

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

www.nganews.com

Legal Organ of Union County

Your Hometown Newspaper Since 1909

March 2, 2016

Danek, Nichols UCHS Star Student, Teacher

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Anna Danek is the 2016 STAR Student of the Year at Union County High School, for having scored the highest in her class on the SAT, and she has chosen Debbie Nichols to serve as her STAR Teacher.

The pair were honored at the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce's now second annual event, An Evening with the STARS, on Thursday, Feb. 25.

Following kind words from her STAR Teacher, as well as from Union County Schools Associate Superintendent Dr. Jeremy Williams, Danek addressed those gathered in her support.

"It's definitely an honor and a pleasure to be here tonight, but I know I wouldn't

be standing here without those in the community and those in my family who have helped me along the way, and I want to thank some of those people today," said Danek, thanking her parents, her grandparents, special guests, and members of her church.

But there was one person in particular that Danek said she wanted to thank that evening - Nichols, her STAR Teacher.

"The joy that she finds in teaching is contagious," said Danek. "I always leave ready to take on another day. I guess you could say Mrs. Nichols and I are both really nerdy about math. We get into conversations about how great math is and all the cool stuff that you can figure out, and other people just kind of look at us like we're crazy, but we both get it."

"Mrs. Nichols has taught

me more than just math - she has taught me that hard work can overcome any challenge. I learned that she once struggled with math, and she wasn't her best subject. But she persevered, and today, she's one of the best teachers I've ever had. So, Mrs. Nichols, thank you."

Danek plans to attend Covenant College in the fall, a small Christian school in Lookout Mountain, previously attended by all three of her older brothers.

"I haven't decided exactly what I want to major in, but I've been considering engineering or physical therapy," said Danek, adding that she plans to run Cross Country in college. "Even though I'll no longer be in Blairsville, I hope for the continued support of those in this community, and for God to continue placing influential people in my life."

Nichols, chair of the high school's math department and Danek's advanced placement calculus teacher, said that Danek was "amazingly smart," and possessed an ability to discuss high level math with the greatest of ease.

"But as smart as she is, that's not what makes Anna stand out," said Nichols. "She's a hard worker - I've never seen her give up on a problem. No matter how hard it is, she'll sit there and she'll fight with it until she gets it."

Even still, Nichols continued, there was more to Danek than just her natural abilities and tremendous work ethic.

"Anyone who has spent time with Anna immediately recognizes what a sweet spirit and joyful soul she is," said

See Stars, Page 3A



Debbie Nichols and Anna Danek smile and friends applaud their collective success

Shooting range moving forward

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

The proposed Union County Shooting Range on Georgia 515 is set to move forward following a second public hearing that occurred on Friday, Feb. 26, in the Union County Courthouse.

Union County Clerk Jennifer Queen opened the well-attended hearing with a statement prepared by Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris, who was detained on other business and could not make the meeting.

"This public hearing is to present the final draft of the plans for the shotgroud shooting facility and the cost of that facility," read Queen, who also stated that the first public hearing took place on



A captive audience listens to the details of the proposed Union County Shooting Range in the Friday, Feb. 26, public hearing.

Jan. 27, 2014. "The county has pledged \$150,000 from SPLOST funds, plus an in-kind contribution of the value of the property. Volunteers will be available to manage

the facility, and the county will provide maintenance and mowing."

At a total estimated cost of \$708,000, the state-of-the-art target shooting facility will

feature three trap ranges with three shooter pavilions, an office, restrooms, check-in area, and 46 parking spaces, including two that are Americans with Disabilities Act compliant.

Funding for the \$708,000 facility will come in the way of federal funds made available for shooting ranges within the state, at a 75/25 split with the county.

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources will act as the distributing agent and grant writing partner for the federal funds, which will make up \$531,000 of the \$708,000, leaving Union County to bring its contribution of 177,000

See Range, Page 2A

Turner to play The Hall on Saturday

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

When Josh Turner arrived at the Georgia Mountain Fair in 2000, he was a relative unknown. When he returned the following year, he was greeted by 10,000 adoring fans.

That's because of the release of his smash hit single "Long Black Train," which became the title of his smash debut album in 2003.

"The first time he came here, no one had ever heard of him," Thomason said, referring to Turner.

"The second time Josh came to the Fairgrounds, we had to open up all the doors at Anderson Music Hall, there were 10,000 people for our paid attendance that day,"



Josh Turner

Thomason said. "They came to see Josh Turner." With more than 2,000 tickets already sold for Saturday's March 5th, 7 p.m.

