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bers, since new ones are not available yet)

A. For 2013, the mill rate for Union County was 5.410 as compared to Lumpkin County at 10.436, Rabun County – 8.170, Habersham County – 9.635, White County – 9.190, Banks County – 8.979 and Towns County at 5.760. These are very large differences other than Towns County.

**Q. What do the different mill rates mean in actual property taxes we pay?**

A. Well for a comparison, if you had a house and land (without homestead exemption) worth \$200,000 in Union County (does not include school tax) you would pay \$432.00. In Lumpkin you would pay \$834.88, in Rabun County you would pay \$653.60, Habersham, \$770.80, White you would pay \$770.80, Banks you would pay \$718.32, and Towns you would pay \$460.80. So other than Towns, our property taxes are considerably lower than other counties in our region.

Calculation of property tax in this example - House and land value \$200,000 x 40 percent (assessed value) = \$80,000. So for all of the examples above, even though the property is worth \$200,000, in Georgia you only pay property taxes on 40 percent (assessed value) or \$80,000 x mill rate (80,000 x .005410) = \$432.00.

**Q. How are the school and county property taxes divided up?**

A. In the example above of a home and /or property worth \$200,000 (taxable value of \$80,000 again with no homestead or other exemptions to make this more simple) you would take our total tax rate of the county 5.410 mills x \$80,000 = \$432.00. The school mill rate is 11.798 x \$80,000 = \$973.84 (the school also has one of the lowest mill rates in the state). So

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enrolled at the VA elsewhere for many years. Most of the VA employees seemed to genuinely want to help me get care sooner. But, one nurse did not, and volunteered that if I didn't like how they did things here, then I should go to another country for medical care.

That comment may have been just a flippant remark on her part, but, it cut me deeply. I am a United States Marine Corps veteran with three purple hearts, and a bronze star, now 130 percent VA-disabled, who fought and sacrificed for THIS country.

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leave around 8 p.m. to go play a gig. He was a jazz piano player who was always gainfully employed on weekends. Before he would leave the dinner table to go get a cat nap prior to getting in his dress suit for the job, he would grab an apple or a pear, maybe a chunk of cheese or some roasted nuts, and sit down with all of us around him. He would cut up the fruit and pass a piece to you on the end of the knife. Patiently, you waited your turn. It always seemed like a gift, because it was delivered with such love and grace. This ritual was one passed down from generations, for meal time was synonymous with family time in the Sicilian culture.

Family time is precious.

the total property tax bill would be \$1,405.84, with a very small portion going to the state. This works out to 31 percent going to the county and 68 percent going to the school system.

**Q. How much of the county budget is spent on salaries as opposed to operations?**

A. This is one of the areas I am most impressed with in Union County. The dedication and hard work of our employees have a lot to do with this. We have fewer employees working harder and because of that, our total salaries account for only 46.32 percent of our budget, while our operation cost are 53.68 percent of our budget. Most counties salaries are at least 60 percent of their budget if not more. So the property taxes we collect of \$6,600,000 barely pay for the employee cost of \$ 6,340,863. Our operation budget is \$7,347,595 and most of these funds do not come from property taxes but from all other revenues of the county including fees, fines and forfeitures and LOST sales taxes.

Without bragging too much, this all means that Union County is one of the most financially sound and fiscally strong counties in Georgia (for our size). While no one likes to pay property taxes, we really get a lot for our money in this county in terms of great parks and facilities, great services including all public safety, roads and bridges and county maintenance, a good court system, and a great Recreation Department, plus outstanding county employees and elected officials.

We all thank you for supporting our county, paying your property taxes and helping to make this one of the best counties anywhere with an exceptional quality of life at the lowest possible cost. We hope you all have a Happy and more importantly, Healthy 2014!

I can only imagine she has no appreciation for the cost of freedom she enjoys and how the terror of combat never goes away.

I hope this person is never again so disrespectful to those who have fought for America. I pray that she never experiences what my Marine Corps squad did. And, to those who have never had to endure the horrors of combat, please do not spit on those who did.

**Chuck Chaussy, Blairsville**

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got up to preach his first sermon and forgot everything he had planned to say. Embarrassed, he ran from the building and into the darkness thinking that his life was over. But, today, if you go to Westminster Abbey you will see the grave of the great missionary. There are no failures buried in these hallowed halls.

Lou Gehrig was referred to as "Piano Legs," but he set an all time high consecutive game record of 2,130 games and became known as the "Iron Man of Baseball."

Louis Pasteur's teacher wrote of him as "the meekest, smallest, and least promising child in my class."

During the French and Indian War at Fort Necessity, a young American officer gave in to the enemy, but we don't

look at George Washington as a failure. Although, he lost two-thirds of the battles he fought during the Revolutionary War, he won the war, founded a nation and became the first President of the United States and the Father of Our Nation.

Phillip Brooks started out as a school teacher. His ambition was to teach school. He never wanted to be a preacher. But when he was dropped from his teaching position, God directed him in a different direction. The next time you sing, *O Little Town of Bethlehem*, be encouraged.

