

## Charlie Hunter celebrates his 95th Birthday



Charlie Hunter, Blairsville native and a member of the Greatest Generation, just celebrated his 95th Birthday on October 12th.

Charlie proudly served 25 years in the United States Air Force. Upon retirement, he became active in the DAV where he served as Commander for a number of years. He is also a member of the American Legion, Masons, and SAR. Members of his immediate family celebrated this momentous birthday with Charlie. He greatly appreciated the many calls, cards, and gifts from family and friends.

## Voting...from Page 1A

Saturday, Oct. 24, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. In-person early voting is happening in the Jury Assembly Room on the bottom floor of the courthouse, even during lunchtime.

The courthouse is still under a judicial order requiring guests to wear face masks, practice social distancing and submit to temperature checks before entering the building.

People uncomfortable voting in a mask may head to the polls on Election Day, as currently, facial coverings are not being required to vote at precincts, though this is subject to change. There's also the option of requesting an absentee ballot to mail or drop off at the Registrar's Office in the courthouse.

Poll workers are following COVID-19 best practices by regularly sanitizing equipment, and the Union County Government is supplying masks at the courthouse for people who don't have them, as well as hand sanitizer.

Voters cannot display campaign-related materials/clothing at polling places where promoted candidates appear on ballots. For example, voters may not enter wearing hats, T-shirts, masks, etc., promoting Donald Trump or Joe Biden for president. This includes popular MAGA gear.

The ballot features contested elections for the following federal and state offices: President of the United States; two U.S. Senate races; the 9th Congressional District seat; two Public Service Commissioner races; District 51 State Senator; and 8th District State Representative.

Also on the ballot are uncontested elections for eight local offices, including Clerk of Superior Court, Sheriff, Tax Commissioner, Surveyor, Coroner, Sole Commissioner, District 1 Board of Education and District 3 Board of Education.

The General Election features three statewide ballot initiatives for all Georgians to decide, including two proposed

state constitutional amendments and a referendum.

Amendment 1, if passed, would enable state legislators to use specifically imposed fees and taxes expressly for their intended purposes.

This amendment would ensure that specific fees, such as the \$1 old-tire disposal fee charged in the purchase of every new tire, actually go toward their express purpose instead of being allocated elsewhere, as is current practice under state law.

Amendment 2, if passed, would enable citizens to freely sue the state in an attempt to challenge "state or local laws that violate the Constitution of Georgia, the U.S. Constitution, or state law." Currently, would-be plaintiffs need government permission to do this.

Statewide Referendum A "establishes a tax exemption for certain real property owned by charities," according to the ballot, which would benefit some nonprofits like the local Habitat for Humanity.

Election Day will be Tuesday, Nov. 3, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. That day, voters should report to their pre-assigned voting precinct, of which there are 11 in Union County: Ivy Log, Dooley, Gum Log, Blairsville, Pat Colwell, Trackrock, Coosa, Jones Creek, Owl Town, Choestoe and Suches.

Voters are not required to bring their mailed precinct cards, but they must show a valid photo ID to vote.

Registered voters who will be at least 18 years of age by Election Day are eligible to vote during early voting, though Oct. 5 was the registration deadline for voters looking to participate in the Nov. 3 election.

Absentee ballots are being automatically mailed to voters who informed the Registrar's Office they were elderly or disabled on a previous application, though all others need to apply to get their mail-in absentee ballot for the General Election.

People may request mail-in absentee ballots by visiting

<https://ballotrequest.sos.ga.gov>, calling the local Registrar's Office at 706-439-6016, or swinging by the office at 65 Courthouse Street.

After requesting an absentee ballot, voters can easily track the progress of their ballot – before and after voting – by signing up at <https://georgia.ballottrax.net/voter/>.

People wanting to fill out their absentee ballots/applications and drop them off in person to the Registrar's Office or exterior drop box at the courthouse can do so up to 7 p.m. on Nov. 3, which is the current deadline for acceptance of all absentee-by-mail ballots.

The deadline to request an absentee ballot is Oct. 30. Voters should be aware it could take days for requested ballots to arrive in the mail and potentially several more for completed ballots to be returned for counting when mailed, so it's best to request one well in advance.

An absentee ballot/application must be submitted by the requesting voter, except for a disabled person, who may have a relative by blood or marriage return his or her absentee ballot/application.

Those who receive an absentee ballot by mail but decide to vote in person will need to have their absentee ballot canceled at time of voting, so be sure to bring it to the polls.

Election officials have said double voting is not a concern, as the system will alert poll workers if a voter has, for example, already cast an absentee-by-mail ballot but forgets and shows up at their regular voting precinct on Election Day.

Voters can access the My Voter Page at [mvp.sos.ga.gov](http://mvp.sos.ga.gov) ahead of the election for information on voter registration status, mail-in application and ballot status, poll location, registration information on file with the county office, sample ballots and more.

The Registrar's Office has been receiving phone calls by concerned voters receiving confusing items in the mail, including a mailer apparently from the Georgia GOP that says, "VOTER ALERT: Public records indicate you have not yet returned your absentee ballot."

Officials say that many of the callers have already submitted their absentee ballots, despite what the mailer says, and that people should disregard third-party mailers.

Furthermore, voters need only fill out one ballot application, and the best way to check absentee ballot status is by using BallotTrax, checking the My Voter Page or calling the Registrar's Office.

## Hope House

Hope House is a faith-based, non-profit benevolence center to help Union County residents and homeless in times of critical need. Hours of operation: Monday 9 a.m.-12 p.m. & Thursday 1 p.m.-4 p.m., located at 215 Blue Ridge Street, Suite E, Blairsville, (706)781-3090. NOE21ZJCA