

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Baker says no 'hard stops' on range proposal so far

By Shawn Jarrard
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It was all good news for advocates of the proposed Union County Target Range off SR 180 in a public meeting dedicated to the project on Wednesday, Oct. 24.

Representatives of the U.S. Forest Service and Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris jointly conducted the hearing at the School Fine Arts Center, with assistance from Sheriff Mack Mason and members of the Union County Gun Club.

More than 200 people attended the meeting, including Gun Club members as well as property owners invited by the Forest Service for having land near the proposed range site.

Blue Ridge District Ranger Andy Baker led a presentation that evening in which he shared a design concept of the proposed target

range. Central to the concept were both rifle and pistol ranges, bathrooms, a clubhouse, ample parking, and an area marked off for potential future expansion of the range.

"This is off 180, also known as the Richard Russell Scenic Byway, in Union County," said Baker. "You have a proposed road off of 180, so we'll be reconstructing a road because of some of the safety issues with the existing road."

Continued Baker: "You see the areas of open, grassy field - that's an old wildlife opening. It's got trees growing up in it, and some of those will have to be removed, but the majority of the area is already cleared where the actual range is being proposed.

"There will be a 200-yard length rifle range, and then a shorter pistol range. You also see some restrooms, some storage facilities, and you'll see

20-foot earthen berms around the perimeter of all the range. That is a safety requirement."

According to Baker, the biggest obstacles initially faced by projects such as this are noise and proximity to nearby water sources.

Fortunately for the project, Baker was able to report that the recently conducted "Shooting Range Noise Acoustical Analysis" had come back with favorable results, and that the range concept takes into account adequate buffers between it and a nearby stream.

"Noise and water, not the only things we're considering, but the two things we're taking a hard look at in the very front end of this project," said Baker. "If we can't mitigate those, we have a hard stop, and so, right now, we don't have any hard stops on this proposal. No to say there won't be, but those are the things we're looking

at first."

The results of the acoustical study and all other publicly available documents related to the project can be found on the project page at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=54559>.

Further studies will include live-fire acoustical analysis, the date and time of which "will be provided to all who comment on the project with their contact information, and will also be posted on the project webpage," according to the Forest Service.

Currently, the Forest Service is soliciting public comment as part of the project's initial "Public Scoping Period," after which the Environmental Analysis portion of the project can begin.

"The more specific that you make (your comments), the better that's going to help us," said Baker. "Obviously, you have the God-given right to say



District Ranger Andy Baker in the Target Range public meeting on Wednesday, Oct. 24. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

I'm against or for this project. Is that really going to help us a lot in the Environmental Analysis? No.

"I need to know what specific things you're concerned about and how this would

impact you, your property, whatever the relationship is you have with this project. That's really going to help us be responsive to your needs.

"So, please, if you write See Range, Page 3A

Aaron named System TOTY; school board meets K-9 Max

By Mark Smith
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Congratulations to Union County Primary school teacher Tammy Aaron, who was named System Teacher of the Year in the Oct. 23 regular meeting of the Union County Board of Education.

"I am so honored, it's just such an honor," said Aaron in the meeting. "It's all for the kids. That's why we're here. They are the reason I do what I do. If I can make a difference in their lives, then that's what I want to do."

Aaron qualified to become System TOTY after first being named Teacher of the Year at the primary school.

"Tammy started her career as a parent volunteer and then a paraprofessional," said Primary School Principal Millie Owenby, introducing Aaron. "She went on to Brenau University and got her



Union County Schools Superintendent John Hill with System Teacher of the Year Tammy Aaron and Board of Education Chair Cindy Odum on Tuesday, Oct. 23. Photo by Mark Smith

bachelor's degree as well as her master's degree there in early childhood and in middle grades with a concentration in language arts, science and social studies.

"She also obtained her

specialist degree in curriculum and instruction at Lincoln Memorial University, and she has add-ons to her certificate in reading and coaching as endorsements. She has also

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A community mourns the loss of local icon Carol Head

By Shawn Jarrard
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When Carol Fleming Head passed away on Tuesday, Oct. 23, her 79th birthday, Union County lost another longtime pillar of the community.

For decades, Carol worked to build up Blairsville and the surrounding area through civic engagement and charitable endeavors, serving alongside her husband Bob Head as a leader in the community.

Mr. Head passed away earlier this year on June 6, also at the age of 79, and together, Carol and Bob enjoyed 57 years of marriage, four children and four grandchildren.

Carol grew up in Hartwell, where she graduated from Hart County High School. She then attended Young Harris College before making Blairsville her home with Bob in the North Georgia Mountains.

A woman of great



Carol Fleming Head

Christian faith, she worked tirelessly on many community projects throughout her lifetime, including the dedication of an untold number of hours in her home church of First United Methodist Church of Union County.

