to create a four-way traffic intersection at Georgia 515 and Glenn Gooch Bypass.

In late May, Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris announced that

the county would purchase 13 acres of land from the family of Leon Davenport.

The land adjoins the Union County Farmers Market, and connects its easternmost area across the

Butternut Creek to Georgia 515.

"If you know me, the only property I'm interested

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Authorities search for meth mastermind

By Charles Duncan
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The footprint of a methamphetamine ring just got much, much larger.

On Tuesday, Sept. 20, the Lumpkin County Sheriff's Office, Appalachian Regional Drug Enforcement and FBI agents executed additional search warrants in Dahlonega,

at 289 Iberian Road and 126 Antique Way, based on the analysis of evidence seized last week.

Agents discovered that the residence on Iberian Road had been destroyed by fire. The State Fire Marshal's Office is investigating this suspicious fire as an arson.

Agents located a second See Search, Page 3A



Clara Mendoza

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Sept 26 @ Fannin co 6 PM

Sept 28 @ GAC 6 PM

FOOTBALL

Sept. 29 @ East Hall 7:30

Don't miss our All New

Panther Prints

Union County High School's own newspaper page

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Thursday, Sept. 28th

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