See Turner, Page 2A

Candidates begin qualifying March 7

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Qualifying for public office candidacy begins next week, running Monday, March 7, through Friday, March 11.

Political Party and Nonpartisan Candidates running for local office will need to bring their completed candidacy paperwork to the Union County Courthouse during the hours of 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. that Monday through Thursday, and from 9 a.m. to noon on Friday, March 11.

Republican Party Chair Dale Allison will be accepting paperwork for Republican Candidates in an office near the Library in the Courthouse.

Those qualifying as Democratic Candidates will need to bring their paperwork to Democratic Party Chair Ruth Ann Miner in the Registrar's

office of the courthouse.

Nonpartisan Candidates will also file in the Registrar's office, with Union County Elections Superintendent Libby Stevens.

All paperwork must be notarized, and fees should be paid when filing for candidacy.

Qualifying fees, which were set by Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris in a county meeting in January, are as follows: Sole Commissioner, \$3,095; Tax Commissioner, \$1,492; Clerk of Superior Court, \$1,492; Magistrate Judge, \$1,492; Probate Judge, \$1,492; Sheriff, \$1,780; County Coroner, \$108; Board of Education, \$54; and County Treasurer, \$54.

"Once they've paid their fees to their respective parties, then they will see me and they will be automatically put into the state databank, and will be published so

that people can see who's qualified," said Stevens. "This is just for local candidates

only. State candidates, like Representatives and State

See Qualifying, Page 3A

Magistrate Judge Johnie Garmon announces not seeking re-election

Chief Magistrate Johnie M. Garmon has announced his intent not to seek re-election at Chief Magistrate of Union County. Garmon was elected to this office in 2000. He states it has been a rewarding experience to have served the citizens of Union County for the past 17 years. He is looking forward to a new phase in his life - that of traveling with his wife and spending quality time with family and friends.

Garmon stated, "I have enjoyed my time working with the different components of the Criminal Justice Agencies and the courts in the north Georgia area, but am most grateful to the citizens of



Johnie M. Garmon
Union County for allowing me to serve them as Chief Magistrate."

BOE hires Rayfield as new superintendent

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Dr. Fred Rayfield will be the new Union County Schools Superintendent starting June 1.

The Union County Board of Education voted in a special called meeting on Monday, Feb. 29, to hire Rayfield to the position, following a 14-day period of public comment on Rayfield as the single finalist.

"I want to first of all thank the board for the opportunity," said Rayfield immediately following his hire. "My family and I are excited to become a part of



Dr. Fred Rayfield

Union County Schools, but also a part of the community.

See BOE, Page 9A

EMC Board closer to new general manager

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

On Thursday night, the nine-member Board of Directors chose the Goodwin Group as the firm that will recommend the next general manager, Board Member Roy Perren said.

Perren said that the board hopes to have a new general manager within 90 to 120 days.

"Joe Goodwin will be the person that we're dealing with," Perren said. "Joe has a tremendous amount of experience as a head-hunter. He's done quite a bit of work for Georgia Power, in addition to some high profile companies in Atlanta like Home Depot. 'He's done a lot of work



Roy Perren

with the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, so, he has quite a bit of experience," Perren said. "He has an extensive resume. Board member Mickey Cummings and I met with him



Stephen Phillips

in November. We were very, very impressed with him."

Perren hopes the search will last no more than 90 to 120 days.

See EMC, Page 17A

Union, Fannin partner on \$50,000 meth bust



Items seized during the recent joint multi-county meth bust

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

Union County Sheriff's Narcotics Agents played a significant role in the arrest of two suspected drug dealers in Fannin County after a three-

month investigation, Union County Sheriff Mack Mason said.

Sheriff Investigators have been following up on information coming from confidential informants

See Meth, Page 15A

Vol. 107 No. 9

2 Sections 24 Pages

Weather

Thurs: Rain Hi 52 Lo 36

Fri: Cloudy Hi 53 Lo 31

Sat: Sunny Hi 59 Lo 36

Arrests 8A

Church 12A

Classifieds 3B

Opinion 4A

Legals 5B

Obits 14A

Sports 16A

See our Website
www.nganews.com
for election results

See our Website
www.nganews.com
for election results

66th Annual Georgia Mountain Fair

See page 10A

UCMS Parent Meeting March 1 @ 6 p.m. Georgia Center for Assessment Presentation on GA Milestones Testing

SPORTS SOCCER Fri Mar. 4 @ Greene Co. 5:30 & 7:30

BASEBALL Tues. Mar 1 @ Fannin Co 5:30 PM

Thurs. Mar 3 vs. Gilmer Co 5 PM

Fri. Mar 4 vs. Washington Wilkes 4:30 PM