

North Georgia News

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Paris: 'Storm not as bad as expected, but bad enough'

By Charles Duncan
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Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris was right last week, the county was in store for some lost days.

The snow event forecast by the National Weather Service came as expected. What the county didn't expect was a bit of help from Mother Nature.

Schools were closed and roads were scraped, sanded and salted. Approximately 300 tons of salt and gravel were spread by the county's Road Department.

However, the temperatures weren't as cold as expected and that helped side roads thaw out during the snow.

The snow did keep county officials guessing.

"That was the longest three days I can remember," Commissioner Paris said. "The snow on Tuesday melted



Left, salt trucks are the county road department as snow pelts Union County; right, as you can see, the roads are clear in Union County. Good work Road Department.



because of unexpected higher temperatures. On Wednesday, the snow came, but, the snow turned to rain. But, on Thursday, here came the snow again."

On Tuesday, the snow

came, covered the ground and roads and caused some travel discomfort.

Nevertheless, Mother Nature offered temperatures that ranged from 32 degrees to 35 degrees that day, and the

snow turned to freezing rain.

Much more snow was anticipated on Wednesday, and it arrived as forecast.

Still, Mother Nature proved helpful as the day continued. There were some

icy patches, but, for the most part, the hard work by the county's Road Department proved fruitful.

Main roads were passable, and thanks to Mother Nature, side roads were

slushy, but passable.

"We were getting concerned," Commissioner Paris said. "We thought we had enough salt to last the rest of

See Snow, 3A

Snowman contest a hit in Blairsville

By Charles Duncan
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Social media took last week's snow event to a new level in Union County.

The Second Facebook Blairsville Snowman Contest attracted 133 entries as Jeff and Sarah Olver hosted the enthusiastic event.

In less than two days, the Blairsville Snowman Contest got more than 1,000 likes on Facebook, Sarah Olver said.

"When life hands you lemons, make lemonade," Sarah Olver said. "When winter weather handed house-bound locals ice and snow, they made snowmen! Lots of snowmen."

The Snowman Contest actually started back in 2011, Sarah Olver said.

"We had that blast of snow over Christmas and New Year's that left people



The Urban Family created this masterpiece in the Facebook Blairsville Snowman Contest. It took first place.

home for over a week," she said. "Patrick Construction hosted a similar online contest, and we won with an igloo

and canoe complete with paddling snowmen."

Sarah Olver says the

See Snowman, 2A

Fire destroys home as snow arrives

By Charles Duncan
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Union County firefighters responded to a structure fire on Woods Road just as the predicted snowstorm arrived on Feb. 10.

Union County Fire Chief/EMA Director Charles Worden said the 4,050 square-foot home was fully engulfed in flames as firefighters arrived on the scene.

"The structure was falling into the basement as command was being established," Chief Worden said. "Stations 1 and 2 and all available tankers received a call from E-911 dispatch.

"The home was fully involved at the time of the call," Chief Worden said.

Inclement weather posed a problem gaining access due to a steep driveway at the home, Chief Worden said.

"Engine 1 and Tanker



Chief Charles Worden

2 used Wilderness Way to gain access through an old road leading to the rear of the home," Chief Worden said. "An evaluation by Lt. Damon Hood revealed that the home had completely burned down into the basement area."

Chief Worden said that firefighters used three hoses from Engine 1 to extinguish

the remaining blaze.

"Firefighters used approximately 7,000 gallons of water to put out the hot spots," Chief Worden said. "They also used 15 gallons of foam solution to put a layer of foam over the remains of the home to prevent it from rekindling."

The residence was a second home for the homeowner. No one was at the residence at the time of the fire, Chief Worden said.

"The snow was falling at the time of the call and it didn't make for the most ideal firefighting situation," Chief Worden said. "We did what we could do given the circumstances."

No one was reported injured during the blaze, Chief Worden said.

"A home fire is always a tragic situation," Chief Worden said. "We're always proud when we can report that there were no injuries."

Union County sends nine to state in SkillsUSA competitions in March

By Charles Duncan
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Davey Arrowood and Ryan McKeral from Union County High School placed first in their respective categories at the recent SkillsUSA Region 2 High School Competition at North Georgia Technical College.

"I see a sea of champions here in this room because you have prepared yourself for success," said North Georgia Technical College President Dr. Gail Thaxton as she welcomed a crowd of nearly 500 contestants, advisers and observers attending the Region 2 SkillsUSA Challenge on Feb. 6, at North Georgia Technical College's Blairsville Campus. Arrowood and McKeral



Davey Arrowood

advance to the Georgia SkillsUSA Conference at the Georgia International Convention Center held March 13-15.

Also headed to the state competition from Union



Ryan McKeral

County will be second place winners Ben Buckley in Carpentry, Courtney Busbee in First Aid/CPR, R.J. Brown in

See Skills, 2A

NWS: 'Warmer weather on the way'

By Charles Duncan
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Could spring be just around the corner?

Probably not, but at least the next few days have warmer temperatures projected in the local forecast.

Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris breathed a sigh of relief on Monday as he checked the forecast for the rest of the week.

According to the National Weather Service, temperatures were scheduled to be at or above freezing through Saturday.

Precipitation is in the forecast, but not of the frozen variety.

"That's music to my ears," Commissioner Paris said.

Paris thought the coun-



Snow is almost a dirty word in Union County. Snow scenes like this are hopefully something we won't witness again until next year.

ty had enough salt to last the remainder of the winter until last week's snow event. Now,

he's looking for a partner to

See Weather, 2A

Chamber to honor STAR Students Francis and Wood; STAR Teachers Payne and Cantrell

By Charles Duncan
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More than 125 Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce members are expected to greet and honor STAR students and teachers from Union County and Woody Gap schools on Tuesday.

Alice Francis is the system-wide STAR Student for Union County, and her STAR Teacher is Amy Payne.

At The Woody Gap School, the STAR Student is



Alice Francis

Logan Wood, and his STAR Teacher is Althea Cantrell.



Logan Wood

County Chamber of Commerce is scheduled to honor the four at its Annual Meet-



Amy Payne

ing and STAR Presentation sponsored by Budget Blinds.



Althea Cantrell

The annual luncheon is scheduled to be held at the Union County Community

Center.

Chamber President Cindy Williams said once again, it's an honor to host the county's best and brightest.

"Attendees can look forward to our annual Chamber programs and statistics update which will highlight the top accomplishments of 2013 as well as exciting announcements for 2014," Williams said. "Each attendee will be the first to receive a complimentary copy of our

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Thu: Rain Hi 62 Lo 46
Fri: T-Storms Hi 56 Lo 31
Sat: Clouds Hi 58 Lo 33

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Friends of the Union County Library will be holding a BIG BOOK SALE

Food Pantry Stock Very Low

See page 6A

CarFit Free Service for Seniors

Thurs. Feb 27th at Senior Center

See page 2B

UNION COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

BASKETBALL:

Region Tournaments
Girls Fri. Feb 21st @ TBA
Boys Sat. Feb 22nd @ TBA