

# Sorghum...from Page 1A

always, will benefit from the festival, such as the Blairsville Kiwanis Club, which will be selling its usual boiled peanuts and pork rinds, and the Union County Lions Club will make hotdogs and hamburgers for festival goers.

"That's what the whole festival is about, is the whole community being able to come together to make money for everybody, not just for us," said Bridges. "About everything we do is donating back."

"Like, for the parade, we need somebody to clean up after the horses in the parade. The group that does that comes from the school, and we donate money to them for cleaning that up, and it's a way for them to raise funds. Everything we do is about giving the money back."

The festival is scheduled at Meeks Park for Saturday, Oct. 8, and Sunday, Oct. 9, then the following weekend for Saturday, Oct. 15, and

Sunday, Oct. 16.

Parking is free, and entry into the festival is \$4, though children 12 and under get in free.

Each of the four days of the festival begins at 9 a.m. and ends at 5 p.m., and there will be square dances at the Old Middle School Gym starting at 8 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 8, and Saturday, Oct. 15.

One of the first events of this year's festival will be the 47th Annual Sorghum Festival Parade, which will take place Saturday, Oct. 8, at 11 a.m., and will this year feature a new route.

Every year, the parade makes its way from the Old Middle School Gym to Gainesville Highway, then three quarters of the way around the Blairsville Square and over past the Blairsville Restaurant to GA 515.

The difference this year is, instead of going down to the U.S. Post Office and making a right, the 2016 Sorghum Festival Parade will take a slightly shorter route using the new downtown off-ramp from 515.

After turning onto the four-lane, the parade will continue until it reaches the ramp, or Bob Head Street.

The parade will take a



New 2016 Sorghum Festival parade route

right onto Bob Head Street and will carry on until it reaches the Old Fort Sorghum, where it will make another right and continue until it reaches its terminus back at the Old Middle

School Gym.

This year's parade theme is "Bring Out the Kids," and float builders will be expressing their inner children in the name of good fun.

For more information about the festival and parade, or to view the music lineup, visit [www.blairsvillesorghumfestival.com](http://www.blairsvillesorghumfestival.com).

# Speech...from Page 1A



Contestants of the inaugural Union County Farmers Market Speech Contest were: Andrew Collins, Emma Kate Ledford, Haley Zuber and Caitlyn Murphy. Photo/Lily Avery

Soil and Water Conservation District leading the charge.

"I serve on the Blue Ridge Mountain Soil and Water Conservation District, on their board of supervisors," said Market Manager Mickey Cummings. "Serving on that board, one of the jobs is try to educate the community about the importance of soil and water conservation and try to involve young people."

"We had the opportunity to pull this together and we started talking amongst ourselves to figure out what we could do to help get people in the community, especially young people, to become more involved. One of the things we talked about was the possibility of a speaking contest."

"We decided to do something to recognize youth and get them more involved and this did. We had 4-H kids and FFA kids, and kids from two or three different counties out here. I think it worked out pretty good."

Other organizations involved in the sponsoring of the event were United Community Bank, WoodmenLife, and the Chestatee-Chattahoochee Resource Conservation District.

Four students from Union and Towns County participated in the contest: Emma Kate Ledford and Haley Zuber from Towns County High School, and Caitlyn Murphy and Andrew Collins from Union County High School.

Contestants were asked to prepare a speech answering the following question: "Why should farmers in the Hiwassee River Watershed be concerned about soil and water conservation?"

Students were given four minutes to share their speeches before the judging began to determine which three would move on to the final round, held at the Blue Ridge Mountain Soil and Water Conservation District Affiliate Member Picnic.

The judges for the competition were: Chelsea Cutler, District Conservationist in Stephens County; Allyson McGraw, retired Family Consumer Science Agent for Union County Cooperative Extension; Ray Covington, Superintendent of the Georgia Mountain Research and Education Center; and Keith Gilmer, retired district manager of the Farm Service Agency.

Ledford began the contest, highlighting her hometown asset, Lake Chatuge. She explained that soil and water conservation are essential to ensure the future of the lake and that everyone, not just farmers, should be mindful of that.

Zuber followed in similar fashion, sharing a personal story of her family's business in chicken houses and how the conservation of Lake Chatuge is imperative to local farmers, including to herself.

Moving right along, Murphy not only explained the importance of soil and water conservation, but also

shared various ways to monitor water levels and watch for soil erosion in a particular area.

Finally, Collins rounded out the contest with a specific example of how cover crops can be affected by soil erosion and increased water levels.

Ledford, Murphy and Zuber moved on to the final round, where they were given a second opportunity to present their speeches to the judges and a chance to win cash prizes.

The contest was close, but Murphy took home the

coveted First Place award, winning a cash prize of \$300. Zuber won Second Place along with a \$150 cash prize, and Ledford came in third, receiving \$100.

Win or lose, each student walked away with not only a little money in their pocket, but knowledge from their research that will last a lifetime.

Next week at the Union County Farmers Market will be Heritage Day, celebrating the wonderful culture of Appalachian mountain life.

# Embezzlement...from Page 1A

"They had done an internal audit on their books, and basically handed me the audit, so I began looking into the case."

According to Lt. Osborn, he took warrants out for money that went missing earlier this summer in July and in August, totaling \$57,529.

Patterson and MedMark parted ways prior to her arrest, according to Lt. Osborn.

MedMark Treatment Centers treat "prescription painkiller and heroin addiction at (their) outpatient clinics, which are located across multiple states," according to the company's website.