There, she spent time educating children, singing in the choir and being a member of numerous committees.

Alongside decades of

volunteerism, Head also served on the local Advisory Board for Adult Education, and for several years on the Foundation Board of North Georgia Technical College.

She was a celebrated local author of short stories, poems and prayers, many of which can be found in her 2009 book titled "A Sprinkling of Heaven's Dust."

And now that she has joined her husband in death, many in the community are mourning the passing of such a giving couple, as many over the years have benefited from the humble actions of Bob and Carol Head.

"I have known Carol Head as long as I can remember," said Lamar Paris, sole commissioner of Union County. "She and Bob have been inseparable for so many years, and it was hard to mention them separately, Bob

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Haunted History Tour a rousing success for Historical Society

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Everyone is familiar with the sights and sounds of Blairsville. The taste of a favorite restaurant, the feel of crisp, cool autumn air with the smell of smoke rising from the chimneys - everyone's five senses are in tune with their surroundings.

But not many locals can provide an accurate portrayal of their hometown based solely on extrasensory perception, aka the "sixth sense."

And that's where Greysen Schmitt and his team of paranormal investigators come in.

Once again, the Union County Historical Society teamed up with Schmitt to offer a Haunted History Tour of Blairsville, and the response this year has been overwhelming.

According to Schmitt, the final tour date was previously scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 27, however, due to the tremendous interest, an additional date was



Greysen Schmitt inside the Historic Union County Courthouse, sharing paranormal evidence gathered by his team. Photo by Todd Forrest

added on Tuesday, Oct. 30, to provide one final opportunity for those unable to book a spot on the sold-out tour.

The tour begins at the old Union County nursing home/hospital located on Hunt Martin Street. Guests are then

taken by bus to the Grapelle Butt-Mock House and Payne Cabin, before wrapping things up at the Historic Union County Courthouse.

While strolling through the dark, abandoned halls of the

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Dancing with North Georgia Stars hits the stage on Saturday

By Mark Smith
North Georgia News
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HIWASSEE - Enotah CASA volunteer and Board Chair Liz Ruf visited with the Mountain Movers and Shakers on Friday, Oct. 26, to talk about a very important event that's happening this weekend.

The Annual Dancing with North Georgia Stars Show & Gala is the premier fundraiser for the Enotah CASA For Children, and this year, it will be held on Saturday, Nov. 3, at 7 p.m., inside the Union County Schools Fine Arts Center.

Ultimately, the event is a dancing competition that pits different volunteer couples against one another to see who can raise the most donation money in the runup to the big event.

Of course, each couple also develops a dance routine and competes on stage to the delight of audience members.

Ruf was accompanied by dance couple No. 10 Vickie

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In the Oct. 26 meeting of the Mountain Movers and Shakers, Roberto Romero and Vickie Levy offer a preview of their dance routine ahead of the Nov. 3 Dancing with North Georgia Stars event. Photo by Mark Smith

Early voting ends on Friday; voter turnout remains strong

By Shawn Jarrard
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More than 4,600 people had voted early as of Saturday, Oct. 27, and early voting continues this week in the leadup to the big General Election on Tuesday, Nov. 6.

These early voting numbers are on par with the 2016 presidential election,

according to the Union County Registrar's Office, which bodes well for a strong overall turnout in the 2018 midterm elections.

Between now and the conclusion of the early voting period on Friday, Nov. 2, during the hours of 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., registered Union County voters can walk into the Registrar's Office to cast their votes.

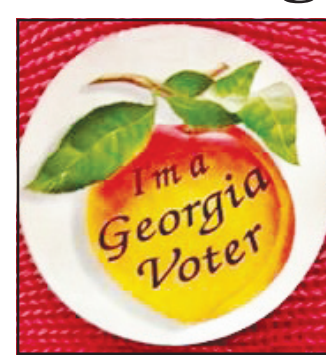
The Registrar's Office is located within the Union County Courthouse at 65 Courthouse Street in Blairsville, and it will remain open to voters even during lunchtime.

Election Day will be on Tuesday, Nov. 6, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., and instead of voting at the Registrar's Office, voters should report to one of the 11 pre-assigned Union County

voting precincts: Ivy Log, Dooley, Gumlog, Blairsville, Pat Colwell, Trackrock, Coosa, Jones Creek, Owtown, Choestoe and Suches.

A sample ballot can be obtained at the Registrar's Office and at www.mvp.sos.ga.gov, which also features valuable voter information personalized to each resident.

"Georgia law requires



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Election Results Newspaper will be available on Wednesday, November 7th after 10 AM

See our special election results insert for all the details and results from the General Election.

Election results will also be available at www.nganews.com

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