Failure never be final. Don't be depressed that you have made some mistakes and failed a few times, God may have something great waiting for you. If you feel you must quit, wait until day after tomorrow.

## Williams...

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small business is a member of its local chamber, the business enjoys a 49 percent increase in its consumer favorability rating, a 73 percent increase in consumer awareness, a 68 percent increase in its local reputation, and an 80 percent increase in the likelihood that consumers will patronize the business in the future.

With survey results like these in addition to a long list of member benefits, it is easy to see the value of being a member of the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce.

If you are a business owner and would like to learn more about how you can benefit from membership, contact our Chamber at (706) 745-5789 or me directly at [President@BlairsvilleChamber.com](mailto:President@BlairsvilleChamber.com).

Don't forget that our Business after Hours celebrating our Business of the Quarter, The Wine Shoppe is coming up on Thursday, Jan. 16, 2014 from 5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. Everyone is invited to attend. Contact the Chamber for details and reservations.

## Ziegenbein...

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each one. Their tails were all wagging and I got some kisses from several of the dogs and even one cat leaned over from his resting spot and planted one on me!

We were shown their private cages, then their playroom, screened porch room, outside running pens for the dogs and how the caretaker even takes time to train some of the dogs to prepare them for their "forever homes". The shelter is sooo clean, and every one in the facility, both staff and volunteers are awesome and you can see they love their animals.

Everyone should visit the center and meet the wonderful folks that maintain it and meet the "residents" and take one or two home. When we are able to add another furry friend to our family as we just moved here and need to get settled, believe me as Arnold S. would say, "I'll be back"!

## Tuschel...

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ceived makes this possible for us to reach our goal.

We would also like to thank our neighboring clubs and groups for their constant support and friendship. Such as, Blairsville Cruisers, the Georgia Mountain Classics in and around Blue Ridge, groups from all over the area and several states.

Again, thank you for supporting a worthwhile cause, from the members of the Good Neighbors Auto Club.

We had a blast. We wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a great New Year.

**Marcus Tuschel, President**

# UNION COUNTY COMMUNITY CALENDAR

<b>Chamber of Commerce events</b>		
For details and future events see events calendar at <a href="http://www.VisitBlairsvilleGA.com">www.VisitBlairsvilleGA.com</a>		
<b>Wednesday, January 1</b>		
2 pm	Tour Misty Mountain Model Railroad-16 Misty Mountain Lane	
<b>Monday, January 6</b>		
6 pm	Alzheimer's Support Group – Cadence Bank	
<b>Tuesday, January 7</b>		
8 am	Tri-State Business Women's Meeting – Blairsville Restaurant	
<b>Wednesday, January 8</b>		
2 pm	Friends of Union County Library Meeting-UC Library	
<b>Every Monday:</b>		
Boy Scouts #101	United Methodist Ch	7 pm
Children's Story Time	Union County Library	11 am
Kiwanis Club	Steve's Steakhouse	Noon
Civil Air Patrol	Blairsville Airport	6:30 pm
<b>Every Tuesday:</b>		
Sweet Adelines	United Methodist Ch	6:30 pm
Get Fit	First UMC	5:15 pm
<b>Every Thursday:</b>		
Masonic Luncheon	Cooks Restaurant	11:30 am
Rotary Club	Cadence Bank	Noon
Get Fit	First UMC	5:15 pm
<b>Second Monday of each month:</b>		
Misty Mtn Quilt Guild	Hayesville	10 am-3 pm
Disabled Am Veterans	UC Annex, Rm 116	Noon (Jan-Oct)
<b>Second Tuesday of each month:</b>		
Historical Society Bd.	Old Courthouse	9:30 am
Band Boosters	UC Middle School	7:30 pm
(Aug through May, except Dec)		
Beta Sigma Phi	Kappa Alpha Chapter	7 pm
Eastern Star #304	Location not listed	7:30 pm
Mtn Laurel Arts/Crafts	Union County Library	10 am
Mtn. Reg. Arts/Crafts	Library - Young Harris	7 pm
NARFE	Grinds & Glazes	Noon
FPL Retirees	Hole in Wall Rest.	9 am
Mtn. Sounds Dulcimer	Sr. Citizens Center	1:30-3:30 pm
<b>Second Wednesday of each month:</b>		
Parkinson's Sup. Grp	Cadence Bank	3 pm
UC Interagency Grp.	UC Civic Center	Noon
GA Mtn Writers Club	Cadence Bank	10 am
<b>Second Thursday of each month:</b>		
Sons Confederate Vet.	UCB Community Rm	7 pm
Appalachian Shriners	Allegheny Lodge	6:30 pm
Knights of Columbus	Marian Hall	7:30 pm
Lions Club	Steve's Cookie Jar	6 pm
Democratic Party	UC Senior Center	6:30 pm
Trout Unlimited	Cadence Bank	6:30 pm
UC Tea Party Patriots	UC Civic Center	7 pm
<b>Second Friday of each month:</b>		
Eastern Star #471	Location not listed	7:30 pm
<b>Second Saturday of each month:</b>		
His Victory Riders	Blairsville Restaurant	8 am