

Checking items off 'to-do' list

We have now reached the point of the legislative session where lists are everywhere. It doesn't matter if they are the individual to-do lists or the bills eligible for consideration by the Senate Rules Committee, all of these lists are getting substantially longer every day. We still have a long way to go in the 2015 legislative session, so these lists are very important tools that keep legislators on task for the State of Georgia and the people we represent.

The Senate approved the Amended FY 2015 appropriations bill last week, which means we are halfway to fulfilling our annual constitutional requirement to pass a balanced budget. HB 75 increases the AFY 2015 budget by \$276 million, bringing the total funding amount to \$21.1 billion. Most of this funding increase will be allocated towards public school enrollment growth. Another \$20 million will be aimed towards economic development recruitment efforts, while \$4.8 million will be directed towards medical trials studying how cannabidiol may help in treating severe childhood seizure disorders. Since there were some discrepancies between the House and Senate on certain line items, a conference committee made up of members from both chambers will now negotiate a final version of HB 75.

However, the House and Senate have agreed on one very significant thing when it comes to the AFY 2015 budget—and that's the importance of keeping insurance coverage for school employees who work less than 30 hours per week. The Senate also included language in their version of HB 75 that strongly supports providing these hard-working employees with health insurance, and I am feeling hopeful about the General Assembly's chances of finding a way to



Georgia State Senator Steve Gooch

keep our bus drivers and cafeteria covered.

SB 3 passed the Senate and will provide an alternative for parents who must temporarily waive parental rights due to circumstances such as military service or substance abuse treatment. The legislation, also known as the "Supporting and Strengthening Families Act," would provide an easier method to transfer caregiving authority to a grandparent or family member without the involvement of a lengthy court process. Ultimately, it will allow parents to adequately address the circumstances that impact his or her ability to adequately care for a child, as well as preserve family structure and stability. The bill will now move to the House of Representatives for consideration.

I presented SB 4 to the Senate Economic Development Committee, where it received a unanimous 'do pass' recommendation. SB 4 seeks to expand the definition of "urban redevelopment" to include the improvement of transit facilities, sidewalks, streetscapes, trails and bike paths. These surface transportation projects add a lot of value to redevelopment areas and often act as a catalyst for neighborhood growth and improvement. The bill will now be considered for a floor vote by the Senate Rules Committee.

Please continue to stay in touch with me and share your thoughts as we work through the legislative session, especially as more bills start moving through the legislative process. As always, I am honored to represent you in the 51st Senate District. NTFeb18.Z14)CA

UNION COUNTY COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Every Monday:		
Children's Story Time	Union County Library	11 am
Kiwanis Club	Steve's Steakhouse	Noon
Civil Air Patrol	Blairsville Airport	6 pm
Boy Scouts #101	United Methodist Ch	7 pm
Every Tuesday:		
Get Fit	First UMC	5:15 pm
Smoky Mtn. Melodies	United Methodist Ch	6:30 pm
Hi Country Harmonizers	Branan Lodge	6:30 pm
Every Thursday:		
Masonic Luncheon	Cooks Restaurant	11:30 am
Rotary Club	Cadence Bank	Noon
Get Fit	First UMC	5:15 pm
Fourth Tuesday of each month:		
Compassionate Friends	Grinds & Glazes	Noon
Misty Mtn Quilt Guild	Blairsville UMC	12:30 pm
Mtn. Sounds Dulcimer	Sr. Citizens Center	1:30-3:30 pm
VFW Post #7394	Veteran's Center	6:30 pm
UC Tea Party Patriots	Shawdownland Tabernacle	7 pm
Eastern Star #304	Location not listed	7:30 pm
Fourth Wednesday of each month:		
No activities listed		
Fourth Thursday of each month:		
Lions Club	Steve's Cookie Jar	6 pm
Cruisers Club Meeting	Sr. Center pavilion	6 pm
UT Homebuilders	YH College	7 pm
Fourth Friday of each month:		
Eastern Star #471	Location not listed	7:30 pm
Fourth Saturday of each month:		
Youngcane Lodge #597	Lodge Hall	7:30 pm

Indictments

...from Page 1A

tions facility, possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony, possession of an illegal weapon, possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, recidivist.

* Gregory Ryan Spivey, two counts, first-degree burglary, possession of methamphetamine, possession of less than an ounce of marijuana, defective windshield.

* Misty Nichole Snow, tampering with evidence.

* Joshua Ryan Woody, riot in a penal institution, obstruction, interference with government property, second-degree criminal damage to property, two counts simple battery, aggravated assault, two counts obstruction, battery, criminal trespass, two counts third-degree cruelty to children.

Income tax reductions for Georgia landowners

If you own land in Georgia, you may have a chance to significantly reduce your income taxes. There is a federal law that allows landowners who protect their land from development and protect the conservation values on the property to reduce their Federal Income tax liability by 30%, or 100% for those who have at least half of their income derived from agriculture. This annual tax savings can be continued for up to 6 years, depending on the value of the land. Additionally landowners can receive a tax credit for their Georgia state income tax worth up to \$500,000.

The way to qualify for this is through a land conservation easement. A conservation easement is simply a legal agreement that the land will never be developed. The owner still has all the other rights and privileges we associate with ownership: private use of the land; the right to sell or convey; the right to hunt, fish, hike, harvest timber or farm—

County & City Reports

Local law enforcement provide the following information for publication. Names are spelled as they were received from the law enforcement agencies. It is important to remember that the following individuals have been charged only and are presumed innocent until such time as they are found guilty by a court or enter a guilty plea.



Union County Jail Arrest Report

Mack Mason, Union County Sheriff

- 02/11/15 Haley Michelle Bragg, age 22, Ellijay, GA Criminal trespass (family violence)
- 02/12/15 Ronnie Michael Bright, age 53, Hiawassee, GA DUI alcohol, speeding in excess of maximum limits (state speed and zone limits)
- 02/13/15 Samuel Thomas Brown, age 18, Blairsville, GA DUI/alcohol, less safe, possession of alcohol by minor, loitering or prowling
- 02/12/15 Danny Dewayne Dockery, age 29, Blairsville, GA Riot in a penal institution, criminal interference w/government property, probation violation (felony) - (2 counts)
- 02/12/15 Heather Dawn Dockery, age 35, Mineral Bluff, GA Failure to appear
- 02/10/15 Sawyer Weston Dockery, age 20, Blairsville, GA Terroristic threats and acts
- 02/10/15 Teresa Renee Hall, age 52, Young Harris, GA Distribution of controlled substance
- 02/10/15 Devin Loyd Hunter, age 24, Woodstock, GA Serving time per court 3 days
- 02/12/15 Andrew James Ray Long, age 28, Liberty, KY Failure to appear
- 02/09/15 Kevin Lee Mashburn, age 30, Mineral Bluff, GA Probation violation (felony) - 4 counts
- 02/12/15 Ali Trelaina Mercer, age 44, Hayesville, NC Probation violation
- 02/11/15 Dainelle Shea Morgan, age 20, Blue Ridge, GA Criminal trespass (family violence)
- 02/09/15 Tanya Sue Patterson, age 36, Blue Ridge, GA Theft by deception
- 02/11/15 Stacy Allen Savage, age 46, Columbus, OH Failure to appear
- 02/10/15 Charles Edwin Taylor, age 57, Dalton, GA Driving while license suspended/revoked
- 02/09/15 Christy Taylor Warner, age 39, Blairsville, GA Theft by shoplifting

There are 71 inmates now being housed in the Union County Jail



Blairsville Police Department

ARRESTS AND INCIDENT REPORT

Chief Johnny Carroll

- 02/10/15 Aaron Patrick Bechert, age 28, Blairsville, GA Hold for other agency
- 02/11/15 John Edward Cloer, age 35, Ellijay, GA Probation violation (felony)
- 02/10/15 Waymon Keith Lumpkin, age 29, Rossville, GA Possession of marijuana, driving while license suspended/revoked
- 02/10/15 Margaret Rose Marie McCormick, age 27, Blairsville, GA Giving false identity to LE officer
- 02/15/15 Stanley Bernard Sheppard, age 45, Blairsville, GA DUI alcohol, driving while license suspended/revoked, following too closely
- 02/14/15 Hubert Wesley Stroupe, age 57, Robbinsville, NC DUI/alcohol/0.08 GM, over 21, driving while license suspended/revoked, no insurance, operating vehicle without valid tag/decal
- 02/09/15 Accident, arrest-probation violations, public intoxication, accident, 911 hang up, courtesy escort
- 02/10/15 Arrest possession, suspended license, arrest-driving on suspended license, arrest-false name-serve warrant, private property accident, business alarm, business alarm, welfare check
- 02/11/15 Serve warrant, assist other agency, accident, misc. disturbance, business alarm
- 02/12/15 911 hang up, funeral escort, private property accident, funeral escort, serve warrant
- 02/13/15 VIN verification, courtesy escort
- 02/14/15 DUI arrest, recover property, courtesy escort
- 02/15/15 DUI arrest



Union County Fire Department

Incidents

Union County Fire Chief David Dyer

- 02/09/15 6 Medical Assists, Medical Assist-Suches
- 02/10/15 Smoke Investigation
- 02/11/15 3 Medical Assists, 3 Motor Vehicle Accidents, Search for Lost Person
- 02/12/15 4 Medical Assists, Medical Alarm
- 02/13/15 6 Medical Assists, Motor Vehicle
- 02/14/15 3 Medical Assists, Public Service, Search and Rescue on Appalachian Trail

NTFeb18.Z3)CA

Rescue

...from Page 1A

search and rescue mission this year," Chief Dyer said. "The conditions of the searches have been brutal with frigid temperatures and blistering winds. At times, these searches can be very dangerous and life threatening for search crews.

"Union County Fire/EMA would like to remind hikers to be prepared, dress appropriately, know the weather, and know your limitations," Chief Dyer said.